

Unit 3: Writing Techniques

Lesson 2 Writing Mechanics, Documentation, & Citation

In this lesson, we'll cover writing mechanics, including sentence-level techniques for good writing, common grammatical issues that arise when writing, and identifying and fixing grammar errors.

Understanding the elements of sentence structures and learning to identify grammatical trouble spots in your own writing will both help you build your writing skills. To help you on this journey, we'll look at the basic elements of a sentence — the subject and the predicate — and discuss strategies for identifying and fixing common sentence construction errors, including sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices. Finally, we'll look at common sentence errors involving subject/verb agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, shifts in person, and shifts in tense.

Imagine that you've graduated from college, started a successful career, and are about to hire a new employee for your company. You've narrowed your choices down to two candidates who seem equally qualified in terms of education and experience. In reviewing their materials, the following passage from one candidate's letter of introduction catches your eye. I am certain that my credentials makes me one of the most qualified applicants for this position. They are exactly what you're looking for. You recognize that something's wrong with these two sentences. You ask yourself, "shouldn't it be credentials make me the ideal person?" And you wonder what the "they" is in the second sentence; are the credentials exactly what you're looking for, or are the qualified applicants exactly what you're looking for? This example shows the importance of mastering grammatical conventions, that is, knowing and following the rules that govern the proper use of written language. Whether it's a paper for your economics professor or a letter to a potential employer, grammatical mistakes like these make it hard for your reader to determine what you mean. Even worse, they detract from your authority as a writer and erode your credibility. In this tutorial, we'll talk about some basics elements of proper grammar. We'll talk about what goes into a grammatically correct sentence, and we'll go over some strategies for spotting grammatical trouble-spots in your own writing. Grammar is a huge topic, though. We can't cover it all in this tutorial. Be sure to study a grammar textbook review all the grammar rules.

When we talk about grammatical issues, we're usually referring to language at the sentence level. This means we're concentrating our attention on the construction of sentences. We're not thinking about larger, essay—level issues such as thesis, claims, or evidence. Proper grammar means that each sentence is mechanically sound. So, let's begin with what makes a sentence. Every sentence should express a specific idea, and at the very least, every sentence *must* have two particular elements. The first is a subject. a word or group of words that identifies a person, place, or thing. The second is a predicate: a word or group of words that tells something about what the subject is or does. Look at these three sentences. Although they're very short, each of them is a complete sentence; each has both a subject and a predicate.

1. George teaches.
2. I agree.
3. Read this.

Note that the third sentence doesn't seem to have an identifiable subject. This particular kind of sentence is called an imperative; Imperatives relay a command or order of some kind. These sentences are governed by a convention called the understood you. When someone hears or reads this sentence, he or she understands that it means "You read this." One of the most common errors in sentence construction is the sentence fragment. This is one of the easiest errors to spot. As the name implies, a sentence fragment is just a piece of a sentence; a piece that's incapable of standing on its own. Remember that length doesn't necessarily determine what's a complete sentence and what's a sentence fragment. Consider this example: Only if you come with me, and we go tomorrow. This example is longer than the complete sentences we just examined, and it expresses a specific idea. But it still can't stand on its own as a sentence. This is an example of a clause. It does contain a

subject and a predicate, but it doesn't state a complete idea on its own. We call this kind of word—group a dependent clause, because its correctness depends on having another clause linked to it. To fix this sentence fragment, turn to the process of subordination. When we use subordination, we build a sentence in which one clause is *supportive* of, or *subordinate* to, another clause. To fix this sentence fragment, we need to link it to an independent clause. An independent clause is a clause capable of standing on its own as a sentence. The independent clause can be shorter than the dependent clause, but it *must be able to stand alone*. Let's look at the newly repaired sentence fragment: I'll go, but only if you come with me, and we go tomorrow. In this example "I'll go" is an independent clause because it has both a subject and a predicate, and it makes sense on its own. The second part of the sentence, "only if you come with me, and we go tomorrow" is the subordinate clause of this sentence. Note that we also added an extra word to the sentence. The "but" that separates our dependent clause from our independent clause is called a subordinating conjunction.

Two other common problems in sentence structure are the run-on sentence and the comma splice. Both of these problems arise when we try to put two independent clauses in the same sentence without having the proper conjunction or punctuation. If a sentence has two independent clauses "running together," we call it a run—on sentence. Sometimes a run—on sentence will have two independent clauses joined only by a comma. We call that type of error a comma splice. Let's look at an example of each.

1. I don't know when I'm going I believe it's sometime next week.
2. There must be some way to do it, we'll just have to keep looking.

There are several ways to fix run—ons and comma splices. One way is to separate each independent clause into a sentence of its own:

1. I don't know when I'm going. I believe it's sometime next week.
2. There must be some way to do it. We'll just have to keep looking.

Another way to fix this problem is to use a semicolon. It allows us to keep all the ideas in one sentence. Semicolons are used to join independent clauses in the same sentence. We can also use a conjunction and change one of the *independent* clauses into a *dependent* clause.

1. I don't know when I'm going, but I believe it's sometime next week.
2. We'll just have to keep looking because there must be some way to do it.

Note that in the second sentence, we inverted the original order of the sentence. Often, when we choose to subordinate one clause, we have to rearrange things a little. Moving sentences, or parts of sentences, around and trying out different sentence structures is a necessary part of getting our ideas shaped into a grammatically correct form. And like anything else, it gets easier with practice.

Now that we've looked at some common problems in building properly structured sentences, let's look at a common problem that occurs *inside* sentences: the problem of

agreement. Agreement refers to the way different parts of a sentence relate to each other. Problems with agreement can happen in two elements of a sentence: the relationship between a subject and a verb, and the relationship between a pronoun and its antecedent. To avoid mistakes in subject—verb agreement, make sure the verb and subject agree in number. If the subject is singular, the predicate should be singular; if the subject is plural, the predicate should be plural too. Determining whether subject/verb agreement is correct can be challenging if the subject is separated from the predicate. Take a look at this sentence: *One of the twelve jury members has had to be excused from the trial.* In this example the subject of the sentence looks as if it may be "members," but it's actually "one" so the predicate must be the singular "has had," rather than the plural "have had." Sometimes it's difficult to determine exactly which of the nouns in a sentence is the subject. One way to narrow down the possibilities is to remember that the object of a prepositional phrase will never be the subject of a sentence. In this case, "of the twelve jury members" is a prepositional phrase, so it can't be the subject. Try eliminating all the prepositional phrases from a sentence if you're having difficulty finding the subject. Words that refer to more than one individual, such as *family, group, team, or jury*, can also present a challenge in determining the proper subject/verb agreement. These nouns are called collective nouns. Unless they're plural themselves, these nouns are usually treated as singular subjects. Here's an example: *Our family is getting together this Christmas. Three more families are joining us.* Some kinds of pronouns refer to people or things that may not be known. These words are called indefinite pronouns. They're also treated as singular subjects: *Anyone who has taken calculus knows that it's not easy. Everyone in our neighborhood enjoys gardening.* Even though *anyone* refers to one person and *everyone* refers to many people, both of these indefinite pronouns receive the singular verb form. Another common problem in agreement is in the relationship between a pronoun and its antecedent, or the noun to which it refers. Just as in subject/verb agreement, correspondence in number is important here. Look at this example of a pronoun/antecedent disagreement. *Each of the team members received their own uniform.* Because each is singular, the proper pronoun should be *his, her,* or maybe both, as in "his or her own uniform." And as we saw earlier, removing the prepositional phrase "of the team members" can help us isolate the subject of the sentence and determine which pronoun to use. Another common problem in using pronouns is uncertainty about what the pronoun is referring to. Here's an example. *The guitar and the bass were turned up too loud. Its sound was distorted and unclear.* In the second sentence, which instrument is being referred to? When there may be confusion about what the pronoun refers to, one sure way to avoid confusion is not to use a pronoun at all. Instead be specific. *The guitar and the bass were turned up too loud. The guitar's sound was distorted and unclear.* It's usually a good idea to review most or all of the pronouns you use, and to make sure that they all have clear antecedents. You may want to get in the habit of checking this as you pause to read over the sentences you've just written. Shifts in person and verb tense are two more common writing problems. Checking for shifts involves making sure that one part of the sentence properly corresponds with another. A shift in person happens when a writer moves among points of view without having a meaningful reason to do so. Here's an example: *The team went to the championship, where you have to show stamina and speed.* Here the writer has

begun with a specific third-person subject . "the team" but ended by using the second-person "you." (One easy way to avoid this particular change in tense is to avoid using that second person "you" unless your meaning absolutely requires you to do so. By the way, in this example the second-person "you" acts as an indefinite subject. To fix this particular problem, we just need to provide a more specific noun: The team went to the Championship, where players have to show stamina and speed. To make sure that you're clear about the passage of time, check shifts in tense. These are another very common shift-error. Remember, tense refers to the form of the verb that indicates the time at which the verb occurs. In tense shifts, the tenses of the verbs are inconsistent with each other. Here are two examples:

1. Henry *takes* so long to get dressed that he *was* late for work.
2. This game is so long that we *were* all asleep by the end.

As a rule, it's usually best to stick to one verb tense. Write in the past, present or future for an entire paragraph or even an entire piece of writing, unless your meaning requires you to change tense to indicate a change in time.

When you read your own writing or the writing of your peers, do you often find sentences that just don't sound right? By the time you finish high school, you'll have about twelve years of experience writing grammatically correct sentences. The art of constructing grammatically accurate sentences is something you started developing early in life. You've probably become pretty skilled at writing, and probably apply many of the rules of grammar instinctively.

Whether you're writing a quick email to a friend or submitting a senior project, grammatically correct writing is important. Grammatical mistakes in your writing detract from your content. Errors can also shift your audience's opinion about your subject and, more importantly, affect their opinion about you as a thinker and a writer.

Many books have been written about grammar. Even the most skilled writers have a favorite grammar guide and consult it regularly. Find a grammar guide you like, and refer to it to answer your grammar questions.

Subjects and Predicates

A sentence is made up of one or more words that express a complete thought. Sentences are as varied as the people who write them. Yet for all this variety, the sentence has a clear, easily identifiable structure.

In every sentence, there are two basic components: **the subject and the predicate.**

A subject of a sentence is always a noun, or a word or phrase functioning as a noun, and is what the sentence is about.

A predicate is the part of the sentence that says something about the subject. The predicate includes the verb, with its objects, complements, and modifiers.

Let's identify the subjects and predicates in the following sentences. First, answer these questions on your own, and then check the answers below in red.

- A. Help!
- B. Paul reads.
- C. I'm tired.
- D. Julia skateboards very poorly.
- E. Angry parents yell.
- F. High school students study, work on homework, go to work, and play sports after school.
- G. My sports car drives fast.

ANSWERS

- A.** Help!

The verb *help* is the predicate, and an understood but not written *you* (as in "you help me") is the subject.

- B.** Paul reads.

The proper noun *Paul* is the subject, and the verb *reads* is the predicate.

- C.** I'm tired.

The pronoun *I* of the contraction *I am* is the subject, and the verb phrase *am tired* is the predicate.

- D.** Julia skateboards very poorly.

The proper noun *Julia* is the subject, and the verb phrase *skateboards very poorly* is the predicate.

- E.** Angry parents yell.

The noun phrase *Angry parents* is the subject, and the verb *yell* is the predicate.

- F.** High school students study, work on homework, go to work, and play sports after school.

The noun *students* is the subject, and the compound verb clause *work on homework, go to work, and play sports after school* is the predicate.

- G.** My sports car drives fast.

The noun phrase *my sports car* is the subject, and the verb phrase *drives fast* is the predicate.

Clauses and Phrases

Two other terms helpful in understanding sentence structure are **clause and phrase**. A **clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate. There are two main types of clauses: independent clauses and dependent clauses**. Clauses are the key structural elements of sentence architecture. **Independent Clauses** present a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. A **dependent clause (also called a subordinate clause)** cannot stand alone as a sentence.

A phrase is a group of related words that lacks a subject or a predicate or both. There are many types of phrases: noun phrases, verb phrases, prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, absolute phrases, verbal phrases, gerund phrase, infinitive phrases, and participial phrases. A phrase's main purpose is to add detail or valuable information. Phrases act as modifiers in a sentence.

Examples

The two independent clauses in the following sentence are in bold.

- **Computers are amazing tools**, but **good writers need to know basic grammar**.

The dependant clause (a clause that can't stand alone) is in bold in this next sentence.

- **Because my sister advised me to take up a sport**, I learned to scuba dive during spring break.
- An example of a phrase is: The very fast sailboat.

Okay! So now we have some building blocks of sentence construction: subjects, predicates, clauses and phrases. Let's see what kinds of simple and complex sentences we can create. First, let's talk about the kinds of sentences we can build. Five **kinds of sentences** can be created, depending on the mood of the main verb: **declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, and conditional**. Below are examples of each.

Examples

- **Declarative**: June 30th is my birthday.
- **Interrogative**: When is your birthday?
- **Imperative**: Read chapter 12 for tomorrow's quiz.
- **Exclamatory**: I simply can't keep up with these long reading assignments!
- **Conditional**: If you do well in the course, you will pass the final exam.

The next thing you need to know about sentence building is the **structure of the sentence**. There are four different types of sentence structure: **simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex**. Below are examples of each.

Examples

- **Simple**: My knee hurts. (single subject, single predicate)
- **Compound**: I stretch before I exercise, so why does my knee hurt? (two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction and punctuation)

- **Complex:** If I can squeeze it in before school, I try to run two miles each morning.
- **Compound-Complex:** If I'm not late, I run two miles, and I get a latte before school.

Using a semicolon, a conjunction, or a conjunctive adverb, combine the sentences in each of the following sets into a single sentence. When you use a conjunction or conjunctive adverb, state in parentheses the relationship it shows. Answer these questions on your own, and then check the answers below in red.

A. Harriet Beecher Stowe became widely known with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852.

Emily Dickinson remained unacclaimed until 50 years after her death.

B. James Joyce was a painstaking writer.

He once spent half a day on the composition of a single sentence.

ANSWERS

A. Harriet Beecher Stowe became widely known with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852.

Emily Dickinson remained unacclaimed until 50 years after her death.

Harriet Beecher Stowe became widely known with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852; however, Emily Dickinson remained unacclaimed until fifty years after her death. (contrast)

B. James Joyce was a painstaking writer.

He once spent half a day on the composition of a single sentence.

James Joyce was a painstaking writer; in fact, he once spent half a day on the composition of a single sentence. (emphasis)

Some of the following entries contain a comma splice (two sentences connected by a comma). If you find one, correct it. If the punctuation is correct, write Correct.

- A. Rocinante's head, neck, and muzzle are a single unit made from a small elbow joint; and her body is an L-shaped Allen wrench, with the smaller part forming a tail.

- B. Welded to the body are four legs, they are made from socket head cap screws.

ANSWERS

- A. Rocinante's head, neck, and muzzle are a single unit made from a small elbow joint; and her body is an L-Shaped allen wrench, with the smaller part forming a tail.

Rocinante's head, neck, and muzzle are a single unit made from a small elbow joint; thus her body is an L-Shaped allen wrench, with the smaller part forming a tail.

- B. Welded to the body are four legs, they are made from socket head cap screws.

Welded to the body are four legs made from socket head cap screws.

In some of the following, the punctuation is faulty. Correct any mistakes you find, adding words where necessary. If a sentence is correct as it stands, write Correct.

- A. On the coast of Maine is the small town of Pirates Cove it resembles the old New England seaports depicted in paintings hanging in country inns and seafood restaurants.

- B. Walking on the beach I collect the shells, they slide and rattle in my bucket as I step over rocks.

ANSWERS

- A. On the coast of Maine is the small town of Pirates Cove it resembles the old New England seaports depicted in paintings hanging in country inns and seafood restaurants.

On the coast of Maine is the small town of Pirates Cove; it resembles the old New England seaports depicted in paintings that hang in country inns and seafood restaurants.

- B. Walking on the beach I collect the shells, they slide and rattle in my bucket as I step over rocks.**

Walking on the beach, I collect the shells; they slide and rattle in my bucket as I step over rocks.

Beyond sentence building, some issues of mechanics are important to use in your writing. Here's a quick review of some of the basics.

Capitalization

- Follow the simple rules for capitalization. Words that should be capitalized include:
- Capitalize first words in every sentence, proper names, names of people, races, languages and places, the names of days, months and holidays
- Capitalize names of businesses or organizations, names of religions and sacred persons, books, and events. Capitalize titles that precede proper names and familial relationship terms.
- Capitalize A.M., P.M., A.D., and B.C., and the call letters of radio and TV stations.
- Capitalize abbreviated forms of businesses, organizations, and documents names.
- Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation if it stands alone as a sentence, or if it's an interjection that can stand alone.

Italics

Follow the simple rules for italics. *Italics*, or slanted type, give emphasis to words.

- Italicize the titles of books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, plays, films, TV series, radio programs, long poems, long musical compositions, and the titles for CD's, paintings, and sculpture.
- Italicize the names of individual ships, trains, airplanes, and spacecraft.
- Italicize foreign words and phrases.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are most commonly used to set off direct quotes in writing, but may also have a mechanical purpose.

- Use quotation marks with the titles of brief works or parts of complete works.
- Quotation marks can also be used to distinguish a word that is being discussed or to indicate that a word is slang.

- Punctuation with quotation marks: Periods and commas are always placed inside quotation marks. Exclamation points and question marks should be placed inside the quote when it punctuates the quoted sentence, and outside the quote when it punctuates the main sentence. Semicolons or colons are always placed outside quotation marks. Any word or punctuation mark that isn't part of the original quotation must be placed inside brackets.
- If more than one paragraph is being quoted, quotation marks should be placed before each paragraph and at the end only of the last paragraph.

Parentheses

Parentheses are used to enclose explanatory or supplemental material that interrupts the regular structure of the sentence. Punctuation is placed within parentheses when the words in the parentheses need punctuation (such as a period or comma).

Brackets

Brackets are used before and after material that a writer adds when quoting another writer.

Apostrophes

An apostrophe is used to show that one or more letters have been left out of a word to form a contraction. An apostrophe is also used to form the plural of a letter, a number, a sign, or a word discussed as a word. The possessive for singular nouns is made by adding an apostrophe and an s. This rule also applies to singular nouns ending with an s or a z. The possessive form of plural nouns ending in s is usually made by adding just an apostrophe (the bosses' office).

Hyphens and Dashes

A hyphen is used to divide a word at the end of a line of print. The word must be split between syllables, and the hyphen is always placed after the syllable at the end of the line, not at the beginning of the next line before the next syllable. Use a hyphen also to join two or more words that serve as a single adjective before a noun (example: big-boned woman). There are some exceptions to this rule. Dashes are used to indicate a sudden break or change in a sentence. A dash can also be used to show interrupted or staggering speech in dialogue. A dash is indicated by two hyphens without spacing or with an "em-dash."

Abbreviations

In formal writing only very few words are acceptable to abbreviate. They are Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., A.M., and P.M. In informal writing more abbreviations may be used. Many grammar guides have a list of common abbreviations in their glossaries or appendixes.

Common Usage Problems

Usage problems arise when a writer uses a word incorrectly. Most grammar books include a section or glossary that deals with this important issue. For example, *Writing: A College Handbook* has a Glossary of Usage near the end of the text. In this glossary you can find the

distinction between *accept* and *except*, between *affect* and *effect*, and many of the other commonly confused or misused words.

Mark Twain once said, "The difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug." This is a greater issue than simple diction. An expert writer never uses the wrong word of a "plagued pair." Expert writers might not always know the difference between *eminent* and *imminent*, but they're aware there is a difference and consult a reference book to clarify the difference.

Sentence Logic

Sentence logic means maintaining consistency in your writing. Writing that varies in point of view, has shifts in verb tense, or has disagreements in number (singular or plural) needs revision. Disagreement of a pronoun and its antecedent and shifts from active to passive voice are also common errors in writing.

Answer the following problems, which relate to sentence logic, and then check the answers below in red.

- 1. In some of the following sentences, the italicized pronoun has been used confusingly. Briefly diagnose what is wrong and then clarify the sentence. If the sentence is correct as it stands, write Correct.**
 - A.** Archimedes discovered the principle of displacement while he was taking a bath. *It* made him leap out of the water with excitement.
 - B.** By measuring the water displaced by the crown, and then measuring the water displaced by the ingot, he could easily tell whether *they* matched in volume, and thus whether the crown was pure gold.

- 2. In some of the following sentences the verb doesn't agree with its subject. Correct every verb you consider wrong and then explain the correction. If a sentence is correct as it stands, explain why.**
 - A.** Members of the city's transportation department is seeking a solution to the traffic problem on Main Street.
 - B.** There has been many complaints from merchants and shoppers.

3. In some of the following sentences, the tense of one or more verbs doesn't properly correspond to the tense of the italicized verb. Correct those sentences. If a sentence is correct as it stands, write Correct.

- A. At that time, inspectors *found* that pollutants have already made the water unsafe to drink.
- B. But until the installation was complete, residents *will drink* bottled water.

ANSWERS

1. In some of the following sentences, the italicized pronoun has been used confusingly. Briefly diagnose what is wrong and then clarify the sentence. If the sentence is correct as it stands, write Correct.

- A. Archimedes discovered the principle of displacement while he was taking a bath. *It* made him leap out of the water with excitement.

Archimedes discovered the principle of displacement while he was taking a bath. *The discovery* made him leap out of the water with excitement. (Pronoun antecedent confusion)

- B. By measuring the water displaced by the crown, and then measuring the water displaced by the ingot, he could easily tell whether *they* matched in volume, and thus whether the crown was pure gold.

Correct. "They" can only refer to ingot and crown because the other nouns are singular or non-countable.

2. In some of the following sentences the verb doesn't agree with its subject. Correct every verb you consider wrong and then explain the correction. If a sentence is correct as it stands, explain why.

- A. Members of the city's transportation department *is* seeking a solution to the traffic problem on Main street.

Members of the city's transportation department *are* seeking a solution to the traffic problem on Main Street. (The subject, members, is plural, so the verb must be plural.)

- B. *There has been* many complaints from merchants and shoppers.

There have been many complaints from merchants and shoppers. (The "there" refers to a plural noun so the verb must be plural.)

3. In some of the following sentences, the tense of one or more verbs does not properly correspond to the tense of the italicized verb. Correct those sentences. If a sentence is correct as it stands, write Correct.

A. At that time, inspectors *found* that pollutants have already made the water unsafe to drink.

At that time, inspectors *found* that pollutants had already made the water unsafe to drink. (The first verb is in the past tense, so the other verb must also be in the past tense.)

B. But until the installation was complete, residents *will drink* bottled water.

But until the installation is complete, residents *will drink* bottled water. (Because the second verb is in the future tense, the first verb can't be in the past tense.)

In this activity, you learned that sentence has two parts, a **subject** and a **predicate**. The subject is what the sentence is about; the predicate tells us something about the subject. You also learned that sentences have both **clauses** and **phrases**. There are two types of clauses, **independent** and **dependent** (or **subordinate**) **clauses**. An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence, but a **dependent clause** cannot. **Phrases** are groups of related words that lack either a subject or a predicate, or lack both a subject and a predicate. Their purpose is to add detail or information to a sentence; they act as modifiers. There are five kinds of sentences, **declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, and conditional**. You also saw four structural types of sentences, **simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex**.

Think back when you were in 8th grade, and your social studies teacher required you to present a research report on the Battle of Gettysburg in the Civil War. You searched the Internet and found a great encyclopedia article about your topic. Then you printed it or copied and pasted it into your report. You carefully copied the URL of the website where you found the article and put it at the end of your report. Then you brought the printout to school and read it aloud to your class. Your teacher gave you an A because you had found accurate information on a subject you did not know anything about. You did not cite your source correctly, but you did give the source credit.

Presenting information someone else wrote as if you wrote it yourself is plagiarism, a kind of cheating. It's stealing someone else's ideas or using someone else's words. In high school and college, plagiarism is a serious offense and can result in a failing grade on an assignment or in a course. In certain schools, the administration will suspend or even expel a student who plagiarizes. Published writers who use information from other sources also want to avoid plagiarism. If they do not properly credit their sources, the authors of those sources could sue them in a court of law, and the resulting publicity could end the plagiarizing authors' careers. The sources a writer uses can form part of the evidence for the argument of the work, but careful writers always give credit to the original authors of the material they have used. In addition, authors want their readers to be able to clearly tell which ideas are the author's own and which ones came from other sources. By documenting their sources of information, authors do more than avoid plagiarism—they also differentiate their own ideas from those found in other sources. Finally, writers document their sources so that their readers know where they can find out more about the subject at hand.

You will need to become an expert in using documentation since you will always cite any sources you use in your own writing. We'll discuss two types of documentation: Internal Documentation and Footnotes. Your teachers will often expect you to use internal documentation. So let's begin with how you would document sources you're referring to. To avoid plagiarism, you must state where you received the information you're using in your essay. We call this manner of documentation "internal documentation." When you summarize, paraphrase, or quote something in your essay from one of these sources, you will place a label inside parentheses at the end of the summary or the paraphrase or the quotation. The summarized paragraph you have used in your essay might look something like this. John Paul Sartre says he is an atheist; however, his works often do not portray the French existentialist in this light. Instead, he sometimes seems to assume a mantle of spirituality that other writers cannot emulate. In addition, he certainly understands the good and evil inherent within all men (Source A). Note the position of the ending period; you place it after you close the parentheses. The Modern Language Association (MLA) gives three different methods for internal documentation, in addition to this one; however, this method will work for you with the AP Language exam essays that require you to cite sources. You have given credit for your sources and have avoided plagiarism. In addition, you will need to become an analytical reader when you are researching. When you are reading a well-documented article, it provides you with clues about where to look for more information on the subject you are researching. Often, the article includes footnotes that give more

information about the subject than the main article does. A direct quotation of an author's exact words is the only footnoted material that requires the use of quotation marks, but both direct and indirect quotations must be footnoted. Any idea or statement that is not the author's own must be documented. Footnotes are another way an author gives credit to his sources, and you might do this in a long research project. But for now, we're just going to look at the structure of footnotes and how they give information. Look carefully at this example of one kind of footnote. The separate parts of the footnote are as follows:

- The name of the author or authors
- The title of the book or article
- The city of publication
- The publisher of the book (or article)
- The copyright year
- And the number of the page on which you found this direct quotation

The AP Language exam will test your ability to understand the information given in footnotes, so it's important to understand how they're structured and what information they provide.

Remember, writers give the information contained in footnotes and parenthetical citations in order to credit their sources, and in doing so, avoid plagiarism. But you can also use this information to find additional sources on the same material. You must become very familiar with the proper way to cite material yourself using internal documentation and footnotes. There are specific styles and structures you need to use. In addition, you must learn to evaluate how and why other writers use documentation. The AP Language exam may ask you to explain what information the writers have gained from their sources, and to do that, you must read critically and closely so that you can respond appropriately.

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Lesson 2 Assessment(s)

- Complete 3.02 Quiz: *Identifying Grammar Errors*
 - Pages 1-14 of this lesson.
- Complete 3.02 Quiz: *Writing Mechanics, Documentation, & Citation*
 - Pages 15-16 of this lesson.