

# Grammar and Mechanics:



Three Grammar Tips  
&  
Four Mechanics' Tips

# Three Grammar Tips

---

- Agreement
  - Subject and Verb
  - Verbs with amounts, fields of study, and other special nouns
  - Verbs with title, company names, and words as themselves
- Active and Passive Voice
- Non-Sexist Pronouns

# Subject and Verb Agreement

---

## □ First Person

- Singular: **I see** a field of fireflies.
- Plural: **We see** a field of fireflies.

## □ Second Person

- **You see** a shower of sparks.

## □ Third Person

- The **scientist sees** a cloud of cosmic dust.
- The **scientists see** a cloud of dust.

# Verbs with Amounts

---

- Amounts as subjects = singular verbs
  - **Two hours** *is* not enough time to finish.
  - **Three hundred dollars** *is* what we must pay.
  - **Two miles** *is* a short sprint for some serious joggers.
  - **Three-quarters of an inch** *is* needed for a perfect fit.

# Verbs with Fields of Study

---

- Field of study as subjects = singular verbs
  - **Statistics** *is* required of science majors.
  - **Statistics** *show* that a teacher shortage is coming.

# Verbs with Special Nouns

---

- Special nouns as subjects = mostly singular verbs
  - The ***news*** **gets** better each day.
  - ***Sports*** **is** a good way to build physical stamina.
  - Three ***sports*** **are offered at the recreation center.**
  - **Those *slacks*** need pressing.
  - That ***pair*** of slacks **needs** pressing.
  - Two new TV ***series*** **are** big hit.
  - A ***series*** of disasters **is** plaguing our production.

# Verbs with Titles & Company Names

---

- Titles as subject = singular verbs
  - ***Breathing Lessons*** by Anne Tyler **is** a prize-winning novel.
- Company names as subject = singular verbs
  - ***Cohn Brothers*** **boxes** and **delivers** fine art.

# Verbs with Words Themselves

---

- Words themselves as subjects = singular verbs
  - **We implies** that everyone is included.
  - During the Vietnam War, ***protective reaction strikes was*** a euphemism for *bombing*.

# Active and Passive Voice

---

- Active voice = subject performs action
  - Most clams **live** in salt water.
  - They **burrow** into the sandy bottoms of shallow waters.
- Passive voice = subject is acted upon
  - Clams **are considered** a delicacy by many people.
  - Some types of clams **are highly valued** by seashell collectors.

# Non-sexist Pronouns

---

- Use neutral pronouns
  - **Everyone** hopes that **he or she** will win a scholarship.
  - **Many students** hope that **they** will win a scholarship.
  - Everyone hopes to win a scholarship.

# Three Mechanics' Tips

---

- Commas
- Colons
- Semicolons

# Commas: Items in a List

---

- Academic style
  - I can't believe you went to Disneyland, Six Flags, and Universal Studios all in one day.
- Journalistic style
  - He likes mustard, onions and chili on his hotdogs.

# Commas:

## Introductory Phrases or Clauses

---

- After we completed our whirlwind visit to all three amusement parks, we fell into a deep sleep for twelve hours.
- To Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse is not a stranger.
- To hotdogs, chili is a natural accompaniment.

# Commas: Nonrestrictive Elements

---

- **An energetic person**, Anna Hom enjoys jogging.
- Anna Hom, **who is in excellent physical condition**, enjoys jogging.
- Anna Hom enjoys jogging, **which is also Adam's favorite pastime**.

# Commas: Coordinating Conjunctions

---

- The sky turned dark gray, **and** the wind died suddenly.
- The November morning had just begun, **but** it looked like dusk.
- Shopkeepers closed their stores early, **for** they wanted to get home.
- Soon high winds would start, **or** thick snow would begin silently.
- The firehouse whistle blew four times, **so** everyone knew a blizzard was coming.

# Commas: Coordinate Adjectives

---

- The **huge, restless** crowd waited for the concert to begin.
- Hundreds of **roaring, cheering, yelling fans** filled the stadium.
- Only corn grown for popcorn pops consistently because all other kinds of corn lack **tough, enable-like** shells.

# Commas: Quoted Words

---

- Speaking of ideal love, the poet William Black wrote, "Love seeketh not itself to please."
- "My love is a fever, " said William Shakespeare about love's passion.
- "I love no love," proclaimed the poet Mary Coleridge, "but thee."

# Colons: Listed Items

---

- **If you really want to lose weight, you must do three things:** eat smaller portions, exercise, and drink lots of water.
- **The students demanded *the following*:** an expanded menu in the cafeteria, improved janitorial services, and more up-to-date textbooks.

# Colons:

## Appositives & Quotations

---

- Appositive
  - Only cats are likely to approve of one old-fashioned remedy for cuts: **a lotion of catnip, butter, and sugar.**
- Quotation
  - **The little boy in *E. T.* did say something neat:** "How do you explain school to a higher intelligence?"

# Semicolons: Independent Clauses

---

- The desert known as Death Valley became a US National Park in 1994; it used to be a US National Monument.
- This is my husband's second marriage; it's the first one for me.

# Semicolons: Sentence Structures & Lists

---

- When the peacock has presented his back, the spectator will usually begin to walk around him to get a front view; **but** the peacock will continue to turn so that no front view is possible.
- Our Constitution is in actual operation; everything appears to promise that it will last; **but** in this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes.
- For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice.