

# The 20 Most Common Grammar Mistakes

Master many of these with instruction at: <http://www.youtube.com/sherryprindle>

1. **Run-on Sentences:** A run-on is not a sentence that runs on and on; it is just not put together with correct punctuation. A compound sentence is two complete thoughts that can only be joined by a semi-colon or a comma with a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
2. **Sentence fragments:** A sentence must contain a subject (noun) and a predicate (verb); it must also form a complete thought.
3. **Subject-verb agreement:** We was/were hiking when I saw/seen a bear. (were, saw)
4. **Hidden singular subjects:** each, every, one, another, everyone, everybody, nothing, much
5. **Pronoun agreement:** Each student should do their (his or her) homework.
6. **I, me, and myself:** If you have questions, please contact Mary or me (not I or myself).
7. **Politically and grammatically correct pronoun usage:** Every manager hires his own assistant. (his or her *or* Managers hire their own assistants.)
8. **Who and whom:** Who/whom shall I say is calling? (who) Who/whom are you calling? (whom)
9. **Commas in a series:** We had an appetizer, entrée, and dessert. (Do I need the last comma?)
10. **Commas with a nonrestrictive elements:** sometimes using the words “that” and “which”
11. **Punctuation with parentheses:** You don’t double a period at the end of a sentence (with an abbreviation like a.m., i.e., or etc.). Punctuation goes outside parentheses, however. (etc.).
12. **Hyphenation:** reiterate, cooperate, vice president—remember when these were hyphenated?
13. **Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe:** The students (students’) meals consisted of hot dog’s and coke’s. (hot dogs, cokes)
14. **Confused contractions:** its, it’s; your, you’re; there, their, they’re; were, we’re
15. **Punctuation with quotation marks:** periods and commas go inside while colons and semicolons go outside; what about question marks and exclamation marks?
16. **List punctuation:** Do I punctuate lists as sentences? Do I punctuate them at all?
17. **List parallelism:** She enjoys hiking, dancing, and to visit museums (visiting).
18. **Misplaced or dangling modifiers:** The pilot was staring at the mountain wearing an officer’s hat. Living in Los Angeles, the traffic was hard to handle.
19. **Word endings:** -er, -es, -ed; -in, -ing; -ent, -ant
20. **Tricky word pairs:** affect, effect; than, then; principle, principal; continual, continuous