Grammar
Usage and Mechanics...the basics

Sentence Fragment – a sentence fragment is part of a sentence that is punctuated as if it were a complete sentences. Sometimes a sentence fragment does not express a complete thought because the subject or the verb is left out.

Ex: The pretzel has a long and interesting history. **Dating back to AD 610.**

Ex: In 1853, Native American George Crum served his version of French fries at Moon Lake Lodge. **Soon thereafter faced a guest's disapproval.**

Run-on sentence – a run-on sentence is two or more sentences written as though they were one sentence.

**The Comma Splice** – this occurs when the writer mistakenly uses a comma instead of a semicolon or a period.

Ex: For generations, people have enjoyed the ever-popular ice cream as a dessert, historical records show that ice cream was invented by the Chinese around 2000 B.C.

**Missing Punctuation or Conjunction** – Joining two sentences together without a comma and a conjunction, or without a semicolon, can confuse the reader.

Ex: Historians believe that the Chinese included overcooked rice, milk, and spices in their recipe no one is sure how the recipe spread to Europe.

**Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement**

The rule – a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender, and person. An antecedent is the noun or pronoun that a
pronoun refers to or replaces.

1. If the antecedent is singular, use a singular pronoun. If the antecedent is plural, use a plural pronoun.

Ex: The Ramayana is one of India's greatest epics. It tells stories about heroic characters. Two of them are Rama and Sita, his wife.

Ex: Rama and Ravana clash when they fight over Sita.

2. Use a singular pronoun if the collective noun names a group acting as a unit.
Ex: The family finally gives its support to Rama.

3. Use a plural pronoun if the collective noun shows the members or parts of a group acting individually.
Ex: Rama's family argue over their plans to rescue Sita.

4. The gender of a pronoun must be the same as the gender of its antecedent.

5. A personal pronoun must agree in number with the indefinite pronoun that is its antecedent.

6. The number of an indefinite pronoun is not always obvious.
Indefinite pronouns that end in one, body, or thing are always singular. Use a singular pronoun to refer to a singular indefinite pronoun.

Ex: Each myth has its own heroes and villains.
Ex: Everyone has his or her favorite myth.

Parts of Speech (that will be on the quiz)
Noun – a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea.
Ex: love, hate, dog, sun, teacher, Mrs. Leek
Verb – a word that expresses an action or a state of being.
Ex: jump, run, cry, think, is/was, have, had
Adjective – a word that modifies, describes, or limits the meaning of a noun or pronoun.

**Adjectives answer four questions** – What kind? How many? How much? Which one? Ex: this star, one dollar, some music, squeaky voice, green light

Adverbs – An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs answer four questions – Where, when, how, and to what extent? Ex: Will they be returning soon? Everyone played magnificently. The classroom was completely full. The orchestra stopped here during their state tour.

*Many adverbs are formed by adding –ly to adjectives. Ex: slowly, extremely, possibly, truly, frequently…

Pronouns – A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or another pronoun. **Some Examples:** I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours, you, your, yours, they, them theirs, he, him, she, it, herself, himself, ourselves, yourself, itself, themselves, each, somebody, either, nobody, something, few, many, several, all, any, none, everybody, everyone, everything, much, who, whom, whose, which, what, that

**Types of Sentences**

1. Simple Sentence – A simple sentence consists of one independent clause and no subordinate clause.
   Ex: Most TV family shows idealize family life.

2. Compound Sentences – A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses joined together.
   Ex: The TV father worked, and the TV mother stayed at home with the TV children. *Independent clauses can be joined with a comma and coordinating conjunction, or a semicolon.

3. Complex Sentences – A complex sentence consists of one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.
   Ex: A 1970s sitcom called The Brady Bunch featured a blended family that consisted of two of the original parents, three girls, and three boys.
   Ex: Although it was not as popular as other programs at the time, the show went on to become and enduring classic.

4. Compound-Complex Sentences – A CC sentence consists of two or
more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.
**Ex:** On January 12, 1971, All In The Family appeared on TV, and audiences saw a show that changed the course of TV comedy.
**Ex:** Each week the show broke new ground, and, as the actors tackled one sensitive subject after another, the show quickly became the number one program on television.

**Clauses**

A **Clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb.**

**Ex:** Your genes carry your family’s genetic history.

An **Independent Clause expresses a complete thought.** It can stand alone as a sentence.

**Ex:** Genes contain the code for your physical appearance.

**Subordinate Clauses (dependent) contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought.** It cannot stand alone. Subordinate clauses may be introduced by words like if, because, even thought, how, what, why, that, while, when, and since.

**Ex:** that determines your height
**Ex:** because inherited traits often skip a generation

*To express a complete thought a subordinate clause must be combined with, or be part of, an independent clause.*

**Appositive and appositive phrases**

An **appositive is a noun or pronoun that identifies or renames another noun or pronoun.** An appositive phrase is made up of an appositive plus its modifiers.

**Ex:** Gail Devers, a champion sprinter, was born in Seattle in 1966.

**Ex:** Barcelona, a large city in Spain, hosted the Olympics in 1992.

An **Essential appositive is an appositive that provides information that is needed to identify the preceding noun or pronoun.**

**Ex:** The American sprinter Gail Devers won an Olympic gold medal in the 100 meter dash in 1992.

*Notice that no commas are used with an essential appositive.*
A nonessential appositive adds information about a noun or pronoun in a sentence in which the meaning is already clear. Ex: Devers, a survivor of Graves’ disease, overcame many obstacles to achieve athletic success.

*A nonessential appositive or appositive phrase is always set off by commas.

**Commas**

1. In a series of three or more items, use a comma after every item except the last one. Ex: Bungee jumping has joined the ranks of surfboarding, skateboarding, and sky surfing as an extreme sport.

2. Use commas after first, second, and so on when introducing items in a series. Ex: Participants are asked to follow three simple rules: first, secure the bungee cord for safety; second, do not attempt to hold on to anything; and third, have fun.

3. Use commas between adjectives of equal rank that modify the same noun. Ex: A young, adventurous man jumped off a 300-foot bridge.

4. Use a comma after an introductory word or a mild interjection such as oh or well. Ex: Oh, bungee jumping is not for the faint of heart.

5. Use a comma after an introductory prepositional phrase that contains one or more other prepositional phrases.
Ex: At the beginning of the jump, a person feels a rush of emotions.

6. Use a comma after an infinitive phrase, a participial phrase, or an adverb clause that begins a sentence.

Ex: Taking a deep breath, the jumper prepares for the dive.
Ex: When the jump is over, the exhilaration remains.

7. Use commas to set off words that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence.
Ex: Bungee jumping, by the way, can be done in groups.
Ex: A seven-person team, for example, has jumped in a specially designed basket.

8. Common interrupters – however, therefore, for example, moreover, by the way, nevertheless, furthermore, of course, in fact, after all, I believe, I suppose

9. Use commas to set off direct address.
Ex: Gentlemen, start your engines.

10. Use commas to set off nonessential appositives. An appositive is a word or phrase that identifies or renames a noun or pronoun. A nonessential appositive adds information about a noun or pronoun in a sentence in which the meaning is already clear.
Ex: Paul, my brother, has gone bungee jumping in Australia.

11. Use commas to separate direct quotations from explanatory words like he said, Greg replied, and Sheila asked. If the explanatory words precede the quotation, insert a comma before the quoted words.
Ex: Mrs. Leek said, “Good job class.”
Ex: “If you don't learn from history,” Mr. Vardo explained, “you are doomed
to repeat it.”
Ex: “You are expected to attend all practices,” said Coach Stewart.

12. Use a comma to separate independent clauses joined by a conjunction in a compound sentence.
Ex: Rodeos are held in many parts of the United States, but they are also popular in Mexico, Canada, and Australia.

13. Do not use a comma to separate the parts of a two-part compound predicate.
Ex: Many Western regions claim to be the birthplace of the rodeo and hold annual exhibitions to celebrate the Old West.

14. Use commas to set off nonessential clauses. A nonessential clause adds extra information to a sentence but is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.
Ex: Trick riding and fancy roping, which are virtually unknown to rodeo fans today, were popular events during the 1920s and 1930s.

Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon to join the parts of a compound sentence if no coordinating conjunction is used.
Ex: The first recorded Olympics took place in 776 B.C. In Olympia, Greece; only one athletic event was held that year – a footrace of about 193 meters.

2. Use a semicolon before a conjunctive adverb that joins the clauses of a compound sentences. Conjunctive adverbs include therefore, however, otherwise, consequently, and moreover. These usually function as introductory words and need to be followed by commas.
Ex: The first seventeen ancient Olympics featured only footraces and ended in one day; however, the program changed in the eighteenth Olympics, when wrestling and the pentathlon were added.

3. When commas occur within parts of a series, use semicolons to separate the parts.
Ex: The first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece; the second in Paris, France; and the third in St. Louis, Missouri.

Colons
1. Use a colon to introduce a list of items. Colons often follow words like these or the following.
Ex: The pentathlon included the following events: discus throw, long jump, javelin throw, running, and wrestling.

2. Use a colon to introduce a long or formal quotation.
Ex: Susan B. Anthony said: “Woman must not depend upon the protection of a man…..”

3. Use a colon after salutations of business letters
Ex: To Whom It May Concern:

Writing Problems…

Sequence of tenses
Ex: After he broke his arm, he is home for two weeks.
Fixed: After he broke his arm, he was home for two weeks.

Shift of pronoun
Ex: If you are tense, one should try to relax.
Fixed: If you are tense, you should try to relax.

Parallelism or parallel structure
Ex: She skis, plays tennis and flying hang gliders.
Fixed: She skis, plays tennis and flies hang gliders.

**Noun agreement**
Ex: Carmen and Sarah are both a pilot.
Fixed: Carmen and Sarah are both pilots.

**Pronoun reference**
Ex: Several people wanted the job, so he or she filled out the required applications.
Fixed: Several people wanted the job, so they filled out the required applications.

**Subject-verb agreement**
Ex: There is eight people on the shore.
Fixed: There are eight people on the shore.

**Logical Comparison**
Ex: Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor’s garden.
Fixed: Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor grew.

**Modification and word order**
Ex: Barking loudly, the tree had the dog’s leash wrapped around it.
Fixed: Barking loudly, the dog wrapped its leash around the tree.

**Ambiguous and vague pronouns**
Ex: In the newspaper they say that few people voted.
Fixed: The newspaper reported that few people voted.

**Improper modification**
Ex: If your car is parked here while not eating in the restaurant, it will be towed away.
Fixed: If you park here and do not eat in the restaurant, your car will be towed away.

**Wordiness**
Ex: There are many problems in the contemporary world in which we live.
Fixed: There are many problems in the contemporary world.

**Pronoun case**
Ex: He sat between you and I at the stadium.
Fixed: He sat between you and me at the stadium.

**Idiom**
Ex: Natalie had a different opinion for her.
Fixed: Natalie had a different opinion of her.

Capitalization Quick Reference…

**Capitalize**

1. the names and initials of people Alice Walker, E.B. White
2. Titles used with or in place of names Professor Holmes
3. Deities and members of religious groups Jesus, Buddha, Catholic
4. Names of ethnic and national groups Hispanics, Jews
5. Cities, states, countries, continents Hayesville, North Carolina
6. Regions, bodies of water, mountains Midwest, Lake Michigan
7. Geographic features, parks Continental Divide, Everglades
8. Streets, roads, planets Deerbrook Dr., Jupiter
9. Companies, organizations, teams Atlanta Braves, Kraft
10. Buildings, bridges, monuments Lincoln Memorial
11. Documents, awards World Cup
12. Special named events Super Bowl
13. Governmental bodies, historical periods and events Congress, Middle Ages, Boston Tea Party
14. Days and months, holidays Tuesday, October, Thanksgiving
15. Specific cars, boats, trains, planes Titanic, Corvette
16. First word in a sentence or quotation
17. Salutation and closing of letters Dear Mom, Sincerely,
18. First word in a line of poetry
19. The personal pronoun I
20. All important words in titles

Words *not* to capitalize…
Do not capitalize north, south, east and west when they are used to tell direction.
Ex: London is east of New York City.
Do not capitalize sun and moon, and only capitalize earth when it is used with names of other planets.
Ex: The sun and moon are heavenly bodies in a solar system that includes Mars, Jupiter, and Earth.
Ex: We now live on the earth, not in heaven.

Do not capitalize the names of seasons.
Ex: The winter snows have nearly disappeared.

Do not capitalize the names of most school subjects.
School subjects are capitalized only when they are the names of specific courses which are usually followed by a number.
Ex: World History 101, English, Spanish
You would not capitalize civics, physics, chemistry, etc.

Commonly Confused Words…
Two = 2, the number Ex: I bought two cokes.
Too = adverb that means also or very Ex: It is too cold outside. I am going to the fair too.
To = use before a verb or as a preposition
Ex: I am going to the store.

They’re = contraction for they are
Ex: They’re going to the grocery store after school.
Their = possessive Ex: Their bookbags were left in the commons area.
There = as in over there Ex: I am going there after school today.

Affect = verb that means “to influence.”
Ex: Her harsh words did not affect me or make me cry.
Effect = noun that means “the outcome or result”
Ex: Her erratic driving was the effect of attempting to text and drive.
Effect = verb that means “to cause”
Ex: The motivational speech of the coach was an attempt to effect change in the attitudes of the players.
All ready = an adjective meaning “fully ready”
Ex: Before the player’s home run, the spectators were all ready to boo the home team.

Already = is an adverb meaning “before or by this time.”
Ex: She was already going to dance when she was asked to babysit on Saturday.

Between = is used when speaking of only two things.
Among = is used for three or more.

Bring = is used to denote motion toward a speaker or place.
Take = is used to denote motion away from a person or place.

Lie = means “to rest or recline.”
Lay = always takes an object
Ex: Dogs love to lie in the sun. Ex: Lay the cookies on the counter.

Than = Use than to make comparisons
Then = Use then on all other occasions.
Ex: I like Shakespeare better than ovid. We read one, then the other.

Loose = means “free, not restrained.”
Lose = means “to misplace or fail to find.”

Fewer = refers to a number of separate, countable units.
Less = refers to bulk quantity
Ex: We have less literature and fewer selections in this year’s curriculum.

Allusion = is and indirect reference to something.
Illusion = a false picture or idea

Verb Tense
**Present tense** places an action or condition in the present.
Ex: Jan takes piano lessons.

**Past tense** places an action or condition in the past.
Ex: We came to the party.

**Future tense** places an action condition in the future.
Ex: You will understand.

**Present perfect tense** describes an action in an indefinite past time or an action that began in the past and continues in the present.

Ex: He has called several times today. I have known about your illness for weeks now.

**Past perfect tense** describes an action that happened before another action in the past.
Ex: She had mentioned that you were ill.
Ex: I had scattered confetti all over the table before the party.

**Future perfect tense** describes an event that will be finished before another future action begins.
Ex: I will have gone to school four years by the time I graduate.