The past, the present, and the future walked into a bar. It was tense.
**BREAKING GRAMMAR RULES QUICK CHECK:**

**Solid or Rule-Breaker (RB)?**
I walked all way to Santa Cruz.

*RBI Try: I walked all the way to Santa Cruz.*  
*Article usage*

**Solid or Rule-Breaker (RB)?**
For who am I holding this glass of wine?

*RBI Try: For whom am I holding this glass of wine?*  
*Pronoun use*

**Solid or Rule-Breaker (RB)?**
I cut down only the trees, which were marked with yellow ribbons.

*RBI Try: I cut down only the trees that were marked with yellow ribbons.*  
*Pronoun use*
Grammar describes the structure of language.

Just as we like clear roads on which to drive, readers enjoy a clear path to follow as they absorb your argument.

That clear path starts with the heart of grammar: clear sentence structure.
Bottom Line up Front (BLUF):
Your writing goal is to produce several clear, concise sentences that demonstrate the connectedness of your ideas.

Sentences depend on: words (which convey meaning) and punctuation (which work as road signs). *Mastery Series: Grammar* sets the stage for success by covering how types of words interact in order to build proper sentences.
You no more need to know all the grammar terms in order to write than I need to know exactly how every single car engine part works in order to drive my car.

However, understanding how a few key elements work (and keeping printed copies of lists of those terms) can really help your writing. I have included the lists that seem to help NPS students the most as individual slides.
WHAT DO ARTICLES DO?

Articles signal whether a noun has a general or specific connotation. “The” is a definite article (the cat) meaning a specific cat; “a/an” are indefinite articles (a cat) meaning any cat.

“Go find a cat!” differs from “Go find the cat!”

WHERE DO I PUT AN ARTICLE?

Generally, you can insert articles the, a, or an before a noun when no other modifiers are present: “the cat” or before already present modifiers: “the big, black cat.”
SPECIFICALLY, USE A, AN, or THE WHEN:

- You need to classify or define a noun.
  - *The chapter introduces a market economy for Alaska.*

- After the first mention of something general when referring back
  - *Improvements are possible within the market economy. The improvements include:*
EXCEPTIONS (MEANING, DO NOT USE AN ARTICLE WHEN):

- Speaking generally
  
  *I love cheese. I’m terrified of heights.*

- Before plural nouns when speaking generally
  
  *Improvements are possible within democracy.*

- Before countries, towns, streets, languages and single mountains:

  *I am from China. She speaks Arabic. The boy climbed Mt. Everest.*

- Before some places and with some forms of transport:

  *I live at home. I came here by car.*

*Writer’s Tips*

Trouble with when to use/not use an article? Listen attentively to your favorite podcasts/radio shows.
Article Usage Exercises

*Solid or R-B?* Why did cat cross the road?  
RB! “the cat”

*Solid or R-B?* Why did Cat cross the road?  
Solid!

*Solid or R-B?* Why did the cat cross the road?  
Solid!

*Solid or R-B?* The cats crossed the road.  
Solid!

*Solid or R-B?* None of the cats crossed the road.  
Solid!
Modifiers—either words or phrases—should provide more information about a subject or object within a sentence. A dangling modifier implies but does not name the subject or the object.

A misplaced modifier can make you an accidental comedian.
Covered with hot melting cheese I ate the pizza.

I ate the pizza covered with hot melting cheese.
Solid or R-B? Having finished my dinner, the waitress offered to bring out the dessert tray.

Solid or R-B? Without knowing his name, it was hard to introduce him.

Solid or R-B? A cop just knocked on my door and said my dogs were chasing people on bikes.

Solid or R-B? The park ranger spotted a beaver peering through his binoculars.

(See in-class handout and answer key) Dangling Modifier Exercises
Having finished my dinner, the waitress offered to bring out the dessert tray.

Try: Once I finished my dinner, the waitress offered to bring out the dessert tray.

Without knowing his name, it was hard to introduce him.

Try: It was hard to introduce him without knowing his name.

A cop just knocked on my door and said my dogs were chasing people on bikes.

Try: A cop just knocked on my door and said my dogs were chasing people that were on bikes.

The park ranger spotted a beaver peering through his binoculars.

Try: Peering through his binoculars, the park ranger spotted a beaver.
WORDS PARTY IN EITHER PHRASES OR CLAUSES!

• PHRASES
  Two+ words WITHOUT both a subject and a verb
  -amphibious warfare
  -on Tuesday

• CLAUSES
  Two+ WITH both a subject and a verb
  -Amphibious warfare will end on Tuesday.
  -When amphibious warfare ends...
on Tuesday
in front of base
as a matter of fact
amphibious warfare
is analyzing

Phrase Examples
A preposition tells a reader when and where something occurred as well as how it occurred.

The puppy is **on** the floor.

The puppy is **in** the trash can.

The puppy is **beside** the phone.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>Alternative 2</th>
<th>Alternative 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about</td>
<td>below</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above</td>
<td>beneath</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>toward(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td>behind</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>under</td>
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<td>beside(s)</td>
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<td>against</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>until</td>
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<tr>
<td>along</td>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>unto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amid</td>
<td>but (except)</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>concerning</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>with</td>
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<td>as</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>during</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>except</td>
<td>through(out)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepositions are easily confused because many have nuanced meanings. Use the following tips adapted from www.grammar.net/prepositions to prevent confusion and to promote clarity:

- Use *at* to identify where an object or subject is; use *to* for other locations.

  The book is at home. I walked to the beach.

- Use *for* to measure periods of time; use *since* to reference a past event.

  Walking for hours made me thirsty. Since 1979, I have loved to walk.

- Use *in* and *for* to indicate general measurements (and yes, time is a measurement); use *on* and *at* to indicate specific dates or times.

  - We measure in inches. We walked for hours. We finish studying in minutes.
  
  - We complete the measurements on time. We walk on Tuesday. We finish studying at 1900.

- Use *about* and *around* to estimate quantities.

  I need about a cup of sugar. You will probably need around an hour to jog.

- Use *in* when referring to geographical locations.

  I particularly like to walk in Paris. I like to drink coffee in the cafes, also.

- Use *on* when referring to road or street names. My favorite café is on Lighthouse Avenue.
Solid or RB? Jim has worked at NPS for 20 years.

Solid or RB? She arrived at base around 4 pm.

Solid or RB? Apartments in Monterey are expensive.

Solid or RB? The blue areas on the map indicate water.

Solid or RB? I met the nicest people at Monterey, California.

Solid or RB? I met the nicest people at the Trident Room in Monterey.
SENTENCE SUBJECTS are usually nouns or pronouns, but sometimes other parts of speech acting as nouns. You can find sentence subjects by asking who or what is doing the action, hence the actor.

*Nouns*: person, place, or thing

- **George** wonders why he cannot find coffee.
- **Peace** is the ultimate goal.

- Abstract nouns are concepts like freedom, prejudice, and democracy.
- Confused about when to capitalize a noun? Come to *Mastery Series: Clarity and Concision*. 
A few examples of other parts of speech acting as the sentence subject…

- **Gerunds**: verb ending in *ing*
  
  *Traveling* creates new thoughts.

- **Adverb** as a subject:
  
  *Happily* is an adverb.

- **Adjective** then a *pronoun* as subjects:
  
  *Beauty* is truly soul deep; that is, *it* comes from the soul.
ACTORS: PRONOUNS CAN BE SENTENCE SUBJECTS

• Pronouns replace nouns.
• The fishermen complained about the weather forecast. **They** said it had not warned them of the mudslide.
• What is the other pronoun above? **You guessed it!**
PRONOUNS ARE GOOD TO KNOW IN OTHER SITUATIONS, TOO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Pronouns</th>
<th>Possessive Pronouns (DO NOT NEED AN APOSTROPHE)</th>
<th>Reflexive/Intensive Pronouns George hurt himself. George himself was not hurt.</th>
<th>Relative Pronouns (used to introduce a modifier)</th>
<th>Interrogative Pronouns (used in questions) “Who goes there?”</th>
<th>Demonstrative Pronouns (used to point out people or things) “that person”</th>
<th>Indefinite Pronouns</th>
<th>Indefinite Pronouns (cont.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>hers</td>
<td>herself</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>himself</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>which</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>another</td>
<td>most</td>
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<td>which</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>these</td>
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<td>neither</td>
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<td>whom</td>
<td>those</td>
<td>anybody</td>
<td>nobody</td>
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<td>it</td>
<td>mine</td>
<td>ourselves</td>
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<td>whose</td>
<td></td>
<td>anyone</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>themselves</td>
<td>whose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>both</td>
<td>no one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>ours</td>
<td>yourself</td>
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<td>each</td>
<td>one</td>
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<tr>
<td>them</td>
<td>their</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>either</td>
<td>other</td>
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<td>us</td>
<td>theirs</td>
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<td>several</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>everyone</td>
<td>some(body) (one)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>yours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>few</td>
<td>such</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRICKY PRONOUN EXERCISES

Which is correct?
The teacher chased its tail. The teacher chased its tail.

Which is a better use of which?
I cut down all the trees, which gave the family lots of firewood for the winter.
I cut down only the trees, which were marked with yellow ribbons.

Which is a better use of that?
I phoned everyone I knew that was in the fire area.
I phoned everyone I knew that made me feel a lot better.

Which is a better use of who rather than whom?
Who lives there?
For who am I holding this glass of wine?

*Tip: when you can replace it with he or she, use who.
When you can replace it with him or her, use whom.

Its = possessive pronoun
It’s = contraction of it is

That/ which: In these cases, use that when what comes after modifies what came before. Use which (with a preceding comma) when what comes after could be cut without altering the meaning of the sentence. We need that but which is optional.

Use who when referring to the subject of a sentence, whom when referring to the object.
#3 ACTIONS: VERBS

*English hinges on the energy of its verbs.*

Verbs either state action

Hank *sneezes.*

Jim *studies.*

Jane *throws* a baseball.

or define a state of being.

Carla *feels* great.

Tim *is comfortable* in his new graduate program.

Google “active verbs” to find lists upon lists of energetic verbs. *Explode! Optimize! De-segregate!*

Another TIP 😊

Come to *Building Better Sentences* to find ways to replace forms of “to be,” like *is, was, were,* as your go-to verbs.
SUBJECTS AND VERBS NEED TO AGREE

I WALK
YOU WALK
SHE, HE, IT, SARAH, CHINA = WALKS
WE WALK
THEY WALK

I AM
YOU ARE
SHE, HE, IT, SARAH, CHINA = IS
WE ARE
THEY ARE

To be, to have, and to do are the three irregular verbs.
Subject / Verb Agreement Exercises

SOLID or RB?

- I walks to the store.
- Everyone walks to the store.
- James and his friend walks to the store.
- China walk to the store.
- The United States walks to the store.
- Five minutes are a lot of time.
- Five minutes is a lot of time.
- The crowd roars as the musicians come on stage.
- The crowd roar as the musicians come on stage.

(See in-class handout and answer key)
Stay consistent with your verb tense and a TIP 😊

- Changing verb tense with no reason will confuse your reader.
- It’s fine to change if there is a reason.

Yesterday, I ran. Today, I jog. Tomorrow, I will fly.

You don’t need future tense when writing your papers/thesis (this chapter will analyze) except when doing a proposal. Change “this paper will analyze” to “this paper analyzes.”
#4 CONNECTION AND CONNECTORS: SENTENCE FORM

Subject = Actor
Verb = Action
(Object = what’s acted upon)
CLAUSES – THE BEST KEY TO UNDERSTANDING GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT SENTENCES

CLAUSE – group of two or more words with both subject and verb

TWO TYPES OF CLAUSES

- DEPENDENT CLAUSE (DC)
  - Like a dependent person, a DC cannot stand on its own.

- INDEPENDENT CLAUSE (IC)
  - Like an independent person, an IC can stand on its own.)
A SIMPLE SENTENCE IS ONE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

• IC.
  • I walk.
  • She walks to the store.
  • The United States Navy optimizes defense.
  • The United States Navy and the Marine Corps work together and find ways to optimize defense.

Note: Word or phrase, IC = still all one IC
  • Tomorrow, I walk to the store.
  • In the heat of the moment, she exercises patience.
CONNECTOR OF IDEAS: CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

• Unfortunately, I ran to the store.
• Luckily, they had cakes.
• Subsequently, I ate cakes.

Not a tropical disease!! 😊
### Connector of Ideas: Conjunctive Adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accordingly</th>
<th>Hence (no comma needed)</th>
<th>Similarly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additionally</td>
<td>Henceforth</td>
<td>Simultaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also</td>
<td>However</td>
<td>Specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatively</td>
<td>Incidentally</td>
<td>Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyway</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Subsequently</td>
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<td>Besides</td>
<td>Instead</td>
<td>Then</td>
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<td>Certainly</td>
<td>Likewise</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td>Meanwhile</td>
<td>Thus (no comma needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversely</td>
<td>Moreover</td>
<td>Ultimately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrarily</td>
<td>Namely</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>Nevertheless</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finally</td>
<td>Next</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Furthermore</td>
<td>Nonetheless</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now (no comma needed)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Otherwise</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What if I want to combine two ICs?

**TWO WAYS TO DO SO:**

- 1) Use a comma and a FANBOY (coordinating conjunction).
  - I walk to the store, and it rains.
- 2) Use a semi-colon (be sure what comes on either side can stand alone).
  - I walk to the store; it starts raining.
  - *You can also add a word (like a not a disease!), phrase, or dependent clause after the semi-colon to clarify the connection.*
  - I walk to the store; unfortunately, it starts raining.
RUN-ON SENTENCES

- While *Mastery Series: Punctuation* teaches more about proper punctuation, please note that these three ways of connecting two ICs are incorrect and known as run-on sentences:
  - I walk, it rains.
  - I walk it rains.
  - I walk and it rains.

CORRECT WAYS TO CONNECT TWO ICs

- I walk. It rains.
- I walk, and it rains.
- I walk; it rains.
REMEMBER DEPENDENT CLAUSES?

• They cannot stand on their own. A dependent clause alone is a sentence fragment.
  • *When* I walk to the store
  • *because* Jane sprinted down the hill
  • *after* the Admiral wrote his article
  • *although* the student completed her thesis
  • *whatever* you might think
### CONNECTORS: DEPENDENT MARKER WORDS
(a.k.a. subordinating conjunctions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>Since</td>
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<tr>
<td>Although</td>
<td>Though</td>
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<td>As</td>
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<td>As if</td>
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<td>Because</td>
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<td>Even if</td>
<td>Whenever</td>
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<td>Even though</td>
<td>Whether</td>
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<td>If</td>
<td>While</td>
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<td>In order to</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What if I want to use a DC? How can I combine it with an IC?

- DC, IC.
  - When I woke up today, I smelled coffee.
  - Because we signed the treaty, peace lasted for 1400 years.
- IC DC. (no comma)
  - I smelled coffee when I woke up today.
  - Peace lasted for 1400 years because we signed the treaty.

*Decide which to use by what comes before and after.*
1. *When you drive a car you must carry liability insurance, which pays for any damage or injury that you may inflict on others.

2. *Insurance in some places is cheaper, than it is in others.

3. *How much insurance costs depends on how congested traffic is in the area.

4. *If you live in a rural community, you probably pay much less than you would, if you lived in a city.

5. *An unmarried male who is under twenty-five pays the highest premium, because statistics show that he is the worst risk.

6. *Drivers who have a record of accidents must also pay a high premium; since they have cost their insurance companies a great deal of money.

7. If you are properly insured it is a very good idea to drive to and around Lake Tahoe.

8. I particularly recommend the East shore of Lake Tahoe but if you are going during Winter then you might prefer Kirkwood and the West shore.
Thank you! You rock!

Questions?