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Rx: Punctuation and Sentence Structure

Punctuation and Sentence Structure: Lesson PSS 1: Commas

Punctuation and Sentence Structure PSS 2: Possessive Apostrophe

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**Punctuation and Sentence Structure Lesson PSS1: Commas**

**There are around 16 comma rules, but all you really have to remember is LIES. Here’s what LIES means:**

**L is for LISTS. A question that always comes up: Do I need the comma before the last item in a series? It’s more formal to use it, so, *yes*.**

**I is for INTRODUCTIONS: Use a comma after any word or group of words that precedes (introduces) the subject of the sentence.**

**E is for EXTRA INFORMATION: Any word or group of words that could be removed from the sentence without losing the sense of wholeness should be set off by commas.**

**S is for SIDE-BY-SIDE SENTENCES: Whenever you join two groups of words that could each be a sentence by themselves, you use a comma. The sentence that you just read is an example of this rule.**

**(The LIES rules don’t include the commas that are used with quotation marks. The comma goes outside the first set of quotation marks; the comma goes inside the end set of quotation marks.)**

**Now, you:**

**Look through your paper. Find your comma mistakes. Rewrite the sentence that you punctuated incorrectly. Tell which LIES you are applying.**

**NOTE: The only thing worse than omitting a needed comma is including one that is not needed. Extra commas slow the reader down. Use a comma only when you have a reason.**

**NEVER SEPARATE THE SUBJECT FROM THE VERB OR THE VERB FROM THE DIRECT OBJECT WITH A SINGLE COMMA.**

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**Punctuation and Sentence Structure** **Lesson PSS2: Possessive Apostrophes**

**Use an apostrophe to indicate possession.**

**Lots of people have difficulty with the apostrophe s (‘s) concept.**

**Actually, it’s simple:**

**The bear**

**The bear has breakfast.**

**That breakfast is the breakfast of the bear.**

**The bear’s breakfast (is the breakfast of the bear).**

**Anytime you can transform a phrase into an “of” phrase, as above, you need to indicate that a noun is being put into the possessive case. You put a noun into the possessive case with ‘s.**

**Try these:**

**The fur of the bear:**

**The eyes of the bear:**

**The feet of the bear:**

**The forest of the bear:**

**The campgrounds of the bear:**

**Now, try the reverse.**

**The bear’s mother:**

**Papa Bear’s porridge:**

**Mama Bear’s chair:**

**Baby Bear’s nice soft bed:**

**Now, go to your paper. Write the possessive phrase that you used and show how it looks in both forms (as ‘s form and then as an “of” phrase).**

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**Punctuation and Sentence Structure Lesson PSS 3: Fixing run-on sentences**

**When two sentences (independent clauses) want to get married, there are two ways in which they may be joined in holy sentence matrimony.**

**The first way is by using a semicolon. Simply insert a semicolon where you now have comma.**

**Choose the semicolon marriage when the two sentences are very closely related and grammatically similar, like this:**

***Sometimes, you feel like a nut; sometimes, you don’t.***

**The other way for two sentences to get married is to use the same comma that you now have, but to strengthen the relationship between the two sentences with one of the following conjunctions: *and, or, so, but*.**

**Your sentences could, of course, decide not to get married at all. In that case, just separate them with a period.**

**Or, sentences might just decide to consume each other. Reword**

**Your sentences so that they become one sentence. Eliminate some words. You may need *which, when, or because* to accomplish this reduction in words.**

**Now, you:**

Go through your paper, looking for sentences in which the parts (clauses), are not properly married. Use one of the above methods to join them in holy sentence matrimony, or separate them, or combine them.

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**Punctuation and Sentence Structure Lesson PSS 4: How to Fix a Sentence Fragment**

**A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. Usually, you can fix it by simply attaching it to its previous sentence.**

**There’s a very easy way to know whether a group of words can stand alone as a complete sentence. If you can put the words “It is true that…” in front of a group of words and have it sound complete, then that group of words is a complete sentence.**

**Now, you:**

**Identify the sentence fragments in your paper. First, put “It is true that…” in front of those words. You will find that the words can’t stand alone as a complete sentence when you put “It is true that…” in front of them. There are two ways to fix a sentence fragment:**

1. **Add more words until the words pass the “It is true that…” test.**
2. **Attach the sentence fragment to its previous (or next) sentence.**

**Write your corrected sentences.**