

Language Arts 9

Grammar/Conventions

This section contains handouts and assignments related to Grammar and Conventions (“The Rules”):

- Parts of Speech
- Grammar Punk
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling



Grammar Terms

Verb: A *verb* is the word that expresses the action in a sentence.

Example: I swim. (What do I do? I swim. So *swim* is the verb. Get it?)

Subject: A *subject* is the person or thing that performs the action expressed by the verb.

Example: I swim. (Who swims? I do. So *I* is the subject. Get it?)

Phrase: A *phrase* is a group of words that does not contain both a subject and a verb

Example: swimming in the pool (Who is swimming? No subject here. Get it?)

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

Example: I swim. (I = subject; swim = verb – Of course this clause could be part of a larger collection of words: “When I swim...” or “I swim in the lake...”)

Independent Clause: An *independent clause* is a group of words that contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought, so it may stand alone as a complete sentence.

Example: I swim three times a week.

Dependent Clause: A *dependent clause* is a group of words that contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause by itself is *not* a complete sentence; it is *dependent* on other words to be part of a complete sentence.

Example: Since I swim three times a week... (Not a complete sentence)

Dependent Marker: A *dependent marker* is a word added to the beginning of an independent clause that makes it into a dependent clause. Here are some: *after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while*. (Dependent marker + independent clause = dependent clause.)

Example: Since I swim three times a week... (*Since* is the dependent marker.)

Independent Marker: An *independent marker* is a connecting word used at the beginning of an independent clause. These words can always begin a sentence that can stand alone. Here are some: *also, consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, and therefore*. They are usually followed by a comma.

Example: I swim three times a week; consequently, I have big lungs.

Example: Also, I am always exhausted.

Coordinating Conjunction: *Coordinating conjunctions* connect words, phrases, and clauses. There are seven of them: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**. Remember them by thinking of this acronym: FANBOYS -- for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.)

Keep this page at the front of the Grammar/Conventions section in your English binder.

Punctuation Rules

(These are the ones we'll use when we play Grammar Punk™.)

Commas

1. Use a comma between two independent clauses (complete thoughts) that are joined by a conjunction. (See *Punctuation Pattern #3.*)
Example: I went to the swimming pool, and I swam twenty laps.
2. Use a comma to separate adjectives that modify the same word. (See *Other Punctuation Rules.*)
Example: The cool, blue water in the pool is inviting.
Example: The water in the pool is cool, blue, and inviting.
3. Use commas to separate non-essential interrupting elements in a sentence. (See *Other Punctuation Rules.*)
Example: The pool, usually crystal clear, was murky this morning.
4. Use commas to separate items in a series. (See *Other Punctuation Rules.*)
Example: I take a swimsuit, goggles, and a towel to the pool.
Example: I swim twenty laps on Tuesday, thirty laps on Thursday, and forty laps on Saturday.
5. Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause. (See *Punctuation Pattern #6.*)
Introductory word: Generally, I swim twenty laps every morning.
Introductory phrase: Hoping to stay in shape, I swim twenty laps every morning.
Introductory (dependent) clause: Because I hope to stay in shape, I swim twenty laps every morning.
6. Use commas (and quotation marks) to set off a speaker's exact words (direct quotation) from the rest of a sentence.
Example: "I like to swim," said the bald man.
Example: The bald man said, "I like to swim."
Example: "I like," said the bald man, "to swim."
7. Use a comma to set off a phrase at the end of a sentence that refers back to the beginning or middle of the sentence *or* that indicates a distinct pause or shift. (See *Punctuation Pattern #7.*)
Example: I swim twenty laps every morning, hoping to stay in shape.
Example: The bald man hung on the edge of the pool, panting heavily.
Example: He looks like he is going to pass out, doesn't he?
Example: He is pale and motionless, not actually unconscious.

Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon to join independent clauses. (See *Punctuation Pattern #4.*)
Example: I went to the swimming pool; I swam twenty laps.
2. Use a semicolon before an independent marker that connects independent clauses. (See *Punctuation Pattern #5.*)
Example: I went to the swimming pool; however, I did not swim very far.
3. Use a semicolon to separate items in a series that already contain commas.
Example: I have been swimming in Layton, Utah; San Diego, California; and Greeley, Colorado.

Colons

1. Use a colon at the end of sentence to emphasize another word, phrase, clause, or list.* (See *Punctuation Pattern #8.*)
Example: There is one main benefit of swimming: health.
Example: I have a simple motto: "Born to swim."
Example: I swim for many reasons: health, endurance, strength, and fun.
Example: I took these items to the pool: towel, swimsuit, goggles, and flippers.
*A complete sentence (independent clause) must come before the colon!
2. Use a colon before an announcement, instruction, or directive.
Caution: No running! Warning: Do not drink the water!