



**It's not you.
It's your grammar.**



USAGE MANUAL

English Department
Swampscott High School
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PHILOSOPHY AND TERMS

Why do I need to know grammar and usage?

This is a question we have heard since the dawn of the usage program at Swampscott High School. The answer is a mixture of the practical and the philosophical. Here are the advantages studying grammar and usage have for students while they are in high school, college, and the workplace:

- The current PSAT and SAT both have a grammar and usage portion
- Many colleges are requiring students to take grammar courses
- Proficiency in grammar will translate to better writing and speaking skills
- The current national and state standards list language skills including grammar as critical to student success
- Being able to write and communicate clearly is an essential real-world skill that has important implications to your career readiness.
- Students have an influence on the English language just as much as adults. You should be part of the conversation.
- Grammar counts in all English classes. Your teacher will assess you every quarter even if you don't like our practical list of reasons. ☺

Here are some terms to help with studying grammar:

Antecedent: a word or a group of words that to which a pronoun refers.

Colloquialism: a word or expression that is customarily restricted to conversation or familiar letters. While it is proper or even effective on occasion, it is definitely unacceptable in formal writing.

Examples:	<i>Colloquial</i>	<i>Proper</i>
	Exam	examination
	Faze	daunt
	Put in	spend
	Cute	amusing, vivacious
	Bunch	set, group
	Deal	transaction
	A lot of	a great deal, much many
	Wire	telegraph
	Mighty	very

Clause: a sentence inside a sentence.

EX: When I get there, I will call you.

Phrase: a group of words that do not express a complete thought.

EX: a good boy, in the morning

Slang: A word that is newly coined for the purpose of vividness and has not yet been accepted by the authority of well-educated people or by dictionary authorities.

Slang has its place even in good writing, provided it is fresh, expressive and to the point. When used properly and sparingly, it may add color and force to writing and speech. However, it must be used only for a desired effect. The trouble with most slang expressions is that they go out of current use so quickly that they soon become meaningless and therefore pointless, except to the person employing them.

Examples: *Slang*

Proper

Dumb	stupid
Ritzy	wealthy, rich
Hard-boiled	tough
Hullabaloo	commotion
Lousy	bad
Pain in the neck	annoying

Parts of speech:

Noun

Verb

Pronoun

Adjective

Adverb

Preposition

Conjunction

Interjection

Reflection:

What are your questions to this point? Do you know your parts of speech? What ways work best for you when studying grammar?

Term I

Test Date: _____

Spotlight on Verbs

Agreement: subject /verb

Verb tenses

Mood of verbs

Irregular Verbs

Faulty Diction: ability – different

Common Misuses of Words: accept – anxious

See this link if you need a refresher on verbs

<http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/verb.htm>

Verb Agreement

1. A verb should agree with its subject in number. A word (subject) that refers to ONE person, place, thing, or idea is SINGULAR in number. A word that refers to more than one is PLURAL.

EXAMPLES:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
student	students
princess	princesses
child	children
deer	deer
it	they

2. Additions, such as phrases in apposition, connected with the main subject by *with*, *as well as*, *together with*, *in additions to*, etc., do not affect the grammatical number of the subject.

EX: Not a single *one* of the thousands who came with a blue ticket *was* admitted.

EX: The *music*, together with the film, *is* stimulating.

EX: *I*, his accountant, *am* expected to verify his statement.

3. Collective nouns may be singular or plural in, depending on its meaning in a sentence. A collective noun takes a singular verb if it refers to persons or things as a group, that is, when it expresses a single idea, one of unanimity; if thought of as separate individuals, it takes a plural verb.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS
army, class, family, group, public, assembly, club, fleet, herd, swarm, audience, committee, flock, jury, team

EX: The *committee* (that is, as one unit) *is* submitting its recommendation.

EX: The *jury* (that is, as separate individuals) *have* disagreed on their verdict

EX: The *flock* (as separate individuals) *are* running in different directions.

4. A fraction is considered singular in number if the object of the prepositional phrase which the fraction follows is singular; it is plural if the object is plural.

EX: Half of (prep. phrase) the *meat was* frozen solid.

EX: Two-fifths of the *papers were* blue in color.

EX: Two-thirds of the *time has* already passed.

5. These indefinite pronouns are singular and require a singular verb.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS: Singular
anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone, something

EX: *Neither* of them *desires* to speak for the candidate.

Nobody ever *wants* to get a root canal.

These indefinite pronouns are plural and require a plural verb.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS: Plural
few, both, many, several

EX: *Several* of the runners *are exercising*.

Few that I know *have qualified* for the tournament.

In sentences beginning with *There is* or *There are* or *Here* or *Where*, the number of the verb should agree with the subject. In sentences beginning with *there is*, *there are*, *here*, or *where*, the subject usually follows the verb.

EX: Here *come* (*verb*) *Margie* and her *friend*. (compound subject)

EX: There *are* many *books* still waiting to be written.

EX: There's the snow-capped *mountain*!

6. A verb agrees with its subject rather than with its predicate nominative. (The predicate nominative renames the subject)

EX: The *highlight* of the trip *is* the visits to Yellowstone and the National Glacier Park.

EX: *Automobiles are* the largest part of the exhibit.

7. When two subjects are joined by *and*, the number of the verb is usually plural.

EX: *Sam* and his best *friend* *Eric are* leaving for vacation.

Rhyme, rhythm, and imagery help poets express their feelings.

8. When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb agrees with the subject nearer to the verb. {Note: Remember, *either/or* belong together and *neither/nor* belong together.}

EX: Neither the *book* nor the *movie is* interesting.

EX: Neither the *book* nor the *movies are* interesting.

EX: Either *they* or *he is* responsible.

EX: Either *he* or *they are* responsible.

9. In a relative clause following an expression like *one of the best*, *one of those*, *the first of many*, the verb is plural because it agrees in number with its antecedent.

EX: Bayard is one of the *best candidates* who *have* yet thrown their hats into the ring.

EX: She is one of *those* who *write* letters better than talk.

Tense of a Verb

Tense indicates time. Each verb has three principal parts: the *present*, *past*, and *past participle*. All six tenses are formed from these principal parts. The past and past participle of regular verbs are formed by adding *ed* to the present form. The past and past participle of irregular verbs are usually different words; however, a few have the same form in all three principal parts.

- **Present tense** expresses action that is happening at the present time or action that happens continually, regularly.

Ex: In September, sophomores smirk and joke about the “little freshies.”

- **Past tense** expresses action that is completed at a particular time in the past.

Ex: They forgot that just ninety days separated them from freshman status.

- **Future tense** expresses action that will take place in the future.

Ex: They will remember this fact in three years when they will be freshmen again.

- **Present perfect tense** expresses action that began in the past but continues in the present or is completed in the present.

Ex: Our boat has weathered worse storms than this one.

- **Past perfect tense** expresses an action in the past that occurs before another past action.

Ex: They reported, wrongly, that the hurricane had missed the island.

- **Future perfect tense** expresses action that will begin in the future and be completed by a specific time in the future.

Ex: By this time tomorrow, the hurricane will have smashed into the coast.

Mood

1. Subjunctive mood: The subjunctive mood is used in instances of doubt, uncertainty, desire (a wish), or condition contrary to fact

EX {Subjunctive}: If I *were* the leader of the group (which I am not), I would start
the mission at once.

EX {Subjunctive}: I wish I *were* the victor!

EX {Subjunctive}: Alfred looks as if he *were* worrying over his debt.

Irregular Verbs

PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
am, be	was, were	been
begin	began	begun
bring	brought	brought
burst	burst	burst
dive	dove	dived
drag	dragged	dragged
drink	drank	drunk
drown	drowned	drowned
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten
go	went	gone
hang (execute)	hanged	hanged
hang (suspend)	hung	hung
hide	hid	hid, hidden
lay (set)	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lie (recline)	lay	lain
lie (deceive)	lied	lied
raise	raised	raised
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
see	saw	seen
shake	shook	shaken
shine (light)	shone, shined	shone, shined
shine (polish)	shined	shined
show	showed	shown
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang, sung	sung
sink	sank, sunk	sunk
slay	slew	slain
spring	sprang, sprung	sprung
strive	strove	striven
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
wake	woke, waked	woken, waked
weave	wove, weaved	woven, weaved
wring	wrung	wrung

Faulty Diction – Term I

AGREE One agrees *to* a plan and *with* a person.

Examples: We agreed *to* her proposal

I agree *with* Courtney.

ALL-ROUND should not be confused with *all-around*, which is improper usage.

Example: Tracy is an *all-round* great person.

AT ABOUT should not be used for *about*. The word *at* is redundant.

Example: The mail arrives *about* (not *at about*) noon.

BACK OF should not be confused with *behind*. *Back of* denotes “the rear area of.”

Examples: The pitcher is *behind* the mound.

The checks are in *back of* (in the rear area of) the safe.

CANNOT SEEM is a colloquial expression and not acceptable in written language. It should be replaced by *seem unable to*.

INCORRECT: Henry *cannot seem* to master French verbs.

CORRECT: Henry *seems unable* to master French verbs.

COULD OF is not an acceptable replacement for **COULD HAVE**.

Example: We could have (not could of) reached the summit had it not begun to rain.

COUPLE refers to two people.

Examples: There were several (not *a couple*) people at the meeting.

A group (not *a couple*) of children went to the park.

Three married couples were dancing on the gymnasium floor.

DIFFERENT is preferably followed by the preposition *from*, not *than*.

Example: This version is different *from* (not *different than*) any other.

Note: In order to avoid awkwardness, the use of *different than* is permissible when the object is a clause.

Example: The revised composition is considerably *different than* what it looked like last week.



Common Misuses of Words- Term 1

accept – except

accept- to receive what is offered

Ex. Tommy's mother **accepted** the offer to be a part of the pre-school reading group.

except- to exclude (verb)

Ex. Terrible Tommy was **excepted** from the reading group after screaming for hours.

except- with the exception of (preposition)

Ex. All the children stayed in the reading group **except** for Tommy.

advice – advise

advice- counsel; suggestions

Ex. What **advice** would you give to a middle school student about high school?

advise- to give counsel or to make a recommendation

Ex. I would **advise** a middle school student to use an assignment notebook.

affect – effect

affect- to influence in some measure (verb)

Ex. The novel *The Hours* **affected** me strongly.

effect- to bring about; to accomplish (verb)

Ex. The hurricane **effected** many changes to the landscape along the beach.

effect- result (noun)

Ex. What **effects** of the hurricane are evident on King's Beach?

aggravate – annoy

aggravate- to make worse or more intense

Ex. The peroxide **aggravated** the wound on the boy's leg.

annoy- to irritate

Ex. I was **annoyed** as I awoke to the sound of the lawn mower outside my window.

all ready – already

all ready- fully prepared

Ex. The technician was **all ready** to install the cable modem.

already- beforehand; by this time

Ex. I have **already** completed my homework.

all together – altogether

all together- in a group

Ex. The puppies were huddled **all together** in the corner of the room.

altogether- entirely; completely

Ex. During the thunderstorm, we lost the TV reception **altogether**.

allude to – refer to

allude to- to refer to a matter indirectly

Ex. My grandfather often **alludes to** his experiences in World War II.

refer to- to refer to a matter openly and directly

Ex. For the first time, my humble grandfather **referred to** his war medal of honor.

amend – emend

amend- to alter; to change

Ex. It requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate to **amend** certain laws.

emend- to correct

Ex. It takes hours of writing revision to **emend** errors of organization and word choice.

among – between

among- used in referring to more than two

Ex. The general decision **among** the twenty members was to leave early.

between- used in referring to only two

Ex. Choosing **between** the two flavors of ice cream proved a difficult task.

anxious – eager

anxious- uneasy or painful with suspense

Ex. I am **anxious** about my dentist visit tomorrow.

eager- pleasantly enthusiastic

Ex. I am **eager** to receive my bonus at work.

