

MORE EXAMPLES: 20 Common Errors

ERROR 1: The comma after introductory words is missing.

Example 1

Wrong: After working all night we finally finished the project.

Right: After working all night, we finally finished the project.

Example 2

Wrong: If you want to buy a car you must first save money.

Right: If you want to buy a car, you must first save money.

ERROR 2: It's not clear to whom a pronoun refers.

Example 1

Wrong: Both Rachel and Emily wanted to wear **her** dress to the party.

Right: Both Rachel and Emily wanted to wear **Emily's** dress to the party.

Example 2

Wrong: Kevin couldn't wait to tell Andre that he had been accepted into the program.

Right: Kevin couldn't wait to tell Andre that **Andre** had been accepted into the program.

ERROR 3: The comma in a compound sentence is missing.

Example 1

Wrong: We wanted to buy Jane a present today but the store was closed.

Right: We wanted to buy Jane a present today, but the store was closed.

Example 2

Wrong: Are you going to Rhiana's play tonight or will you go tomorrow?

Right: Are you going to Rhiana's play tonight, or will you go tomorrow?

ERROR 4: The wrong word is used.

Example 1

Wrong: She **excepted** the award with a smile.

Right: She **accepted** the award with a smile.

Example 2

Wrong: Renee studied harder for the test **then** Ryan did.

Right: Renee studied harder for the test **than** Ryan did

MORE EXAMPLES: 20 Common Errors, continued

ERROR 5: Commas are missing around a clause that is not necessary for the sentence's meaning.

Example 1

Wrong: Oscar my father's Irish terrier dug a hole in the garden.

Right: Oscar, my father's Irish terrier, dug a hole in the garden.

Example 2

Wrong: My sister the tall one has red hair.

Right: My sister, the tall one, has red hair.

ERROR 6: The verb endings are wrong or missing.

Example 1

Wrong: Karin **use** two coats of paint to make the color brighter.

Right: Karin **used** two coats of paint to make the color brighter.

Example 2

Wrong: Tyree **learn** to give speeches by **given** them.

Right: Tyree **learned** to give speeches by **giving** them.

ERROR 7: The wrong preposition is used or a preposition is missing.

Example 1

Wrong: Lizzy met me **on** the coffee shop on Kendall Street.

Right: Lizzy met me **at** the coffee shop on Kendall Street.

Example 2

Wrong: I plan to go the beach this weekend.

Right: I plan to go **to** the beach this weekend.

ERROR 8: A comma is used to separate two complete sentences.

Example 1

Wrong: Amy wrote a new song, she will perform it tonight.

Right: Amy wrote a new song. She will perform it tonight.

Example 2

Wrong: Don rescued a dog from the local shelter, he thinks the dog is a Labrador mix.

Right: Don rescued a dog from the local shelter; he thinks the dog is a Labrador mix.

MORE EXAMPLES: 20 Common Errors, continued

ERROR 9: An apostrophe is missing in the possessive pronoun.

Example 1

Wrong: Peters car broke down yesterday, so he had to take the bus to work.

Right: Peter's car broke down yesterday, so he had to take the bus to work.

Example 2

Wrong: I borrowed Kristins pen to sign the petition.

Right: I borrowed Kristin's pen to sign the petition.

ERROR 10: Different verb tenses are used to tell about the same action.

Example 1

Wrong: I **walk** outside and **opened** my umbrella.

Right: I **walked** outside and **opened** my umbrella.

Example 2

Wrong: Micah went to the library and **checks** out the book.

Right: Micah went to the library and **checked** out the book.

ERROR 11: The point of view changes and is not consistent.

Example 1

Wrong: If **someone wants** to join the club, **you** must first sign up.

Right: If **you want** to join the club, **you** must first sign up.

Example 2

Wrong: When **people** have a bad feeling about something **they** are about to do, **we** should pay attention to it.

Right: When **people** have a bad feeling about something **they** are about to do, **they** should pay attention to it.

ERROR 12: The writing has sentence fragments that don't express a complete thought.

Example 1

Wrong: **Even when we tried to pack light.**

Right: Even when we tried to pack light, our luggage was still quite heavy.

Example 2

Wrong: Jada overslept. **Missed her train.**

Right: Jada overslept and missed her train.

MORE EXAMPLES: 20 Common Errors, continued

ERROR 13: The verbs are in the wrong tense or form.

Example 1

Wrong: Robin has **try** to knit a sweater before.

Right: Robin has **tried** to knit a sweater before.

Example 2

Wrong: He **gone** to work late this morning.

Right: He **went** to work late this morning.

ERROR 14: The subject and verb in the sentence don't agree.

Example 1

Wrong: Chiara and Thomas **is** going to the prom.

Right: Chiara and Thomas **are** going to the prom.

Example 2

Wrong: Either Paul or Tevon **are** driving to the game.

Right: Either Paul or Tevon **is** driving to the game.

ERROR 15: The commas are missing for items in a series.

Example 1

Wrong: Alison can speak French Italian and German.

Right: Alison can speak French, Italian, and German.

Example 2

Wrong: In my house there are two dogs three cats and five goldfish.

Right: In my house there are two dogs, three cats, and five goldfish.

ERROR 16: A noun and the related pronoun do not agree in number.

Example 1

Wrong: **Each student** needs to make sure **they have** the right books for class.

Right: **Each student** needs to make sure **he or she has** the right books for class.

Example 2

Wrong: **Those guys** didn't call me last night. **He** must have forgotten we were supposed to meet.

Right: **Those guys** didn't call me last night. **They** must have forgotten we were supposed to meet.

MORE EXAMPLES: 20 Common Errors, continued

ERROR 17: Commas are used to separate an essential clause from the rest of the sentence. A clause is essential if it can't be taken out without changing the basic meaning of the sentence.

Example 1

Wrong: Everyone, who wants to try out for the team, should meet on the basketball court after school.

Right: Everyone who wants to try out for the team should meet on the basketball court after school.

Example 2

Wrong: The door, that was painted blue, was the right one to open.

Right: The door that was painted blue was the right one to open.

ERROR 18: Two or more sentences are joined together without punctuation to form a run-on sentence.

Example 1

Wrong: Hugo needed spending money he got a part-time job.

Right: Hugo needed spending money, **so** he got a part-time job.

Example 2

Wrong: I asked for a second piece of pie she gave me all the leftovers!

Right: I asked for a second piece of pie. She gave me all the leftovers!

ERROR 19: A modifier is misplaced.

Example 1

Wrong: His clothes were slovenly and he needed his hair cut **badly**.

Right: His clothes were slovenly and he **badly** needed his hair cut.

Example 2

Wrong: Busy with a bone I hardly attracted the dog's attention as I rode up.

Right: As I rode up, I hardly attracted the attention of the dog, **busy with a bone**.

ERROR 20: Its and it's are misused.

Example 1

Wrong: The iguana sat on a branch and blinked **it's** eyes at us.

Right: The iguana sat on a branch and blinked **its** eyes at us.

Example 2

Wrong: Its up to you what topic you select for your research paper.

Right: It's up to you what topic you select for your research paper.
