

The marriage of two sentences.

When you join two sentences, you have two options:

You can join them with a conjunction + a comma.

You can join them with a semicolon.

Using a comma alone creates a comma splice.

Using nothing creates a run-on sentence.

Plurals.

Plurals are formed in three ways: you add *-s*, *-es*, or *-ies*, or the word doesn't change (moose), or the word changes entirely (mouse to mice).

The only time you use an apostrophe + "s" to form a plural is when you are writing about a) single letters (P's and Q's), b) single numbers (1's and 2's), or c) an acronym with periods (the M.B.A.'s).

Colon don'ts.

Yes, colons often start a list. However, never put a colon after include, includes, including, or for example.

Noun-pronoun agreement.

For precise communication, the noun drives the bus: a singular noun requires a singular verb and singular pronoun. This sentence is confusing and incorrect: Each author must mind their manners. "Each" author is singular, so you must write "his or her." An easy workaround would be "All authors must mind their manners."

Tricky nouns include audience, company, team, crew, and staff. These nouns are treated as singular nouns and require a singular verb form and the singular pronoun it. Again, an easy workaround would be to rephrase if necessary: audience members, listeners, employees, staffers, and participants.

Don't be trendy.

Guard against overuse of trite words and expressions (the phrase "thought leader") comes to mind.

Reduce or eliminate the use of repetitive words that rarely add value: just, some, really, and very are good examples.