Outline

Logistics
Writing Mechanics
Statement Assignment
Writing Process
### Logistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Personal statement</td>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Peer Review of Statement Draft</td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Tutorial and Pitch</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 4</strong></td>
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<td>Post your wikipedia topic to EEE class bulletin board, Bring Statement Draft to class</td>
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Mechanics of writing
In **linguistics**, **grammar** is the set of **structural** rules that govern the composition of **clauses**, **phrases**, and **words** in any given **natural language**.

Given a well-defined set of rules, we can ask the question: is this a valid sentence?
Grammar

Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>VP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Aux</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>VP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Det</td>
<td>NOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>NOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP</td>
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<td>Verb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Det → that | this | a | the
Noun → book | flight | meal | man
Verb → book | include | read
Aux → does

Parse tree

- S
  - NP
    - Det
      - The
    - NOM
      - Noun
      - man
  - VP
    - Verb
      - read
    - NP
      - Det
        - this
      - NOM
        - Noun
        - book
Example

Polly loves cake more than me

Polly loves cake more than I
Example

Polly loves cake more than me
  Polly loves cake more than she loves me

Polly loves cake more than I
  Polly loves cake more than I do

Subject/object pronouns are different (I/me)
Example

They have two sons who are doctors.

They have two sons, who are doctors.
Example

They have two sons who are doctors.

(Restrictive clause; they may have other sons)

They have two sons, who are doctors.

(Nonrestrictive clause; they have two sons)

Defining/restrictive clauses are not denoted by commas

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/645/03/
A **style guide** or **style manual** is a set of standards for the writing and design of documents, either for general use or for a specific publication, organization or field. The implementation of a style guide provides uniformity in style and formatting of a document.

The **Manual of Style** (often abbreviated **MoS** or **MOS**) is a **style guide** for Wikipedia articles that encourages editors to follow consistent usage and formatting.
Why are these details important?

• Some sentences “sound” wrong
  -In working world, proper sentence construction makes you appear credible and authoritative
  -Unfair handicap for second-language English speakers (work twice as hard!)

• Consistent style is easier to read
  -Wikipedia articles are easier to understand because they “sound” the same
  -Aids in communication

• Make every word count
  -Words will be more persuasive if chosen carefully
  -High “signal to noise” ratio
Examples

I have been thinking about going overseas and visit India for a vacation, and some missionary work though my church.
Examples

Make sure ‘and’ lists agree

I have been thinking about going overseas and visit India for a vacation, and some missionary work through my church.

I have been thinking about going overseas and visiting India for a vacation, and performing some missionary work through my church.
Examples

Eliminate unnecessary ‘be’ verbs

I have been thinking about going overseas and visit India for a vacation, and some missionary work through my church.

I have been thinking about going overseas and visiting India for a vacation, and performing some missionary work through my church.

I plan to visit India and perform some missionary work through my church.
Examples

Do #2 and #3 imply different things?

I have been thinking about going overseas and visit India for a vacation, and some missionary work through my church.

I have been thinking about going overseas and visiting India for a vacation, and performing some missionary work through my church.

I plan to visit India and perform some missionary work through my church.
Examples

Do #2 and #3 imply different things?

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I plan to visit India and perform some missionary work through my church.

http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html
Examples

The reason that I like to be his student is not because he grades easily or he is the favorite professor on RateMyProfessor.com. That is because I like his teaching styles.
The reason that I like to be his student is not because he grades easily or he is the favorite professor on RateMyProfessor.com. That is because I like his teaching styles.

I like Professor X not because he is popular or grades easily, but because his lectures are interesting.
Examples

I loved to go to his class everyday because he made his lecture so interesting also with the homework, and taught me so much information that I did not have a chance to learned or any ideas on how to start.
Examples
Clarify meaning, list items in regular order, use consistent tense

I loved to go to his class everyday because he made his lecture so interesting also with the homework, and taught me so much information that I did not have a chance to learned or any ideas on how to start.

I enjoyed his class because his lectures were interesting, his homeworks were relevant, and he was able to teach difficult material in a clear manner.
For the last couple of years all I have been doing is working and attending summer school. Since this is my last year of college I thought, hey why not do something I’ll never have the chance to do again. So I did it. I went to study abroad in India.
Examples

Informal tone

For the last couple of years all I have been doing is working and attending summer school. Since this is my last year of college I thought, hey why not do something I’ll never have the chance to do again. So I did it. I went to study abroad in India.

Typically I attend summer school during my summer break. Since this is my last year of college, I decided to try something new and instead studied abroad in India.
Strunk and White’s ‘The Elements of Style’
Memorize first 18 rules

II ELEMENTARY RULES OF USAGE
1. Form the possessive singular of nouns with ’s .......................... 3
2. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last .............................................. 4
3. Enclose parenthetic expressions between commas .......................... 4
4. Place a comma before and or but introducing an independent clause .................. 6
5. Do not join independent clauses by a comma ................................. 7
6. Do not break sentences in two .................................................... 8
7. A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject ................................................................. 9
8. Divide words at line-ends, in accordance with their formation and pronunciation .. 10

III ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION
9. Make the paragraph the unit of composition: one paragraph to each topic ........ 13
10. As a rule, begin each paragraph with a topic sentence; end it in conformity with the beginning ...................................................... 15
11. Use the active voice ..................................................................... 18
12. Put statements in positive form .................................................... 20
13. Omit needless words .................................................................. 21
14. Avoid a succession of loose sentences ......................................... 23
15. Express co-ordinate ideas in similar form ..................................... 24
16. Keep related words together .......................................................... 25
17. In summaries, keep to one tense .................................................. 27
18. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end .......................... 28

Note: All rules meant to the broken; but these will help your text “sound right”
When we grade your written mechanics, we will evaluate **clarity** and **conciseness**.
Clarity

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/600/1/
Common Clarity Concerns

• Misplaced modifiers
• Dangling modifiers
• Parallel Structures
• Passive Voice
Misplaced Modifiers

• Modifier
  – Describes, clarifies, or gives more detail about other words in a sentence
  – Can be a word or group of words (phrase)

• Misplaced modifier
  – A modifier in the wrong place in a sentence
  – Makes sentences awkward, confusing, or (unintentionally) humorous
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

- Do these sentences have different meanings? Why?
  - The dog under the tree bit Carrie.
  - The dog bit Carrie under the tree.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

• How can you correct this sentence?
  – *Buffy called her adorable kitten opening the can of food and filled the bowl.*

• Process:
  – What is the modifier?
  – What word does it describe, clarify, or give more detail about?
  – Where should the modifier be placed?
    » Modifiers go next to the word or phrase they modify.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

• How can you correct this sentence?
  – Buffy called her adorable kitten opening the can of food and filled the bowl.

• Process:
  – What is the modifier?
  – What word does it describe, clarify, or give more detail about?
  – Where should the modifier be placed?
    » Modifiers go next to the word or phrase they modify.
  – Opening the can of food, Buffy called her adorable kitten and filled the bowl.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

• Misplaced modifier:

  – Portia rushed to the store loaded with cash to buy Guy’s birthday present.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

• Misplaced modifier:
  
  – Portia rushed to the store loaded with cash to buy Guy’s birthday present.

• Correctly placed modifier:

  – Portia, loaded with cash, rushed to the store to buy Guy’s birthday present.
• One-word modifiers that limit can easily be misplaced. These include:
  – *Almost, even, exactly, hardly, just, merely, nearly, only, scarcely* and
    *simply*

• To be clear, place the modifier immediately before the word or phrase you want
  to limit.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

– Almost everyone in the class passed the calculus exam.

– Everyone in the class almost passed the calculus exam.
Which sentence indicates that everyone in the class failed the exam?

- Almost everyone in the class passed the calculus exam.

- Everyone in the class almost passed the calculus exam.
– Jean-Luc nearly earned $100.

– Jean-Luc earned nearly $100.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

• Which sentence indicates that Jean-Luc earned some money?

  – Jean-Luc nearly earned $100.

  – Jean-Luc earned nearly $100.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

- Susan only drank a cup of tea.
- Susan drank only a cup of tea.

(I still make this mistake)
• Which sentence indicates that Susan did not drink anything else?

  – Susan only drank a cup of tea.
  – Susan drank only a cup of tea.
Misplaced Modifiers (cont)

- Review
  - Misplaced Modifier:
    - modifier in the wrong place in a sentence

- Process to correct misplaced modifiers:
  - What is the modifier?
  - What word does it describe, clarify, or give more detail about?
  - Where should the modifier be placed?
    - Modifiers go next to the word or phrase they modify.
    - One-word, limiting modifiers go directly before the word or phrase they modify
Common Clarity Concerns

• Misplaced modifiers
• Dangling modifiers
• Parallel Structures
• Passive Voice
Dangling Modifiers

• Dangling Modifier:
  – does not sensibly modify anything in its sentence
  • modifier is present, but it has nothing to modify
  – often occur at the beginning or end of a sentence
  – often indicated by an –ing verb or a to + verb phrase

(gerund) (infinitive)
• What is the modifier modifying?

  – **Having finished dinner**, the rugby match was turned on.

• Remember, modifiers go next to the words or phrases they modify.
Dangling Modifiers (cont)

• 3 ways to fix dangling modifiers:
  – Name the appropriate doer of the action as the subject of the main clause
    • Having finished dinner, Jude turned on the rugby match.
  – Place the subject of the action within the dangling modifier:
    • After Jude finished dinner, he turned on the rugby match.
  – Combine the phrase and clause.
    • Jude turned on the rugby match after finishing dinner.
Dangling Modifiers (cont)

• How might you correct the following sentence?

  – Playing solitaire on the computer for three hours, Michael’s paper was not finished.

• Process:

  – What is the modifier?

  – What word does it describe, clarify, or give more detail about?

  – Do you need to insert doer?

  – Where should the modifier be placed?

    » Modifiers go next to the word or phrase they modify
Dangling Modifiers
(cont)

• 3 revised sentences with connected modifiers:

  – Playing solitaire on the computer for three hours, Michael did not complete his paper.

  – Because Michael played solitaire on the computer for three hours, he did not complete his paper.

  – Michael did not complete his paper because he played solitaire on the computer for three hours.

Which is better?
Dangling Modifiers (cont)

• How might you revise the following sentences?

  – To work as a loan officer, an education in financial planning is required.

  – To improve her grade, the test was completed again.

  – After reading the original study, the article remains unconvincing.
Dangling Modifiers (cont)

- Possible revisions:

  - To work as a loan officer, one needs an education in financial planning.

  - She repeated the test to improve her grade.

  - After reading the original study, I find the article unconvincing.
Dangling Modifiers (cont)

• Review
  – Dangling modifier:
    • modifier is present, but it has nothing to modify
    • often occur at the beginning or end of a sentence
    • often indicated by an –ing verb or a to + verb phrase

  – Process to correct dangling modifiers:
    • Name the appropriate or logical doer of the action as the subject of the main clause
    • Place the subject of the action within the dangling modifier:
    • Combine the phrase and clause.
Parallel Structure

- Parallel Structure:
  - “Using the same pattern of words to show that 2 or more ideas are equally important.”
  - Applies to words, phrases, or clauses
  - Usually use coordinating conjunctions ("and," "or") to join parallel structures.
Parallel Structure (cont)

• With the -ing form (gerund) of verbs:
  – Parallel: Mary likes hiking, swimming, and bicycling.

• With infinitive verb phrases:
  – Parallel: Mary likes to hike, to swim, and to ride a bicycle.
  – OR
  – Mary likes to hike, swim, and ride a bicycle.

Note: Use "to" before all the verbs in a sentence or only before the first one—don’t mix.
Parallel Structure (cont)

• Clause:
  – group of words containing V+O which forms part of a sentence

• A parallel structure that begins with clauses must continue with clauses.
  – The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, not eat too much, and do some warm-up exercises before the game.
Parallel Structure (cont)

Which sentences show parallel structure?

– Dino does not like to sing, dance, or acting.
– Dino does not like singing, dancing, or acting.

– The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.
– The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and in a detailed manner.
Parallel Structure (cont)

• Lists after a Colon:
  – Be sure to keep all the elements in a list in the same form.
  
  – What’s wrong with this sentence?
    – The dictionary can be used for these purposes: to find word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings, and looking up irregular verbs.
Parallel Structure (cont)

Proofreading strategies for parallel structure:

- Skim your paper, pausing at "and" and "or." Check on each side of these words to see if the joined items are parallel.

- If you have several items in a list, put them in a column.

- Read your writing out loud. Listen to the sound of the items in a list or the items being compared. Do you hear the same kinds of sounds? Do your hear a “rhythm”?
  - If something breaks that rhythm or repetition of sound, check if it needs to be made parallel.
Passive Voice

• Passive Voice:
  – Indicates what is receiving action not who/what is doing action
    • Active voice is “normal” for English and is more common
  – Two clues:
    • Verb takes form of “to be” + past tense transitive verb
    • “by” phrase (optional)
  – Examples:
    • The cat was brushed by Johanna.
      – Active: Johanna brushed the cat.
    • Mistakes were made by the government.
      – Active: The government made mistakes.
    • Mistakes were made.
      – Someone made mistakes.
  – Not “wrong,” but it does affect sentence and paragraph clarity and unity
Passive Voice (cont)

• Why and how might you revise the following sentence?

    The decision that was reached by the committee was to postpone the vote.
Passive Voice (cont)

• Suggested revisions:

  – Better: The committee reached the decision to postpone the vote.

  – Best: The committee decided to postpone the vote.