

The Practical Grammar Handbook for College Writers

Marian Anders



CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2013
Marian Anders
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Practical grammar handbook for college writers / Marian Anders.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61163-168-5 (alk. paper)

1. English language--Grammar. 2. English language--Rhetoric. 3. Report writing. I. Title.

PE1112.A54 2012

428.2--dc23

2012012691

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, NC 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction	xi
About the Author	xiii
Acknowledgments	xv
Chapter One • Verbs and Subjects	3
Finding Verbs	4
Sentences with more than one Verb	9
Finding Subjects	12
Sentences with more than one Subject	13
One Word Subjects	15
Strange Subjects	16
Chapter Two • Phrases, Independent Clauses, and Dependent Clauses	21
Clauses and Phrases	21
Prepositional Phrases	25
Independent and Dependent Clauses	28
The Sneaky, Mysterious, Invisible THAT	35
Chapter Three • Fragments, Comma Splices, and Run-Ons	37
Sentence Fragments	37
Process for Identifying Fragments	38
Fixing Fragments	43

Comma Splices and Run-Ons	48
Four Methods for Fixing Comma Splices and Run-Ons	48
Chapter Four • Commas	59
Basic Commas	60
Advanced Commas	66
Why Commas Drive People Crazy.	76
Chapter Five • Other Punctuation and Mechanics	79
Apostrophes.	79
Capitalization.	87
Punctuating Dialogue.	93
Numbers	94
Hyphens and Dashes.	95
Colons	96
Semi-Colons	98
Chapter Six • Case and Agreement	101
Pronouns	101
Pronoun Case	103
Choosing the Correct Case.	104
Pronoun Agreement	107
Pronouns with Compound Antecedents.	111
Pronouns Separated from their Antecedents	113
Subject–Verb Agreement	116

Subject–Verb Agreement with Compound Subjects	117
Subjects Separated from the Verbs	119
Chapter Seven • Powerful Writing	123
Modifiers	123
Misplaced Modifiers	124
Dangling Modifiers	125
Passive vs. Active Voice	127
Avoiding Wordiness	131
Parallel Structure	133
Chapter Eight • Homophones	137
General Homophones	137
Lay and Lie	146
Who and Whom	147
Chapter Nine • Sentence Types	149
The Four Sentence Types	150
Steps for Analyzing Sentence Types	152
Tricky Details in Analyzing Sentence Types	155
False Subordinating Conjunctions	156
Chapter Ten • Research Skills	161
Doing Research	168
Taking Notes	171
From Notes to Rough Draft	174
Paraphrasing	175

Quotations	182
Parenthetical Notes	189
List of Works Cited	201
Citing Sources in Parentheses and the List of Works Cited.	202
A Book with One Author	202
A Book with Two Authors	203
A Book with Three Authors	203
A Book with an Unknown Author / Book with More than One Edition	203
A Book with Sections or Chapters Written by Different Authors / Book with an Editor	204
Encyclopedia or Dictionary Entry	204
A Magazine Article	204
A Newspaper Article	205
A Newspaper Article with an Unknown Author	205
Editorial in a Newspaper	205
Movie Review	206
Web Site	206
Short Work from a Web Site	206
Work from a Database	206
Film or Video	207
Radio or Television Program	207
Personal Interview	208

Contents

Appendix	211
Types of Verbs	211
Transitive and Intransitive Verbs	214
Verbals—Gerunds and Infinitives	215
Tricky Sentence Structures	216
Clause Patterns	220
Relative Clauses	224
Kinds of Phrases	226
Parts of Speech	228
Verbs	228
Nouns	229
Pronouns	229
Conjunctions	230
Interjections	232
Prepositions	232
Adjectives	233
Adverbs	234
Answers	237
Index	267

Introduction

As a student, I always enjoyed English and got good grades, but I didn't understand grammar. I had a natural talent for language and writing, so I got good grades on my papers without really knowing what I was doing.

I began learning grammar when I was working on my Master's degree in English at Florida State University. When I became a teacher and saw how frustrated my students got, I started developing my practical grammar approach which presents the material step-by-step in a logical fashion and provides a variety of tricks for students to use.

I have taught English grammar, composition, and literature to college freshmen and sophomores for twenty years, and the methods presented in this handbook work for all kinds of students, those who love writing and those who find it difficult. These methods work because they are based on logic rather than memorizing rules or lists of words.

My students have told me, "I always hated English, but this isn't too bad," and "I never understood grammar before, but this makes it easy." *The Practical Grammar Handbook for College Writers* focuses on what you need to know and explains everything quickly and clearly. Grammar may never be your favorite subject, but it doesn't have to be a mystery either.

—Marian Anders

About the Author

Marian Anders earned a Master of Arts degree in English from Florida State University. She has twenty years' experience teaching all levels of grammar and composition, from basic skills developmental to advanced college grammar. She teaches English at Alamance Community College in Graham, North Carolina.

Acknowledgments

I offer my thanks and appreciation to the many English teachers I have had the privilege of working with for the past twenty years. By sharing ideas and supporting each other, we have all become better teachers. I especially thank Jeannie Murphy, my friend and mentor from Pierce College, who taught me the intricacies of traditional grammar, and to Nancy Bolle, also from Pierce College, who was a supportive friend when I was a new teacher.

Abundant thanks also to my family for their invaluable support.

This book is dedicated to all my students—past, present, and future.