The Practical Grammar Handbook for College Writers
Contents

Introduction ................................................................. xv

About the Author .......................................................... xvii

Acknowledgments ............................................................ xix

Chapter One · Verbs and Subjects ................................. 3
  Finding Verbs ......................................................... 4
  Sentences with More than One Verb ......................... 9
  Exercise 1.1 Finding Verbs ................................. 10
  Exercise 1.2 Finding Verbs ................................. 11
  Finding Subjects .................................................. 12
  Sentences with More than One Subject ................. 13
  One-Word Subjects ........................................... 15
  Strange Subjects ............................................... 16
  Exercise 1.3 Finding Subjects ......................... 17
  Exercise 1.4 Finding Subjects ......................... 18

Chapter Two · Phrases, Independent Clauses,
and Dependent Clauses ............................................. 21
  Clauses and Phrases ........................................... 21
  Exercise 2.1 Identifying Clauses and Phrases ........ 24
  Prepositional Phrases ........................................ 25
  Exercise 2.2 Identifying Prepositional Phrases .... 26
Contents

Independent and Dependent Clauses ...................... 28
Exercise 2.3 Identifying Phrases, Independent
Clauses, and Dependent Clauses ..................... 30
Exercise 2.4 Identifying Phrases, Independent
Clauses, and Dependent Clauses ..................... 32
Exercise 2.5 Practice Identifying Phrases,
Independent Clauses, and Dependent Clauses ...... 34
The Sneaky, Mysterious, Invisible That .............. 35
Exercise 2.6 Identifying the Invisible That ........... 36

Chapter Three · Fragments, Comma Splices,
and Run-Ons .............................................. 37
Sentence Fragments ...................................... 37
Process for Identifying Fragments ..................... 38
Exercise 3.1 Identifying Fragments .................... 40
Exercise 3.2 Identifying Fragments .................... 41
Exercise 3.3 Identifying Fragments .................... 42
Fixing Fragments ........................................ 43
Exercise 3.4 Fixing Fragments ......................... 45
Exercise 3.5 Fixing Fragments ......................... 46
Comma Splices and Run-Ons ........................... 48
Four Methods for Fixing Comma Splices and
Run-Ons .................................................. 48
Exercise 3.6 Fixing Comma Splices and Run-Ons . . 53
Exercise 3.7 Fixing Comma Splices and Run-Ons . . 55
Contents

Chapter Four · Commas .................................................. 59
   Basic Commas ......................................................... 60
      Comma Job #1 ...................................................... 60
      Comma Job #2 ...................................................... 61
      Comma Job #3 ...................................................... 62
      Comma Job #4 ...................................................... 62
      Exercise 4.1 Basic Commas ..................................... 63
      Exercise 4.2 Basic Commas ..................................... 65
   Advanced Commas ..................................................... 66
      Comma Job #5 ...................................................... 66
      Comma Job #6 ...................................................... 68
      Comma Job #7 ...................................................... 69
      Exercise 4.3 Advanced Commas ............................... 73
      Exercise 4.4 Advanced Commas ............................... 74
   Commas in Dialogue and Quotations .......................... 76
   Why Commas Drive People Crazy ................................ 77
      Exercise 4.5 Analyzing Comma Jobs ....................... 77

Chapter Five · Other Punctuation and Mechanics ................. 79
   Apostrophes .......................................................... 79
      Apostrophe Job #1 ............................................... 79
      Apostrophe Job #2 ............................................... 81
      Possession with Words Ending in S ......................... 83
      Exercise 5.1 Apostrophes ....................................... 84
      Exercise 5.2 Apostrophes ....................................... 85
Contents

Exercise 5.3 Plural Possessives ......................... 86
Capitalization ............................................. 87
  Capitalization Rule #1 ................................. 87
  Capitalization Rule #2 ................................. 87
  Capitalization Rule #3 ................................. 88
  Capitalization Rule #4 ................................. 88
  Capitalization Rule #5 ................................. 89
  Capitalization Rule #6 ................................. 90
Exercise 5.4 Capitalization ................................. 91
Exercise 5.5 Capitalization ................................. 92
Punctuating Dialogue ................................ 93
Numbers .................................................. 94
Hyphens and Dashes .................................. 95
Colons ..................................................... 96
Semi-Colons ............................................. 98
  Semi-Colon Job #1 ..................................... 98
  Semi-Colon Job #2 ..................................... 98
Exercise 5.6 Colons, Dashes, and Semi-Colons .... 99

Chapter Six · Case and Agreement ................. 101
  Pronouns ................................................ 101
  Pronoun Case ......................................... 103
    Choosing the Correct Case ......................... 104
  Exercise 6.1 Pronoun Case ......................... 106
Contents

Pronoun Agreement ................................................. 107
  Pronouns with Compound Antecedents ............... 111
  Pronouns Separated from Their Antecedents .......... 113
Exercise 6.2 Pronoun Agreement ......................... 114
Exercise 6.3 Pronoun Agreement ......................... 115
Subject–Verb Agreement ........................................... 116
  Subject–Verb Agreement with Compound Subjects ............................................................................. 117
  Subjects Separated from the Verbs ......................... 119
Exercise 6.4 Subject–Verb Agreement .................... 120
Exercise 6.5 Subject–Verb Agreement .................... 121

Chapter Seven · Powerful Writing .......................... 123
  Modifiers ................................................................. 123
  Misplaced Modifiers ............................................... 124
  Dangling Modifiers ............................................... 125
  Exercise 7.1 Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers ...... 126
Passive vs. Active Voice ............................................ 127
  Exercise 7.2 Passive Voice ....................................... 130
Avoiding Wordiness .................................................. 131
  Exercise 7.3 Revising Wordiness ............................ 132
Parallel Structure ...................................................... 133
  Exercise 7.4 Practice with Parallel Structure .......... 135
Contents

Chapter Eight · Homophones ....................... 137
  General Homophones .......................... 138
  Lay and Lie ................................ 146
  Who and Whom ............................... 147

Chapter Nine · Sentence Types .................... 149
  The Four Sentence Types ..................... 150
    Steps for Analyzing Sentence Types ...... 152
    Exercise 9.1 Analyzing Sentence Types .. 153
    Exercise 9.2 Analyzing Sentence Types .. 154
  Tricky Details in Analyzing Sentence Types 155
    False Subordinating Conjunctions ...... 156
    Exercise 9.3 Tricky Sentence Types ...... 158

Chapter Ten · Research Skills ..................... 161
  How this Chapter is Organized ............... 161
  Part 1: The Big Picture ....................... 163
    What Additional Tasks Are Needed for Writing a Research Paper? 170
  Part 2: Learning the Skills You Will Need .... 172
    First Skill: Doing Research ............... 172
    Second Skill: Paraphrasing ............... 178
    Exercise 10.1—Practice Paraphrasing .... 186
    Third Skill: Quotations .................... 188
    Exercise 10.2—Punctuating Quotations ... 194
    Exercise 10.3—Including Quotations in Your Paraphrase ......... 198
Contents

Fourth Skill: Taking Notes ......................... 201
Fifth Skill: Documenting Sources with In-Text
   Citations and Signal Phrases ..................... 204
Exercise 10.4—Color-Coding of Sources in
   an Essay with In-Text Citations .................. 211
Exercise 10.5—Guided Analysis of In-Text
   Citations .............................................. 213
Exercise 10.6—Color-Coding of Sources in
   an Essay with In-Text Citations and
   Signal Phrases ....................................... 226
Sixth Skill: Documenting Sources with a List
   of Works Cited ......................................... 227
Exercise 10.7—Works Cited Listings and
   In-Text Citations .................................... 256
Exercise 10.8—Reviewing What You’ve Learned .. 257

Part Three: Using your Skills to Write a Research
   Paper Step-by-Step ................................ 259
Step 1: Do Preliminary Research ..................... 260
Step 2: Develop Your Research Question .......... 261
Step 3: Find the Information You Need and
   Maintain a Working Bibliography ................ 261
Step 4: Take Notes .................................... 262
Step 5: Sort Your Notes into Piles Based on the
   Key Words ............................................. 263
Step 6: Rearrange Your Notes into a Skeleton
   Draft .................................................... 264
## Contents

Step 7: Smooth the Skeleton Draft into a Rough Draft ............................................ 265  
Step 8: Do Revision .......................................................... 266  
Step 9: Remove Unnecessary In-Text Citations ........................................ 266  
Step 10: Edit ................................................................. 271  
Step 11: Formatting .......................................................... 272  
Step 12: Finish Your Paper and Celebrate! .................................................. 273  

### Appendix ................................................................. 275  
Types of Verbs .............................................................. 275  
Transitive and Intransitive Verbs .......................................................... 278  
Verbals—Gerunds and Infinitives .................................................. 279  
Tricky Sentence Structures .......................................................... 280  
Clause Patterns ................................................................. 284  
  Direct Objects, Indirect Objects, Object Complements, and Subject Complements ........... 284  
  First Clause Pattern: S–V ............................................... 284  
  Second Clause Pattern: S–V–DO ...................................... 285  
  Third Clause Pattern: S–V–IO–DO .................................... 286  
  Fourth Clause Pattern: S–V–DO–OC .................................. 286  
  Fifth Clause Pattern: S–LV–SC (PA/PN) .................................. 287  
Relative Clauses ............................................................... 288  
Kinds of Phrases .............................................................. 290  
Parts of Speech ............................................................... 292  
  Verbs ................................................................. 292  
  Nouns ................................................................. 293
Contents

Pronouns ............................................. 293
Conjunctions ................................. 294
Interjections ......................................... 296
Prepositions ........................................ 296
Adjectives ........................................... 297
Adverbs .............................................. 298

Answers ............................................... 301

Index .................................................. 331
Introduction

As a student, I always enjoyed English, but I never understood grammar. I had a natural talent for language and writing, so I got good grades on my papers without 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 my students getting frustrated by the traditional approach to learning grammar, I developed a more practical approach which presents the material step-by-step and provides a variety of tricks for students to use.

I have taught English grammar, composition, and literature to college freshmen and sophomores for over 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 intuition or memorization.

My students have told me, “I always hated English, but this isn’t too bad,” and “I never understood grammar before, but this method 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 or a misery.

—Marian Anders
About the Author

Marian Anders earned a Master of Arts degree in English from Florida State University. She has over 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 to the many English teachers I have had the privilege of working with over the 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.