

On the Job **WRITING**



BASIC EDITION

Lesson 19

In this lesson, you will learn how to:

- Make subject and verb agree
- Create words of equal importance in a series
- Use “me” and “I” correctly

AVOID COMMON ERRORS

Regina agonizes over the red circles and check marks in the report her boss hands back. “*This needs revising,*” is the only thing Mr. Sebastian says, but Regina can tell Mr. Sebastian is disappointed in her.

When Regina turned in the report, she knew it probably had mistakes, but she was on a tight deadline for another project and decided to pass it on. Proofreading and revising are not something she likes to do, and she admits she’s not as careful as she should be.

Two years ago, Regina took a community college class to improve her writing skills, but she gave up when her workload got heavier. Her test scores showed that her writing errors are similar to those made by other business writers. She misspells words, makes grammar errors, uses incorrect punctuation and capitalizes incorrectly.

She is embarrassed that her writing is so poor, and she believes it is hurting her opportunity for a promotion. On her last job evaluation, her lowest score was for writing ability. Regina has known for some time that she needs to enroll in another writing class, and this report may be the thing that gets her moving.



DEFINE IT! Parallel

When something is parallel, it is matching, similar or equal.

GRAMMAR, WORD USAGE AND PARALLEL STRUCTURE

The difference in skilled and weak writers often comes down to whether their documents contain common errors. By being able to identify commonplace errors and replace them with correct words, you will stand out from your coworkers.

Do Your Subject and Verb Agree?

The subject of a sentence determines the type of verb that is needed. For example, if you are writing about one thing, such as a person, part, service or invoice your subject is singular and the verb must also be singular.

When a verb is about more than one thing, it is plural. Therefore, it requires a plural verb. Words or phrases coming between a singular or plural subject and verb have no effect.

Singular Subjects The meeting schedule is/are available.
An invoice is/are due.

Plural Subjects My customers is/are professional friends.
Changes in the project is/are completed.

Singular Subjects Each, every, either, one, another, much, both, few, others, several, anything, anybody, anyone, everyone, someone, nobody and no one

Singular Plural Subjects All, none, any, some, more and most may be singular or plural, depending on the noun they reference.

Are the Words in a Pattern Equal?

When two or more ideas in a sentence are equally important, they are said to be parallel. For example, if several words create a series, the same pattern should be used for all words to show they are equal.

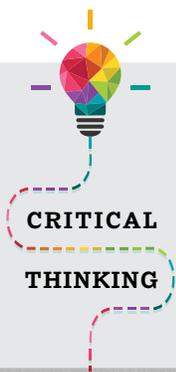
Unequal The new department head is young, personable and comes with good qualifications.

Equal The new department head is young, personable and well qualified.

If you use an “ing” word in the first part of a sentence, then use an “ing” word for the second part.

Unequal Joseph enjoys his work as a store clerk during the week and training to become a computer service technician nights and weekends.

Equal Joseph enjoys working as a store clerk during the week and training to become a computer service technician nights and weekends.



Do you believe readers notice the difference, or care, when a document contains mistakes?

SHOULD IT BE “ME” OR “I”?

Knowing when to use “me” and “I” correctly is one of the best ways to show you know your grammar. These two words are often switched and used incorrectly, but there are some fast ways to get them right.



“Me” or “I”?

“I” is the person who performs an action and is the subject of a sentence. “Me” refers to the person that the verb is acting on—called the “object” of the action.

Confusion over whether to use “I” or “me” may occur when several people are named after the verb, for example, “Susan wants to ride to the airport with you, Randy and I/me.” By removing the names in the series and substituting “me” or “I”, the correct word becomes clearer. “Susan wants to ride to the airport with I/me.”

Use “I”

I will have that spreadsheet of automobile parts numbers to you tomorrow.

Kendra and I are both assigned to the same team.

Sasha, Joe, Pedro and I will be finished with the Myers project by next week.

Use “Me”

Mr. Jeffrey is leaving the final decision up to Janaka and me.

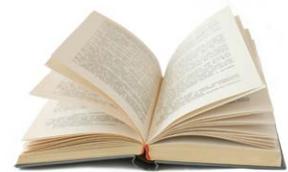
Will you help Nick and me load the truck?

When is a good time for you, Mazie and me to meet?

DID YOU KNOW



Surveys report that people with good writing ability earn more than individuals with poor writing skills.



LESSON 19 ACTIVITY

The following sentences contain grammar mistakes. Write the sentence correctly and explain why it was wrong.



I was surprised when Bill asked John and I to chair the committee.

Jeanne explained her ideas for the workshop, her plans for the daily activities and why she wanted the project schedule to be revised. She explained the lesson again for the benefit of Luann and I.