Nouns may show possession or ownership. Use an apostrophe with a noun to show something belongs to someone or to something.

**Examples:** Jane’s dress is red. The table’s legs were uneven.

There are only three simple rules to follow.

**Making Singular Nouns Possessive**

**Rule 1:** Singular nouns are made possessive by adding ’s.

- girl’s dress
- class’s project
- Mr. Smith’s car

**Making Plural Nouns Possessive**

Plural nouns are made possessive according to their endings.

**Rule 2:** If a plural noun ends in -s, add the apostrophe after the -s.

- the boys’ game
- the classes’ schedules

**Rule 3:** If a plural noun does not end in -s, add ’s.

- men’s suits
- children’s games

**Making Proper Nouns Possessive**
To make a proper noun possessive, use the same rules.

**Examples:** The Clauses’ house is located at the North Pole.
Shop-Mart’s hours are nine a.m. to five p.m.

**Making Hyphenated Compound Nouns Possessive**
For hyphenated compound nouns, follow the rule for the last word. The apostrophe will never go in the middle.

**Examples:**
- brother-in-law
- editors-in-chief
- Italian-Americans

- brother-in-law’s
- editors-in-chief’s
- Italian-Americans’

**Making More than One Noun Possessive**
Sometimes, two or more nouns in a sentence should show possession. If the nouns have joint ownership, add an apostrophe to only the last noun according to the rules of possessives. If the nouns have separate ownership, you must add apostrophes to both nouns. Let’s look at some examples.

**Examples:**

- Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus’s house is located at the North Pole.
  
  Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus share joint ownership of the house, so we add the apostrophe to show possession on only the last noun, Mrs. Claus.

- The girls’ and the boys’ shoes were placed in cubicles while they played.
  
  The girls and the boys have separate ownership of their own shoes, so we must add apostrophes to show possession on both nouns.
In the previous practice, the subject was located right before the verb. Many times, there are words or phrases between the subject and the verb. Be careful to see who or what is doing the action or is being.

One of my friends is going.

The subject is one, not friends. One is singular so you choose is going, not are going.

Practice
Circle the correct verb. Be careful to pick out the subject (not just the word before the verb) to make the verb agree with it. Remember singular verbs end in -s.

1. The tiles in the corner (is/are) broken.
2. Which type of pens (was/were) your favorite?
3. The letters from Cale (has/have) been found in the drawer.
4. The forks in the drawer (was/were) bent.
5. My interest in crafts (keeps/keep) me busy.
6. Two colors of the flag (has/have) been changed.
7. The best of all the entries (was/were) yours.
8. One of the robins (has/have) an injured wing.
9. Most members of her family (is/are) artistic.
10. The pieces of furniture (is/are) antique.
11. The houses on that street (is/are) huge.
12. The tires on the left (was/were) low in air pressure.
13. The challenge from the instructors (was/were) to break the record.
14. The orchids on the table (has/have) been drooping.
15. His focus on the issues (is/are) his strength.
16. Two horses in the pasture (was/were) eating grass.
Complex Sentences

You may recall that we said a main clause makes a complete thought. Think of a main clause as a train engine. A train engine can move by itself and doesn’t need to be attached to anything else in order to move. Now let’s look at clauses that are not main clauses and do not make up a complete thought. They are called subordinate clauses. You can think of a subordinate a clause like a train car. A train car cannot move by itself; it needs to be attached to a train engine in order to move.

Before you can begin to understand complex sentences, you need to know what a **subordinate clause** is. It has a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought, so it cannot stand alone as a sentence. A subordinate clause must occur with a main clause for a complete sentence just as a train car must be attached to a train engine.

A **complex sentence** has a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. The following are complex sentences.

**Example 1:** The girl who raised her hand had red hair.

The girl **who raised her hand** had red hair. 

**Example 2:** When the ship docked, we walked on the beach.

We walked on the beach is the main clause. When the ship docked is the subordinate clause. The subject of the subordinate clause is **ship** and the verb is **docked**; however, this clause is not a complete thought.

Subordinate Clause Sentence Fragments

Remember, a subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a sentence. If it occurs alone, it is a sentence fragment and is incorrect. It is also important to realize that an incomplete main clause fragment joined with a subordinate clause still makes a sentence fragment. As your mother may have told you, “Two wrongs don’t make a right.” Similarly, two incorrect sentence fragments don’t make a complete sentence. Look at the following examples.

**Example 3:** After I ran five miles.

This is a subordinate clause. It cannot stand alone as a complete sentence; therefore, it is a sentence fragment.

**Example 4:** When she turns seventeen.

This is also a sentence fragment made up of a subordinate clause.
Parallel structure means using like grammatical parts to emphasize a similarity between ideas.

**Making Series With Coordinating Conjunctions Parallel**

When using a coordinating conjunction — *and, or, but* — in a series, you must always use the same grammatical elements joined by the conjunction to keep the sentence parallel. A grammatical element could be an adverb, an adjective, a noun, a prepositional phrase, etc. Don’t get hung up on the *names* of the grammatical elements. By this point, however, you should be able to recognize different grammatical elements even if you can’t remember their exact names.

**Example 1:** The man was old, lonely, and a miser. NOT parallel

The man was old, lonely, and miserly. parallel

This sentence is not parallel. It uses the coordinating conjunction *and* to make three comparisons about the man. *Old* and *lonely* are adjectives, and *miser* is a noun. You can’t join adjectives with a noun with *and*.

You can make this sentence parallel by making all the comparisons adjectives, or you can reword the sentence by taking out the *and*. Look at the two corrected sentences below.

The old, lonely man was a miser. parallel

**Example 2:** The model learned to speak well, walking with poise, and that she must apply makeup correctly.

Is this sentence above parallel? No, it is not parallel because it has different grammatical elements joined by *and*.

The model learned to speak well, to walk with poise, and to apply makeup correctly.

Is the sentence above parallel? Yes, it is now parallel because the grammatical elements are all the same type, infinitives (*to* + a verb)
Some words are similar in spelling and can be easily confused even though they do not sound exactly alike. Let’s take a close look at some similar words that are commonly confused.

### Accept versus Except

**Accept** is a verb meaning to receive.

You **accept** an award.

Hint: Remember “accept award” both start with a.

**Except** is a verb meaning to take or leave out.

I like all fruit **except** blackberries.

Hint: Associate the x in except with “leave out.”

### Affect versus Effect

**Affect** can be used only as a verb and means to influence.

Interest rates **affect** the stock market.

**Effect** is most commonly used as a noun meaning result.

Interest rates have an **effect** on the stock market.

If you always use *affect* as a verb and *effect* as a noun, you will be correct most of the time. But, for test purposes, let’s look at the exception. *Effect* can also be used as a verb meaning to accomplish. If you can substitute the word accomplish (or create) for the verb, you should use *effect* and not *affect*.

The lobbyists **effected** a change in the law.

(The lobbyists accomplished a change in the law.)

### All Ready versus Already

**All ready** means prepared.

*We were all ready to go to summer camp.*

**Already** means previously or so soon.

*Jeff was already on the bus.*

*Are we there already?*

If you are in doubt which word to use, take off the “all” and see if the sentence still means about the same. If it does, use all ready. If it doesn’t make sense or it changes the meaning of the sentence, use already.