

CHAPTER 5

“ Writing with accuracy ”

Task 1: In the extract below match each underlined word or phrase to their parts of speech.

Some people find it easy to write accurately and clearly without thinking. Many of us, however, may have to work hard to ensure we are writing without errors and in the most accessible way. In order to check what we have written and to understand how to improve, we need to know a bit about English Grammar.

1. Noun People
2. Main verb need
3. Auxiliary verb are
4. Modal auxiliary verb may
5. Adjective accessible
6. Adverb accurately
7. Past Participle written
8. Present Participle writing
9. Preposition in
10. Pronoun it
11. Article the
12. Determiner (but not article) some
13. Linking word however

Task 2: Label the subjects and objects in the following sentences? If there is no Object, write NO (no object).

1. This university has a music department.

Subject This university *Object* music department

2. This practical introduces the fundamentals of neurobiology.

Subject This practical *Object* the fundamentals of neurobiology

3. This essay will discuss social conditions in the nineteenth century.

Subject This essay *Object* social conditions in the nineteenth century

4. My university is in London.

Subject My university *Object* NO

Task 3: Which of the following are grammatically correct sentences? If they are correct, tick them ✓, but if they are incorrect, can you identify the problem?

1. Learning grammar is essential for good writing. ✓
2. Because it is a complex thing to analyse. X This is a dependent clause and cannot stand alone.
3. By analysing the samples, a number of problems with the treatment. X This is not a clause at all because there is no verb.
4. Brown (2009) suggests different approaches to studying learning. ✓ Be careful with this sentence, however. Notice the different meaning here: Brown (2009) suggests different approaches to studying learning are necessary.

Task 4: Find seven incorrectly used commas in the following extract from a student essay.

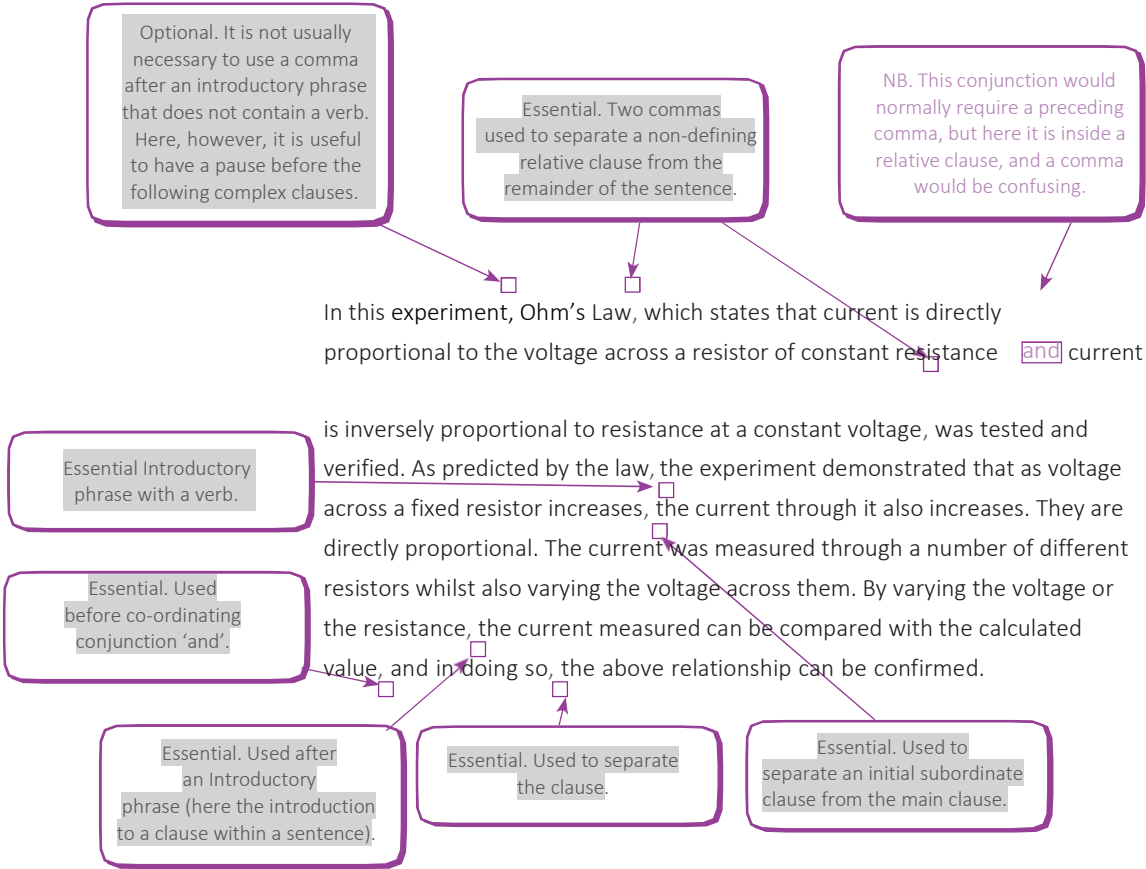
The diagram illustrates seven comma errors in the following text:

This essay provides a focus on the importance of reflecting on practice, in order to improve skills. According to Brown and Studd (2009), reflective behaviour leads to better outcomes, however, this is not supported by research done by Tynrcroft(2015). Tynecroft suggests that although reflection is, clearly, useful in clarifying why there are successes and failures, it cannot guarantee an improvement in practice. There are three reasons for this, the reflection may be flawed it may be insufficient, or it may be correct but not lead to a corresponding change in behaviour.

Callout boxes and their corresponding errors:

- Don't separate names and dates in an in-text reference with a comma.** (Points to the comma in "Brown and Studd (2009)")
- When a prepositional phrase is at the end of the sentence, there is no need for a comma.** (Points to the comma after "practice" in "reflecting on practice, in order")
- The use of commas here would emphasise 'clearly' which is not appropriate here.** (Points to the comma after "is" in "reflection is, clearly, useful")
- Use 'however' to link two sentences. Here the comma should be a full stop.** (Points to the comma after "outcomes" in "leads to better outcomes, however")
- Don't use a comma after a conjunction (unless to separate out extra information for emphasis).** (Points to the comma after "although" in "although reflection is, clearly, useful")
- To introduce a list, use a colon.** (Points to the comma after "this" in "There are three reasons for this, the reflection")
- Use 'however' to link two sentences. Here the comma should be a full stop.** (Points to the comma after "insufficient" in "it may be insufficient, or it may be correct")

Task 5: The following sample is hard to follow because it lacks any commas. Find eight places where commas would aid the reader's comprehension. Identify whether the comma is essential (E), or helpful, but optional (O).



Task 6: Decide if the semicolons in the extracts below are correctly used (a) or incorrectly used (b).

1. An optical wedge is located between; the test-flash beam and the artificial pupil. **b** don't use semicolon to introduce a list. Here, no punctuation is necessary.
2. The subject must decide what criteria to use to determine when the test flash is at threshold visibility; they must then use these same criteria throughout the experiment. **a** used to separate two related independent (main) clauses.
3. Several theories have been proposed in the last 20 years and these include: behaviourist conditioning theory; connectivist theory; social constructivist theory; and transformative theory. **a** used to separate complex items in a list
4. Game theory is relevant to games in which one person's gains result in losses for the other participants; this theory is now often applied to a wide range of behavioural relations, and can be an umbrella term for any area related to the science of logical decision making. **a** used to separate two independent (main) clauses. A full stop may be better here, however, as the sentence is very long.
5. Game theory can be an umbrella term for any area related to the science of logical decision making; however, the most common use of the theory is to model population growth. **a** used to separate clauses after linking word 'however'.

Task 7: The following extract does not use any semicolons. Find one place where you could replace the existing punctuation with a semicolon. Why is the semicolon the better choice here?

In the UK, government figures have shown that unemployment has risen and fallen in line with GDP growth^{1,2}. Many economists argue that greater economic growth will create more jobs. This is because it is assumed that with a larger economy, the population will have more disposable income; they are expected to spend more money. Therefore, businesses would expand to cater to this greater demand, and consequently would need to employ a greater number of staff.

A semicolon works better than a full stop here to show the close links between the two independent clauses. Note, however, that the full stop is not incorrect.

Task 8: Each of the four samples below includes a colon. However, only one is used correctly. Decide which one is correct and why.

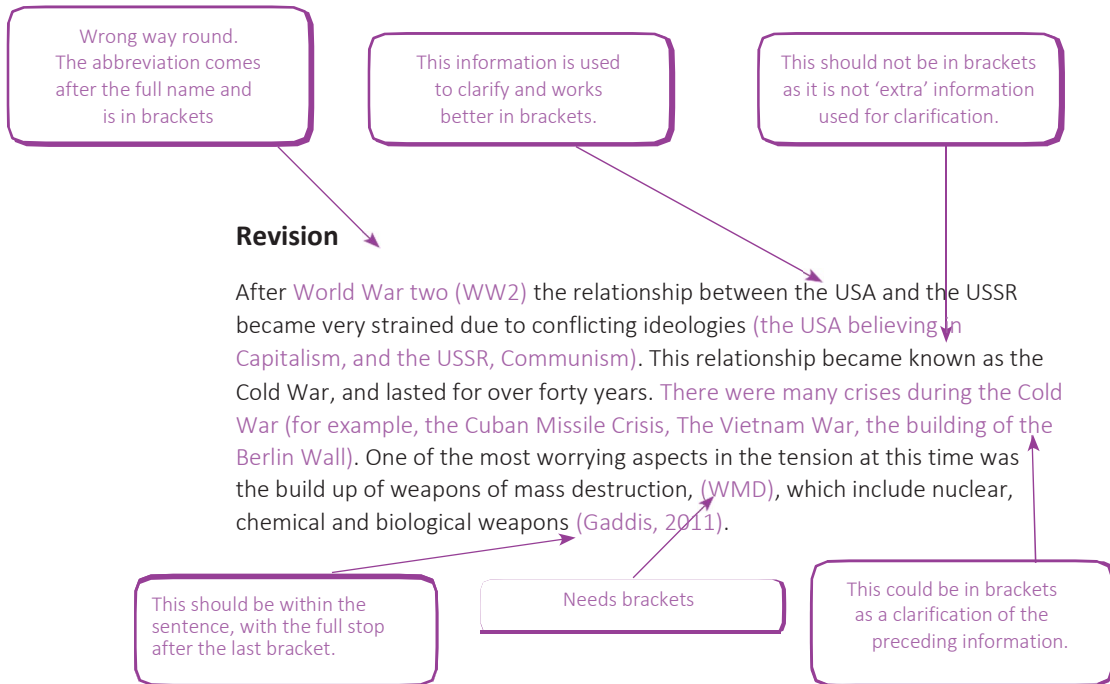
1. Ohm's Law is named after the German physicist Georg Ohm: he described measurements of voltage and current through simple electrical circuits containing various different lengths of wire. **IC** A semicolon would work here, or a full stop, to separate two linked independent clauses
2. Low blood pressure can be influenced by the following factors: the time of day; how stressed or relaxed a person is; how much exercise they do; temperature; if food has recently been eaten. **C** Used to introduce a list
3. When researching human subjects it is important to be objective: therefore, information about thoughts or feelings should not be included, as these cannot be directly observed. **IC** A semicolon or a full stop needed here to separate two independent clauses when a linking word like 'therefore' is used.
4. For example: fault in the immune system or genetic predisposition. **IC** A semicolon is needed here (or a comma).

Task 9: Replace existing punctuation with a colon in one place in the following extract.

The rules of punctuation have changed with time, and some marks are more commonly used than others; however, it is important to understand how to use the marks of punctuation to aid clarity and to ensure that the reader is guided through a text. Some rules are complex, and these include the following: use of colons, use of semicolons, use of brackets, and use of commas.

Colon needed to introduce the list.

Task 10: Find and correct the mistakes with the use (or absence) of brackets in the following sample.



Task 11: Add brackets if they are appropriate.

1. Buildings with poor insulation are costly to heat (though they are cheaper to build), and are more likely to be inhabited by people on low incomes.
The commas are not incorrect, but the brackets keep the main message more clearly defined.
2. Functional theories of art suggest that something can be defined as 'art' if it was intended to produce aesthetic experiences (nature cannot be considered art because it is not created in order to produce a response).
Using two separate sentences is not incorrect, but the brackets indicate that this information is helping to clarify the preceding information.
3. Electronics is widely used in the information processing industry (computer services, software, and data services) because the ability of electronic devices to act as switches makes digital information processing possible.
The original is unclear. Brackets clarify that these are the components of the information processing industry.
4. Brown (2016) argues that fish in all parts of the world are under threat from excessive fishing as well as habitat destruction and decline.
Author- prominent in-text citations require brackets around the date/year.

Task 12: Decide if the apostrophes in the following sentences are correct (a) or incorrect (b). Correct them if they are incorrect.

1. Fisheries' scientists **b** – This appears to be correct, but it is not necessary to include the apostrophe when the noun fisheries is being used to 'classify' what kind of scientists.
2. A chemical bonds relative strength depends upon the level of attraction between atoms. **b** – a chemical bond's
3. In order to maintain a balance between the energy from the sun and the energy that leaves the earth, there is a constant adjustment in theEarth's climate system. **a**
4. In the 1980's the numbers of fast-food restaurants, bank outlets and shopping malls increased significantly. **b** – the 1980s; no apostrophe for dates

Task 13: General punctuation task

Identify and correct the errors in the sentences below. There may be: missing punctuation(MP), incorrect punctuation (IP), or use of punctuation when there should be no punctuation (UP). Some sentences may have more than one error.

1. The workers prior assumptions and their views on the importance of autonomy and innovation made them less willing to accept bureaucratic change. **MP (workers')**
2. In initial trials there were problems with sustainability, therefore the components were derived from a renewable source in order to improve the green credentials rating. **IP and MP (... sustainability. Therefore,...)**
3. This example shows how in some situations, including the manufacturing industry, a bureaucracy may still be preferable and, can be linked with some characteristics of other organisational forms to establish a successful organisation. **UP and MP (... still be preferable, and can be ...)**
4. The following organisations were involved in the decision to back the changes; UNICEF, Save the Children, Dr Barnados, and Care International. **IP (...back the changes: UNICEF ...)**
5. The branded product market has shown remarkable resilience to the introduction onto the market of significant generic products which is a surprise. **MP (...generic products, which is...)**
6. Brown (2015) suggests that policy makers should consult interested parties to ensure there is a reason for new policy. Although it is important to remain unbiased at all times. **IP (...for new policy, although ...)**
7. Research into climate change uses modelling techniques, which use existing data to project forward and make predictions. **UP (...techniques which use existing ...)**
8. The deposition of emperors by the army, became a common theme in the third century, as soldiers began to distrust their commanders and the emperors to whom they had sworn allegiance. **UP (...by the army became a common ...)**

Task 14: Find and correct the spelling error(s) in the following sentences

(There may be more than one error in each sentence.)

1. After a successful presentation, the research group **achieved** a **distinction** for their work on the project.
2. Some of the data was **omitted** as it was considered unreliable.
3. In the course of my studies, I developed a number of **independent** learning **strategies** that helped me meet targets and deadlines and succeed in my studies.
4. The study involved both **qualitative** and **quantitative** research, and reliability of results was improved through triangulation of results.
5. It is also interesting to note that fossil remains indicate the former **occurrence** of therepods on this section of the **Jurassic** coastline.

Task 15: Find and correct 10 spelling errors in the following extract from a student's report.

Pertinent to our understanding of the current obesity epidemic is the role of effective communication between General Practitioners (GPs) and obese patients. **Comparative** research has illustrated the health risks, which include hypertension and diabetes (Gray et al, 2011). As a result, GPs are considered to be a suitable medium for providing nutritional advice and information on suitable weight loss interventions (Malterud and Ulkriksen, 2010). However, literature has reported a reduction in **commitment** to weight loss interventions following GP consultations, highlighting a discontinuous relationship between communication and behaviour (Swift, Choi, Puhl & Glazebrook, 2012).

A **fundamental determinant** of bridging the communications gap capitalises on examining the impact of GPs' terminology on low self-esteem and self-blame when addressing an individual's weight status (Brochu & Esses, 2011; Gray et al, 2011). Augmenting the literature, Collier (2010) demonstrated **noticeable** undesirability in obese patients, following GPs' adoption of the term "obesity". This implicated the importance of endorsing a sensitive language style when discussing obesity, alongside a need for accessibility to **knowledge**-sharing resources and effective **procedures**. It also may call into question areas of **competence** within the medical **profession** when it comes to dealing with patient care.

Task 16: Choose the correct word in the following sentences.

1. Smith (2010) goes **further**, suggesting that the methodology is flawed.
2. The mechanism consisted of eighteen **discrete** elements.
3. The **principal** aim of the study was to determine the effects of UV light on the human skin.
3. The interview was conducted **orally**.
4. The heat loss was measured while the vehicle was **stationary**.
5. The report should be written **formally**
6. This essay will examine the causes and **effects** of global warming on the polar ice caps
7. The software was **licensed** to the university.
8. **Fewer** than five candidates were selected for interview.
9. The results of the study **imply** that smoking causes cancer.

Task 17: Find and correct eight misused words in the following PowerPoint slide

Report Summary

- Comprised of four sections: Background, Interview with CEO, Finding, and Recommendations
- Focus on the board members of Brock Brothers Ltd and their wage increases between 2010-2015
- Interview with Mr David Brock, whose position as CEO is under threat from stakeholders
- Mr Brock justified his annual pay rise, stating, "it's reward for good management."
- Mr Brock claimed that shareholders were using their power to undermine his authority
- The report concludes that Mr Brock should resign from the management board, and its members should also re-consider their positions

Task 18: Now identify 12 misused words in the following extract from a student's job application letter.

During my degree, I developed and practised many transferable skills that I believe complement the roles, duties and skills required for the advertised post. For example, in my second year, I was appointed by the Student Union as a debt counsellor. One of my roles was to provide advice and support to anyone whose daily life may be affected by financial problems and difficulties, and to ensure that their personal life did not adversely impact on their studies. The position also involved a number of administrative duties, which included the use of spreadsheets and general office tasks such as ordering stationery. I am confident therefore that altogether my skills match the profile that you're looking for and I am an ideal candidate for your organization.