Chapter 21

Appendix A: Writing for Nonnative English Speakers

Multilingual Writers

If you learned English as a second language and you regularly speak a language other than English, this appendix is for you. It also provides a refresher course on many of the elements in <u>Chapter 15 "Sentence Building"</u>, <u>Chapter 16 "Sentence Style"</u>, <u>Chapter 17 "Word Choice"</u>, <u>Chapter 18 "Punctuation"</u>, <u>Chapter 19 "Mechanics"</u>, and <u>Chapter 20 "Grammar"</u>.

21.1 Parts of Speech

In English, words are used in one of eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, conjunction, preposition, and interjection. This table includes an explanation and examples of each of the eight parts of speech.

Noun	Person, place, or thing	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	Iowa	book	arm
			horse	idea	month
Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	he	it	I
			her	my	theirs
Adjective	Describes a noun or pronoun	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	sticky	funny	crazy
			long	cold	round
Verb	Shows action or state of being	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	run	jump	felt
			think	is	gone
Adverb	Describes a verb, another adverb, or an adjective and tells how, where, or when something is done	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	slowly	easily	very
			often	heavily	sharply

Conjunction	Joins words, phrases, and clauses	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	and	because	but
			since	or	so
Preposition	First word in a phrase that indicates the relationship of the phrase to other words in the sentence	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	in	on	to
			after	at	over
Interjection	A word that shows emotion and is not related to the rest of the sentence	Wow! After the game, silly Mary ate her apples and carrots quickly.	Hey	Wow	Look
			Super	Oh	Yuck

21.1 Parts of Speech

21.2 English Word Order

The simplest level of English word order within a sentence is that subjects come first followed by verbs and then direct objects.

Figure 21.1

Subject Donkeys	**+**	Verb eat	**+**	Object oats.

When you have more complicated sentences, use the following general order.

Figure 21.2

Modifiers The large	Subject building	Verb blocked	Objects the sun	Compliments and/or Modifiers for our urban picnic.

When an English sentence includes more than one adjective modifying a given noun, the adjectives have a hierarchy you should follow. The adjectives that modify the noun within <u>Table 21.1 "Hierarchical Order of Adjectives"</u> show that hierarchical order. You should, however, keep a string of adjectives to two or three. The example includes a longer string of adjectives simply to clarify the word order. Using this table, you can see that "the small thin Methodist girl..." would be correct but "the young French small girl..." would be incorrect.

Some languages, such as Spanish, insert "no" before a verb to create a negative sentence. In English, the negative is often indicated by placing "not" after the verb or in a contraction with the verb.

Example

I can't make it before 1:00 p.m.

Incorrect example: I no can make it before 1:00 p.m.

21.3 Count and Noncount Nouns

Nouns that name separate things or people that you can count are called count nouns. Nouns that name things that cannot be counted unless additional words are added are called noncount nouns. You need to understand count and noncount nouns in order to use the nouns correctly with articles, in singular and plural formations, and in other situations. Some nouns can serve as either count or noncount nouns.

Examples of Count Nouns

- box(es)
- dog(s)
- house(s)
- leaf (leaves)
- moon(s)
- peach(es)
- sheep
- women

Examples of Noncount Nouns

- advice
- cheese
- equipment
- furniture
- information
- Internet
- mail
- weather

Examples of Nouns That Can Be Either Count or Noncount Nouns

- baseball (play baseball vs. throw a baseball)
- love (He is my love! vs. two loves: poetry and basketball)
- marble (play with a marble vs. a floor made of marble)

21.4 Articles

In English, nouns are identified or quantified by determiners. Articles, such as *a*, *an*, and *the*, are one type of determiner. Use the following guidelines to alleviate confusion regarding whether to use an article or which article to use.

- Use *a* and *an* with nonspecific or indefinite singular count nouns and some proper nouns where you do not have enough information to be more specific. Use *a* before nouns beginning with a consonant sound and *an* before nouns beginning with a vowel sound.

Example 1

I have *a dog* at home, also. (The word "dog" is a nonspecific noun since it doesn't refer to any certain dog.)

Example 2

(before a vowel): Carrie gave everyone *an apple* at lunch.

Example 3

(before a consonant; with proper noun): He was wearing *a Texas* shirt.

- Use *every* and *each* with singular count nouns and some proper nouns.

Example 1

I heard every noise all night long.

Example 2

I tried each Jell-O flavor and liked them all.

- Use *this* and *that* with singular count and noncount nouns.

Example 1

(with count noun): I am going to eat *that apple*.

Example 2

(with noncount noun): I am not too excited about *this weather*.

- Use *any*, *enough*, and *some* with nonspecific or indefinite plural nouns (count or noncount).

Example 1

I didn't have *any donuts* at the meeting because he ate them all.

Example 2

Do you have *enough donuts* for everyone?

Example 3

He ate *some* donuts at the meeting.

- Use *(a) little* and *much* with noncount nouns.

Example 1

I'd like *a little meatloaf*, please.

Example 2

There's not *much spaghetti* left.

- Use *the* with noncount nouns and singular and plural count nouns.

Example 1

(with noncount noun): *The weather is beautiful today.*

> ### Example 2
>
> (with singular count noun): Who opened *the door*?

> ### Example 3
>
> (with plural count noun): All *the houses* had brick fronts.

- Use *both*, *(a) few*, *many*, *several*, *these*, and *those* with plural count nouns.

> ### Example 1
>
> I have *a few books* you might like to borrow.

> ### Example 2
>
> Daryl and Louise have been traveling for *several days.*

> ### Example 3
>
> Are *those shoes* yours?

21.5 Singulars and Plurals

English count nouns have singular and plural forms. Typically, these nouns are formed by adding *-s* or *-es*. Words that end in *-ch*, *-sh*, or *-s* usually require the addition of *-es* to form the plural. Atypical plurals are formed in various ways, such as those shown in the following table.

Singular Nouns	Plural Nouns
dog	dogs (*-s* added)
table	tables (*-s* added)
peach	peaches (*-es* added)
wish	wishes (*-es* added)
kiss	kisses (*-es* added)
man	men (atypical)
sheep	sheep (atypical)
tooth	teeth (atypical)
child	children (atypical)
alumnus	alumni (atypical)
leaf	leaves (atypical)

Proper nouns are typically either singular or plural. Plural proper nouns usually have no singular form, and singular proper nouns usually have no plural form.

Singular Proper Nouns	Plural Proper Nouns
Kentucky	Sawtooth Mountains
Alex	*The Everglades*

Noncount nouns typically have only one form that is basically a singular form. To quantify them, you can add a preceding phrase.

Noncount Nouns	Sentences with Noncount Nouns and Quantifying Phrases
gas	We put twelve gallons of gas in the car this morning.

Noncount Nouns	Sentences with Noncount Nouns and Quantifying Phrases
anguish	After years of anguish, he finally found happiness.

21.6 Verb Tenses

You can practice conjugating many English verbs to increase your awareness of verb tenses. Use this format for the basic conjugation:

- I laugh at Millie.
- You laugh at Millie.
- He/She/It laughs at Millie.
- We laugh at Millie.
- You laugh at Millie.
- They laugh at Millie.

You can also practice completing these five forms of English. A mixture of tenses is used to show that you can practice the different forms with any tense.

Affirmative Usage

- I play ball.
- You play ball.
- She plays ball.
- We play ball.
- You play ball.
- They play ball.

Negative Usage

- I do not play ball.
- You do not play ball.
- She does not play ball.
- We do not play ball.
- You do not play ball.
- They do not play ball.

Yes/No Questions

- Do you play ball?
- Does she play ball?
- Do we play ball?
- Do they play ball?

Short Answers

- Yes, I do.
- Yes, she does.
- No, they do not.
- No, you do not.

Wh- Questions

- Who is she?
- Where did you find it?
- When are you coming?
- Why won't it work?
- What are you going to do?

See Chapter 15 "Sentence Building", Section 15.2 "Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses" for an in-depth overview of verb tenses.

21.7 Correct Verbs

People who are new to English often experience confusion about which verb forms can serve as the verb in a sentence. An English sentence must include at least one verb or verb phrase and a tense that relays the time during which the action is taking place. Verbals (such as gerunds and infinitives) should not be confused with verbs.

- A sentence with a gerund must also have another verb.

Example

Correct example: Roger enjoys driving the RV.

Incorrect example: Roger driving the RV.

- A sentence with an infinitive must have another verb.

Example

Correct example: Kyle decided to write a long message.

Incorrect example: Kyle to write a long message.

- Verbs must match the timing indicated by the other words in a sentence.

> ### Example
>
> **Past tense correct example:** Yesterday, I called you at 5:00 p.m.
>
> **Past tense incorrect example:** Yesterday, I call you at 5:00 p.m.
>
> **Future tense correct example:** The next time it rains, I will bring my umbrella.
>
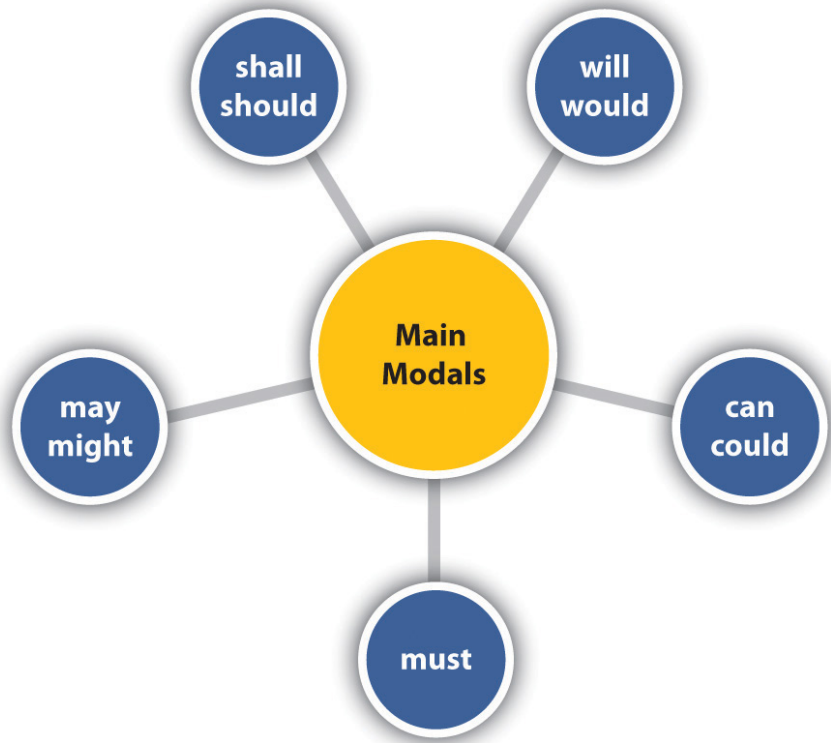> **Future tense incorrect example:** The next time it rains, I bring my umbrella.
>
> **Present tense correct example:** Come in and get warm.
>
> **Present tense incorrect example:** Come in and got warm.

See <u>Chapter 15 "Sentence Building"</u>, <u>Section 15.2 "Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses"</u> for a more extensive overview of verb tenses.

21.8 Modal Auxiliary Verbs

Figure 21.3

The English language includes nine main modal auxiliary verbs that are used with other verbs. These modals, shown in the wheel in four pairs and a single, can refer to past, present, or future tense based on the verbs that are used with them. The modals themselves do not change form to change tense. As shown in the following table, you can use modals to express an attitude in regard to the action or general situation of the sentence.

Modal Function	Format for Present or Future Tense	Format for Past Tense
Advisability	*should* or *ought to* + base verb	*should* or *ought to* + *have* + past participle
	You *should take* the time to visit Yellowstone.	You *ought to have taken* the time to visit Yellowstone.

Modal Function	Format for Present or Future Tense	Format for Past Tense
Capability	*can*, *am able to*, *is able to*, or *are able to* + base verb	*could*, *was able to*, *were able to* + base verb or past participle
	Aisha *can tell* you who was at the party.	Saul *was able to walk* on the beam without falling off.
Deduction	*must*, *has to* + base verb	*must* + *have* + *past participle*
	Hank *must know* Spanish and French.	Lucy *must have driven* through the night.
Forbiddance	*must* + not + base verb	N/A
	You *must not take* his food.	
Expectation	*should* + base verb	*should* + have + past participle
	The sun *should set* about 7:15 today.	The boys *should have finished* their ball game by now.
Intention	*will* or *shall* + base verb	*would* + base verb
	I *will meet* you at the theater.	I said I *would finish* sometime today.
Necessity	*must* or *have to* + base verb	*had to* + base verb
	I *must finish* cleaning before they arrive.	Greg *had to get* gas before we started the trip.
Past habit	N/A	*would* or *used to* + base verb
		When I worked there, I *used to eat* at Marvy's every day.
Permission request	*can*, *could*, *may*, or *might* + base verb (in question format)	*might* or *could* + base verb
	Could I *go* with you?	My parents said I *could use* their car next week.
Polite request	*could* or *would* + base verb (in question format)	N/A
	Would you please *hand* me page 45?	
Possibility/uncertainty	*may* or *might* + base verb	*might* + *have* + past participle

Modal Function	Format for Present or Future Tense	Format for Past Tense
	Alice *might be* at work by 6:00 a.m.	I don't remember, but I *might have been* the one sitting next to him that night.
Speculation	*could*, *might*, or *would* + base verb	*could*, *might*, or *would* + *have* + past participle
	If he conditions enough, he *could win* his race.	There *could have been* some real money in that deal we almost made.

21.9 Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds are nouns formed by adding *-ing* to a verb, such as *running.* Infinitives are nouns formed from the "to" form of a verb, such as *to run.* These two noun forms are called verbals, because they are formed from verbs. Experience with English will teach you which form to use in which situation. In the meantime, the following lists provide a brief overview.

Verbs That Should Be Followed Only by Gerunds and *Not* by Infinitives
These Verbs Could Fill This Blank: _____ (His) Walking

- admit
- avoid
- complete
- consider
- delay
- deny
- dislike
- finish
- imagine
- miss
- postpone
- quit
- recommend
- resist
- stop
- suggest
- understand

Verbs That Should Be Followed Only by Infinitives and *Not* by Gerunds
These Verbs Could Fill This Blank: _____ to Walk

- agree
- appear
- ask
- beg
- claim
- decide
- demand

- desire
- fail
- happen
- hesitate
- intend
- manage
- offer
- plan
- pretend
- struggle

Verbs That Can Be Followed by Either Gerunds or Infinitives
These Verbs Could Fill Either of These Blanks: _____ (His) Walking or _____ to Walk

- begin
- can('t) afford
- can('t) bear
- cease
- commence
- continue
- dread
- hate
- intend
- like
- loathe
- love
- neglect
- prefer
- start
- try
- undertake

See Chapter 20 "Grammar", Section 20.1.7 "Deciding If Relative Pronouns Take a Singular or Plural Verb" for more information regarding gerunds and infinitives.

21.10 Forming Participles

Participles are verb forms that combine with auxiliary verbs to create different tenses.

- To form **perfect tenses**, use *had*, *has*, or *have* with the past participle.

  Example: My dog has eaten twice today.

- To form **progressive tenses**, use a form of the verb *to be* with the present participle, or gerund.

  Example: My dog is eating a treat.

- To write in **passive voice**, use a form of the verb *to be* with the past participle.

  Example: The treat was eaten by my dog.

  See Chapter 15 "Sentence Building", Section 15.2 "Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses" for a more extensive overview of the relationships between participles and verb tenses, and see Chapter 16 "Sentence Style", Section 16.3 "Using Subordination and Coordination" for more on passive voice constructions.

21.11 Adverbs and Adjectives

Adverbs often end in *-ly* and modify verbs, other adverbs, and adjectives. As a rule, you should place an adverb next to or close to the word it modifies, although adverbs can be placed in different positions within a sentence without affecting its meaning.

> ### Example
>
> **Before the verb:** "He **slowly** walked to the store."
>
> **After the verb:** "He walked **slowly** to the store."
>
> **At the beginning of the sentence:** "**Slowly**, he walked to the store."
>
> **At the end of the sentence:** "He walked to the store **slowly**."
>
> **Between an auxiliary and main verb:** "He was **slowly** walking to the store."

Some adverbs, however, have a different meaning based on where they are placed. You should check to make sure that your placement carries the intended meaning.

> ### Example
>
> "She **only** loved him."
>
> **Translation:** "The only emotion she felt toward him was love."
>
> "**Only** she loved him."
>
> **Translation:** "The only person who loved him was her."
>
> "She loved **only** him." or "She loved him **only**."
>
> **Translation:** "The only person she loved was him."

Some adverbs simply do not work between the verb and the direct object in a sentence.

> ### Example
>
> **Acceptable adverb placement:** She **barely** heard the noise.
>
> **Unacceptable adverb placement:** She heard **barely** the noise.

Adjectives modify nouns and in some more heavily inflected languages, the endings of adjectives change to agree with the number and gender of the noun. In English, adjectives do not change in this way. For example, within the following sentences, note how the spelling of the adjective "eager" remains the same, regardless of the number or the gender of the noun it modifies.

The eager boy jumped the starting gun.

The eager boys lined up.

The eager girls eyed the starter.

As in these sentences, adjectives usually are placed before a noun. The noun can be the subject, as in the preceding example, or a direct object, as in the following sentence.

Harold admired his shiny red car.

Adjectives can also be placed after a linking verb. The adjective still modifies a noun but is not placed next to the noun, as in the following example.

The weather was miserable.

When two or more adjectives are used to modify a single noun, they should be used in a set order, as shown in Table 21.1 "Hierarchical Order of Adjectives". Even though the table shows ten levels within the hierarchy, you should limit your adjectives per noun to two or three.

Table 21.1 Hierarchical Order of Adjectives

| Determiner | Opinion or Assessment | Physical Description | | | | Nationality | Religion | Material | Nou |
		Size	Shape	Age	Color				
The	pretty	small	thin	young	white	French	Methodist	plastic	girl

When using an adverb and adjective together with a noun, you should typically place the adverb first, followed by the adjective, and then the noun.

the strikingly golden tree

For more information about adverbs and adjectives, see Chapter 20 "Grammar", Section 20.6 "Using Adverbs and Adjectives".

21.12 Irregular Adjectives

In English, adjectives have comparative and superlative forms that are used to more exactly describe nouns.

> ### Example
>
> Joey is **tall**, Pete is **taller** than Joey, and Malik is the **tallest** of the three boys.

One common way to form the comparative and superlative forms is to add *-er* and *-est*, respectively, as shown in the preceding example. A second common method is to use the words *more* and *most* or *less* and *least*, as shown in the following example.

> ### Example
>
> Lucy is **eager** to start, Callie is **more eager**, and Shannon is **the most eager**.

Some adjectives do not follow these two common methods of forming comparatives and superlatives. You will simply have to learn these irregular adjectives by heart. Some of them are listed Table 21.2 "Sample Adjectives That Form Superlatives Using Irregular Patterns". Notice that some are irregular when used with a certain meaning and not when used with a different meaning. See Chapter 20 "Grammar", Section 20.6.3 "Using Comparatives and Superlatives" for more examples of irregular adjectives.

Table 21.2 Sample Adjectives That Form Superlatives Using Irregular Patterns

much (noncount nouns)	more	most
many (count nouns)	more	most
little (size)	littler	littlest
little (number)	less	least

old (people and things)	older	oldest
old (family members)	elder	eldest

Some adjectives' comparatives and superlatives can be formed with either *-er* and *-est* or with *more* and *most* (or *less* and *least*). In these cases, choose the version that works best within a given sentence.

Table 21.3 Sample Adjectives That Can Form Superlatives Using *-er* and *-est* or *More* and *Most*

clever	cleverer	cleverest
clever	more clever	most clever
gentle	gentler	gentlest
gentle	more gentle	most gentle
friendly	friendlier	friendliest
friendly	more friendly	most friendly
quiet	quieter	quietest
quiet	more quiet	most quiet
simple	simpler	simplest
simple	more simple	most simple

Some adjectives do not have comparative and superlative forms since the simplest form expresses the only possible form.

Sample Adjectives That Do Not Have Comparative and Superlative Forms

- blind
- dead
- fatal
- final
- left
- right
- unique
- universal
- vertical

- wrong

21.13 Indefinite Adjectives

Indefinite adjectives give nonspecific information about a noun. For example, the indefinite article *few* indicates some, but not an exact amount. Indefinite adjectives are easily confused with indefinite pronouns since they are the same words used differently. An indefinite pronoun replaces a noun. An indefinite adjective precedes a noun or pronoun and modifies it. It is important for you to understand the difference between indefinite adjectives and pronouns to assure you are saying what you mean. Some common indefinite adjectives include *all*, *any*, *anything*, *each*, *every*, *few*, *many*, *one*, *several*, *some*, *somebody*, and *someone*.

Example

Indefinite adjective: We are having *some* cake for dessert.

Indefinite pronoun: I like cake. I'll have *some*, please.

Indefinite adjective: You can find a state name on *each* quarter.

Indefinite pronoun: I have four Illinois quarters, and *each* is brand new.

21.14 Predicate Adjectives

Since linking verbs express a state of being instead of an action, adjectives are used after them instead of adverbs. An adjective that follows a linking verb is referred to as a *predicate adjective*. Be careful not to use an adverb simply because of the proximity to the verb.

Example

Correct (adjective follows linking verb): Kelly is selfish.

Incorrect (adverb follows linking verb): Kelly is selfishly.

Correct (adjective follows linking verb): Beth seems eager.

Incorrect (adverb follows linking verb): Beth seems eagerly.

Linking Verbs That Can Be Followed by Adjectives

- appear
- be
- become
- feel
- get
- grow
- keep
- look
- prove
- remain
- seem
- smell
- sound
- stay
- taste
- turn

21.15 Clauses and Phrases

Clauses include both subjects and verbs that work together as a single unit. When they form stand-alone sentences, they're called independent clauses. An independent clause can stand alone or can be used with other clauses and phrases. A dependent clause also includes both a subject and a verb, but it must combine with an independent clause to form a complete sentence.

Types of Dependent Clauses	Descriptions	Examples
Adverb clause	Serves as an adverb; tells when, how, why, where, under what condition, to what degree, how often, or how much	**To avoid sunburn**, she plastered her body with sunscreen.
Noun clause	Serves as a noun when attached to a verb	**That she would win the race** seemed quite likely.
		She thought **that she would win the race**.
Adjective clause (also called a relative clause)	Begins with a relative pronoun (*that, who, whom, whose, which*) or a relative adverb (*when, where, why*); functions as an adjective; attaches to a noun; has both a subject and a verb; tells what kind, how many, or which one	The day **that he lost his watch** was an unlucky day.*
		The house **where they lived** is gone.
Appositive clause	Functions as an appositive by restating a noun or noun-related verb in clause form; begins with	The idea **that Josie**
*In some instances, the relative pronoun or adverb can be implied (e.g., "The day he lost his watch was an unlucky day").		

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Types of Dependent Clauses	Descriptions	Examples
	that; typical nouns involved include possibilities such as assumption, belief, conviction, idea, knowledge, and theory	**will someday be taller than me** is crazy.
*In some instances, the relative pronoun or adverb can be implied (e.g., "The day he lost his watch was an unlucky day").		

Phrases are groups of words that work together as a single unit but do not have a subject or a verb. English includes five basic kinds of phrases.

Types of Phrases	Descriptions	Examples
Noun phrase	Multiple words serving as a noun	Darcy ate **a ham sandwich**.
Verb phrase	Used as the verb in sentences that are in the progressive and perfect tenses	The class **should have started** a half-hour earlier.
Prepositional phrase	Begins with a preposition (covered in more depth in <u>Section 21.9 "Gerunds and Infinitives"</u>)	Work will be easier **after the holiday rush**.
Adjective phrase	Functions as an adjective; might include prepositional phrases and/or nouns	My brother is **very tall and handsome**.
Adverb phrase	Functions as an adverb; might include prepositional phrases and/or multiple adverbs	Let's go walking **after dinner**.
		Ignacia walked **wearily and unsteadily**.

21.16 Relative Pronouns and Clauses

An adjective clause gives information about a preceding noun in a sentence. Look at the following examples.

The car that Richie was driving was yellow.

Des Moines, **where I live**, is in Iowa.

Mr. Creeter, **whose brother I know**, is the new math teacher.

Like many other adjective clauses, these begin with a relative adjective (*which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*) or a relative adverb (*when* or *where*). When you use a relative clause to describe a noun, make sure to begin it with one of the seven relative adjectives and adverbs listed in the previous sentence.

21.17 Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions are words that show the relationships between two or more other words. Choosing correct prepositions can be challenging, but the following examples will help clarify how to use some of the most common prepositions.

Types of Prepositions	Examples of Prepositions	How to Use	Prepositions Used in Sentences
Time	at	Use with hours of the day and these words that indicate time of day: *dawn*, *midnight*, *night*, and *noon*	We will eat *at 11:30.*
			We will eat *at noon.*
	by	Use with time words to indicate a particular time	I'll be there *by 5:00.*
			I'll be finished *by October.*
	in	Use with *the* and these time-of-day words: *afternoon*, *evening*, and *morning*	We'll start *in the morning.*
		Use on its own with months, seasons, and years	The rainy season starts *in June.*
	on	Use with days of the week	I'll see you *on Friday.*
Location	at	Use to indicate a particular place	I'll stop *at the dry cleaners.*
	in	Use when indicating that an item or person is within given boundaries	My ticket is *in my pocket.*
	by	Use to mean "near a particular place"	My desk is *by the back door.*
	on	Use when indicating a surface or site on which something rests or is located	Place it *on the table*, please.

Types of Prepositions	Examples of Prepositions	How to Use	Prepositions Used in Sentences
			My office is *on Lincoln Boulevard.*
Logical relationships	of	Use to indicate part of a whole	I ate half *of the sandwich.*
		Use to indicate contents or makeup	I brought a bag *of chips.*
	for	Use to show purpose	Jake uses his apron *for grilling.*
State of being	in	Use to indicate a state of being	I am afraid that I'm *in trouble.*

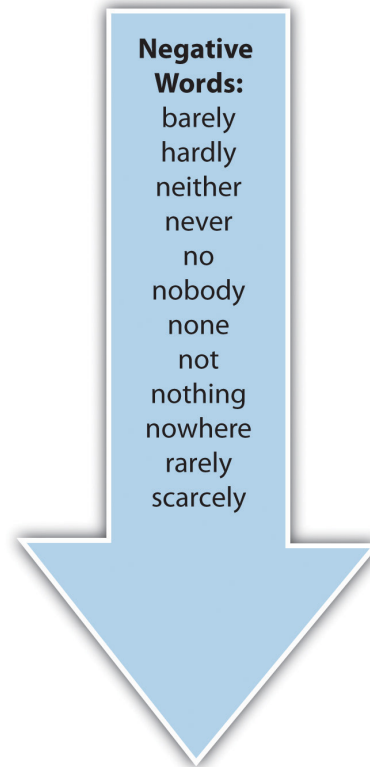# 21.18 Omitted Words

Some languages, especially those that make greater use of inflection, do not include all the sentence parts that English includes. Take special care to include those English parts that you might not be used to including in your native language. The following table shows some of these words that are needed in English but not in other languages.

Sentence Parts	Language Issues
Articles	Neither Chinese nor Arabic includes articles, such as *a* and *an*, so people with Chinese or Arabic as a first language have to take great care to learn to use articles correctly.
Verbs	Many languages have verb tense setups that vary from English, so most new English learners have to be very careful to include auxiliary verbs properly. For example, Arabic does not include the verb "to be," so native speakers of Arabic who learn English have to take special care to learn the usage of "to be." An Arabic speaker might say, "The girl happy," instead of, "The girl is happy."
Subjects	Spanish and Japanese do not include a subject in every sentence, but every English sentence requires a subject (except in commands where the subject *you* is understood: "Go get the box").
Expletives	Inverted English sentences can cause problems for many new English speakers. For example, you could say, "An apple is in the refrigerator." But in typical English, you would more likely say, "There is an apple in the refrigerator." This version is an inverted sentence, and "there" is an expletive. Many new English learners might invert the sentence without adding the expletive and say, "Is an apple in the refrigerator."
Plurals	Neither Chinese nor Thai includes plurals, but English does. So many new English learners have to take great care to differentiate between singular and plural forms and to use them at the appropriate times.
Subject pronouns	In Spanish, the subject pronoun is often not used, so Spanish speakers learning English will often omit the subject pronoun, saying, "Am hungry," instead of, "I am hungry."

21.19 *Not* and Other Negative Words

Figure 21.4

Negative Words:
barely
hardly
neither
never
no
nobody
none
not
nothing
nowhere
rarely
scarcely

To form a negative in English, you have to add a negative word to the sentence. Some of the negative words in English are shown in the blue arrow. Typically, you should place the negative word before the main verb.

I was *barely* awake when I heard you come home.

Kurt is *not* going with us.

In casual English, it is common to form contractions, or shortened combined words, with the auxiliary or linking verb and the word *not*. Contractions are typically not acceptable in very formal writing but are becoming more and more common in certain academic and public contexts.

I haven't heard that before.

Jill isn't my cousin.

Using two negative words in the same sentence changes the meaning of the negative words to positive, thus supporting the common saying "Two negatives make a positive." Think of it as being similar to multiplying two negative numbers and getting a positive number. Double negatives are often used in extremely casual talk but never in professional or academic settings.

> ## Example
>
> **Correct:** I didn't hear anything.
>
> **Incorrect:** I didn't hear nothing. (The two negatives change to a positive, so the sentence technically means "I heard something.")

21.20 Idioms

Idioms are informal, colorful language. Although their intent is to add interest to the English language, they also add a lot of confusion since their intended meanings are not aligned with their literal meanings. In time, you will learn the idioms that your acquaintances use. Until then, reading lists of idioms, such as the following, might prove helpful. Just remember that when a person says something that seems to make no sense at all, an idiom might be involved. Also, keep in mind that this list is just a very small sampling of the thousands of idiomatic expressions that occur in English, as happens with any language.

Idiom	Intended Meaning
A little bird told me.	I know some information, and I'd rather not say where I heard it.
Don't count your chickens before they hatch.	Don't decide before you have all the facts.
Don't jump out of your skin.	Don't get overly excited.
Go fly a kite.	What you are saying doesn't make sense.
Hank's got some major-league problems.	Hank has some serious problems.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained.	You can't succeed if you don't try.
People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.	You should not criticize others for faults that you also have, or since you aren't perfect, you should not criticize others.
They are joined at the hip.	They are always together and/or think alike.
We've got it made in the shade.	Everything is working out just right.
What does John Q. Public say?	What does the average person think?
You're crazy.	Your words do not make sense.

21.21 Spelling Tips

Spelling is a vital part of your written English skills. Your spelling needs to include both an understanding of general spelling rules and a mastery of common words that you will use often. You can visit <u>Chapter 19 "Mechanics"</u>, <u>Section 19.1 "Mastering Commonly Misspelled Words"</u> for an overview of general English spelling rules. The following are some of the most common words you will need to spell listed in categories.

Days and Months		Time	Di
• Monday • Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday • Friday • Saturday • Sunday	• January • February • March • April • May • June • July • August • September • October • November • December	• second • minute • hour • day • week • month • year • decade • century • millennium • moment	

Grocery Lists		General Shopping Lists	Fa
• apples • asparagus • bananas • beans • bread • butter • cabbage • carrots • celery • cheese • chicken • cucumber	• eggs • ham • hamburger • fish • lamb • lettuce • milk • pork chops • roast • soda • tortillas	• bath soap • deodorant • dish soap • floss • shampoo • toilet bowl cleaner • toothpaste • window cleaner	

Services	Words for Packing to Move	Math Words	Meas
• barber • dentist • doctor • hair dresser • lawyer • nurse • pharmacist • teacher	• bathroom • bedroom • dining room • family room • garage • kitchen • laundry room • living room	• add • subtract • multiply • divide • more • less • sum • difference • equals • plus • total	

Holidays	Common Names	
• New Year's Day • Martin Luther King Jr. Day • Valentine's Day • St. Patrick's Day • Mother's Day • Memorial Day • Flag Day • Father's Day • Fourth of July	• Barbara • Elizabeth • Jennifer • Linda • Maria • Mary • Patricia • Susan • Adam • David • James • John • Michael • Richard • Robert • William	• Anderson • Brown • Davis • Garcia • Harris • Jackson • Johnson • Jones • Martin • Miller • Moore • Smith • Taylor • Thomas • White • Wilson

Holidays	Common Names	
• Labor Day • Halloween • Columbus Day • Thanksgiving • Christmas		

21.22 American Writing Styles, Argument, and Structure

Your original language has its own structures, formats, and cultural assumptions that are likely natural to you but perhaps different from those of English. The following broad guidelines underlie basic American English and US academic writing.

- Citing sources: Some languages and cultures do not consider citing sources of ideas to be of paramount importance. In US academic situations, however, failing to cite sources of ideas and text is referred to as plagiarism and can result in serious ramifications, including failing grades, damaged reputations, school expulsions, and job loss.
- Introducing the topic early: Unlike some languages, American English typically presents the topic early in a paper.
- Staying on topic: Although some languages view diversions from the topic as adding interest and depth, American English is focused and on topic.
- Writing concisely: Some languages hold eloquent, flowing language in high esteem. Consequently, texts in these languages are often long and elaborate. American English, on the other hand, prefers concise, to-the-point wording.
- Constructing arguments: US academic writing often involves argument building. To this end, writers use transitions to link ideas, evidence to support claims, and relatively formal writing to ensure clarity.