

Conventions Covered in AP English 12

Convention 1 of 5

Subject-verb agreement

(covered on Monday, August 17)

Verbs should agree with their subjects in number. It's important not to be distracted by intervening prepositional phrases.

- Wrong:** The books is still at the library.
One of the boys were standing near the fire alarm when it went off.
- Right:** The books are still at the library.
One of the boys was standing near the fire alarm when it went off.

Convention 2 of 5

Sentence Boundaries

(covered on Friday, August 28)

A sentence consists of at least one independent clause--otherwise it is a fragment. Do not join independent clauses with a comma only; you must also supply a conjunction or a semicolon.

- Wrong:** Today Angel Island is open to the public, people can tour it as they can tour Ellis Island in New York.
- Right:** Today Angel Island is open to the public, and people can tour it as they can tour Ellis Island in New York.

(For this example, you could use a semicolon, a colon, or a dash instead of a conjunction .)

Convention 3 of 5

Verbs after Intervening Phrases and Clauses

(covered on Friday, August 28)

Verbs following prepositional phrases or relative clauses agree with *the noun that the prepositional phrase or relative clause describes* not with the last noun in the phrase or relative clause.

Wrong: One of these shirts are too worn out to wear to school.

Each of the deposits were marked with the incorrect date.

Right: One of these shirts is too worn out to wear to school.

Each of the deposits was marked with the incorrect date.

Convention 4 of 5

Quotations: Punctuation and grammar

(covered on Wednesday, September 9)

1. Periods and commas come before closing quotation marks; semicolons come after; the position of question marks and exclamation points depends upon context.
2. You should think of quoted material as though it were a big noun--in other words, the attribution (the sentence material that introduces or follows a quotation) must constitute an independent clause. If the clause "completes" before the quotation, use a colon to introduce quoted material.
3. When quoting a fragment of a longer utterance, you don't need to precede it with a comma; nor do you need to capitalize the first word of the quotation.
4. Use double quotation marks (") for all direct quotations--even for "cautionary" quotations. Use single quotation marks (') for quotations within quotations. For quotations within quotations within quotations, use double quotation marks.
5. In writing narrative dialogue, begin a new paragraph each time a different character speaks. When the same speaker needs to begin a new paragraph, do not close the quotation marks of the previous paragraph.

Wrong: George W. Bush ran for president on a platform of "compassionate conservatism".

Though no one today talks about "the great society", during the Johnson administration it was a phrase on everyone's lips.

Jones was adamant, "I never saw that man before in my life."

Smith said: "We have never known a social program of this caliber."

I assured him I had no such, "Nefarious intentions."

Right: George W. Bush ran for president on a platform of "compassionate conservatism."

Though no one today talks about "the great society," during the Johnson administration it was a phrase on everyone's lips.

Jones was adamant: "I never saw that man before in my life."

Smith said, "We have never known a social program of this caliber."

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Convention 5 of 5

Sentence Types

(covered on Monday, October 5)

Summary:

With respect to clause construction, there are four types of sentence: *simple*, *compound*, *complex*, and *compound-complex*.

With respect to the subordinate ideas, there are two types of sentence: *Periodic* and *Loose*.

Elaboration:

A *simple* sentence consists of one independent clause alone.

A *compound* sentence consists of two independent clauses (it is rare for an English sentence to consist of more than two independent clauses).

A *complex* sentence consists of at least one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

A *compound-complex* sentence consists of more than one independent clause and at least one subordinate clause.

A *periodic* sentence does not complete grammatically until its end; the grammatical completion is usually forestalled by any number of subordinate phrases and/or clauses.

A *loose* sentence completes grammatically but is extended by subordinate ideas (in the form of clauses and phrases).

Wrong:

Right: