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4th Grade Grammar & Conventions - Common Cores Part I

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1. Capitalization

Capital letters, or uppercase letters, make words stand out on a page. In general writing, a capital letter is used for the first word of every sentence. In titles, capitalize the first and last word of a title and every word in between with the exception of short prepositions (to, from, with, for), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or), and articles (a, an, the). In direct speech, a capital letter is used for the first word in the statement, even if it is not the first word in a sentence. Personal pronouns (I, I’m) and proper nouns (names of people, places, and things) are always capitalized.

Examples of capitalization:
- Title of a movie: Toy Story
- Title of a chapter: "How to Choose a Topic"
- Direct Speech: He said, “There are many different animals in the zoo.”
- I am excited to go to the movies with Sandra.

2. Commas in Compound Sentences

A compound sentence contains two simple sentences, each a main clause, joined by a conjunction. A comma preceding the coordinating conjunction is used to separate the main clauses in a compound sentence. In the following sentences, subjects are underlined and verbs are in gray.

Examples of commas in compound sentences:
- I worked hard on my homework, and my sister watched TV.
- Malik played baseball, but Brett ran home to eat.
- Asia shops at the mall, so her mom can run errands.
3. Commas and Quotation Marks in Dialogue and Text

Dialogue is words spoken between two or more people. These words are called direct speech. Writers often use dialogue in narrative writing (telling a story). Quotation marks are used to set off words spoken in direct speech. Commas are used to separate words, phrases, and clauses in sentences. Commas also set off direct speech and dialogue from the rest of the sentence.

Examples of commas and quotation marks in dialogue:
- “Where have you been? I was waiting at my house forever. You knew how important this birthday party was to me!” Alexis whined to Claire.
- My little sister yelled, “Look at the horses, Mom!”
- When Josh sat down in the movie theatre, he whispered, “Can I have some popcorn?”
- “Mary, will you answer the telephone?”
- The author states, “It is clear that when students do their homework, they get better grades on their tests.”

4. Complete Sentences

A complete sentence contains a subject and a predicate that work together to form a complete thought. A fragment results when there is no subject or verb. A run-on sentence contains two or more parts that can stand alone in separate sentences but instead are combined into one sentence incorrectly.

Examples of complete sentences, fragments, and run-ons:
- Complete sentence: John spent his afternoon coloring and reading.
- Fragment: Some of the girls to the mall.
- Run-on: Look through Angelo’s telescope you can see Saturn’s rings.
Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two; there, their).

5. Frequently Confused Words

Using the right word in your writing is very important. A dictionary is a great reference for finding the proper spelling and meaning of a word.

Examples of frequently confused words:

- a, an
- accept, except
- allowed, aloud
- a lot, allot
- already, all ready
- ant, aunt
- flower, flour
- heal, heel
- hole, whole
- knot, not
- meat, meet
- one, won
- peace, piece
- poor, pore, pour
- principal, principle
- quiet, quit, quite
- wear, where
- weather, whether
- their, there, they’re
- waist, waste
- ate, eight
- bare, bear
- blew, blue
- board, bored
- brake, break
- breath, breathe
- for, four
- hear, here
- hour, our
- knows, nose
- metal, medal
- pain, pane
- peak, peek
- raise, rays
- scene, seen
- some, sum
- which, witch
- wood, would
- tail, tale
- wait, weight
- by, buy
- capital, capitol
- cent, scent, sent
- choose, chose
- close, clothes
- coarse, course
- good, well
- heard, herd
- its, it’s
- lay, lie
- miner, minor
- pair, pare, pear
- petal, pedal
- read, red
- sea, see
- son, sun
- who, whom
- your, you’re
- than, then
- way, weigh
- creak, creek
dear, deer
die, dye
desert, dessert
dew, do, due
doesn’t, don’t
hair, hare
Hi, high
knew, new
lead, led
oar, or, ore
passed, past
plain, plane
right, write
seam, seem
weak, week
who’s, whose
threw, through
to, too, two
Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will use **modal auxiliaries** (e.g., can, may, must) to convey various conditions.

### 6. Modal Auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries are helping verbs that are used to add meaning and convey time (past, present, future). The modal auxiliaries are am, is, was, are, were, has, have, had, could, should, would, will, shall, be, been, being, can, may, must, might, do, did, does, ought, used to, need. In the following examples, **modal auxiliaries** are underlined and **verbs** are in gray.

Examples of **modal auxiliaries**:
- Rebecca **was** going to the park. (past)
- Mark **is waiting** for his friends to go play. (present)
- Abigail **will be writing** a short story today. (future)

Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will **order adjectives** within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., a small red bag rather than a red small bag).

### 7. Order Adjectives

Adjectives are words that add information to nouns and pronouns. They describe the color, size, shape, number, or any other aspect of a noun or pronoun. When more than one adjective is used before a noun, they must be put in the proper order (deteminers, observation, size and shape, age, color, origin, material, qualifier, noun).

Examples of **ordering adjectives**:
- My dad rented a **beautiful** (observation) **red** (color) **sports** (qualifier) **car** (noun).
- I have a **big** (size) **brown** (color) and **black** (color) **hunting** (qualifier) **dog** (noun).
Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will form and use **prepositional phrases**.

8. **Prepositional Phrases**

Prepositional phrases are phrases that begin with a preposition. They usually give information about the position of something or someone. In the following sentences, the prepositions are in gray; the prepositional phrase is underlined.

Examples of **prepositional phrases**:
- I read a book **during my visit to the library**.
- They waited **for him beyond the bathroom**.
- I looked **toward the sky and into the clouds**.

Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will form and use the **progressive** (e.g., I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking) **verb tenses**.

9. **Progressive Verb Tenses**

Progressive verb tenses inform the reader of when an action is taking place. This includes the present, past, and future. For example: I am walking (present), I was walking (past), I will be walking (future). The progressive form shows if the action has happened, is happening, or will be happening.

Examples of **progressive verb tenses**:
- Present (happening now): My teacher **is giving** us a spelling test today.
- Past (happened already): I **was doing** my homework during the storm.
- Future (will happen): I **will be moving** in the fall.
Core Standard: L.4.2: Students will spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

**10. Reference Materials**

Reference materials present facts and information about a topic in an organized way. There are usually different headings that contain pieces of information.

Dictionaries contain words and definitions and are organized alphabetically. A dictionary is an important tool for checking and correcting spellings of words. It also provides meanings of words.

Examples of **print reference materials:**
- Dictionary
- Thesaurus
- Encyclopedia

Examples of **web-based reference materials:**
- [http://www.thesaurus.com/](http://www.thesaurus.com/)
Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why).

11. Relative Adverbs

Adverbs are words that describe or give information about adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs. The relative adverbs are where, when, and why. In the following examples, the relative adverbs are underlined.

Examples of relative adverbs:
- Where: I don’t know where we are going for dinner.
- When: I remember the day when I started school.
- Why: “Do you know why George cannot go to the movies with us?”

Core Standard: L.4.1: Students will use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why).

12. Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns relate the relative clause to the noun that it is modifying. The relative pronouns are who, whose, whom, which, that, what, whoever, whomever. In the following examples, the relative pronouns are underlined.

Examples of relative pronouns:
- This is the grocery store that my mom likes.
- The student who has perfect attendance gets a special prize.
- I got to pick which dress I wore to school today.
- Whoever broke the window is in trouble.
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1. **Abstract Nouns**

An abstract noun is a thing that you can think about, believe in, or imagine but cannot see, hear, or touch. This includes feelings, ideas, actions, and events. Unless they begin a sentence, abstract nouns do not begin with a capital letter.

Examples of abstract nouns:
- Feelings: love, anger, joy, excitement, fear
- Actions: laughter, sleep, honesty, kindness
- Ideas: dream, faith
- Things: beauty, friendship, freedom, memory, education

2. **Adjectives**

Adjectives are words that add information to nouns and pronouns. They are important in writing because they are used to add detail. Adjectives describe the color, size, shape, number, or any other aspect of a noun or pronoun.

In the following sentences, adjectives are underlined.
Examples of adjectives:
- Do I smell **sizzling** bacon?
- My fingers and toes are **numb**!
- The **wobbly** desk needs to be fixed.

3. **Adverbs**

Adverbs are words that modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs often tell when, where, why, or under what conditions something happens. There are, also, adverbs that make the word being modified negative. Adverbs frequently end in –ly. (However, not all words ending in –ly are adverbs.)
3. Adverbs (cont.)

In the following sentences, adverbs are underlined.
Examples:
- Modifying a verb – The kids play outside at recess. (tells where)
- Modifying an adjective – Clara drove a very fast car. (tells more about the adjective “fast”)
- Modifying another adverb – Karen moved quite slowly down the sidewalk. (tells more about the adverb “slowly”)
- Creating a negative – Grandpa will not attend the wedding. (changes or modifies the verb “attend”).

4. Apostrophes in Contractions

Contractions are shortened words or phrases. The apostrophe shows where letters have been left out of contractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase/ word</th>
<th>contraction</th>
<th>phrase/ word</th>
<th>contraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is not</td>
<td>isn’t</td>
<td>who has</td>
<td>who’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it had</td>
<td>it’d</td>
<td>will not</td>
<td>won’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it will</td>
<td>it’ll</td>
<td>would not</td>
<td>wouldn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let us</td>
<td>let’s</td>
<td>you are</td>
<td>you’re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she will</td>
<td>she’ll</td>
<td>you have</td>
<td>you’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should have</td>
<td>should’ve</td>
<td>you will</td>
<td>you’ll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Commas in Addresses

Commas are used in an address in a sentence to set off the street, city, and state. Commas are used in an address on an envelope to set off the city and state.

Examples of **commas in an address**:
- My family’s address is 123 Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
- On an envelope:
  - Jane Smith
  - 123 Main Street
  - Ann Arbor, MI 48105

6. Commas in Salutations

The comma is a punctuation mark that is used to separate words, phrases, and clauses and to separate the salutations in correspondence. Salutations are greetings in letters before the body of the text.

Examples of using a **comma** for greetings:
- Dear Julie,
- Dear Grandma,

7. Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Comparative adjectives compare two people, places, things, or ideas. By adding the ending -er or the word more or less before an adjective, a comparison is made.

Superlative adjectives compare three or more people, places, things, or ideas. By adding the ending -est or the word most or least before an adjective, a superlative comparison is made.
7. Comparative and Superlative Adjectives Cont.

Examples of **comparative adjectives**:
- Marie is shorter than Addison.
- Watermelon is more delicious than an apple.

Examples of **superlative adjectives**:
- My mom is the happiest person I know.
- The math test was the most difficult test I’ve ever taken.

8. Comparative and Superlative Adverbs

Comparative adverbs compare how two things are done. By adding the ending –er or the word more or less before an adverb, a comparison is made.

Superlative adverbs compare how three or more things are done. By adding the ending –est or the word most or least before an adverb, a superlative comparison is made.

Examples of **comparative adverbs**:
- My Mom will be home sooner than my dad.
- I play outside more often than my friends.

Examples of **superlative adverbs**:
- I work hardest in school when I am writing.
- Of all the flowers in the garden, this one is the most beautiful.

9. Complex Sentences

A complex sentence contains a subordinate clause and a main clause. A subordinate clause adds meaning to the main clause, which is the most important part of the sentence.

Examples of **complex sentences**:
- When the game was over (subordinate clause), she would celebrate (main clause).
- As usual, he brought dessert to the party (main clause) and made everyone happy (subordinate clause).
- When her mother was not at home (subordinate clause), she began to worry (main clause).
10. **Compound Sentences**

A compound sentence contains two simple sentences, each a main clause, joined by a conjunction. In the following sentences, subjects are underlined and verbs are in gray.

Examples of **compound sentences**:
- I worked hard on my homework, and my sister watched TV.
- Malik played baseball instead, so Brett ran home to eat.
- Asia felt hungry, so she ate a sandwich.

11. **Coordinating Conjunctions**

A coordinating conjunction connects two or more equal parts. These may be words, phrases, or clauses. Common coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet

Examples of **coordinating conjunctions**:
- The ocean is beautiful but scary. (words)
- We can shop in the morning or in the evening. (phrases)
- The man runs up the hill, and then he rests at the top. (clauses)

12. **Hyphens Between Syllables**

Hyphens are used to break words when they will not fit at the end of a line of text. The word breaks are made between syllables in a word. Each part of a word in a word break should sound as it does in the whole word.

Examples of using a **hyphen** for breaking a word at the syllable:
- Three ships were surrounded by plates of thickening sea ice.

**Rules for word breaks**:
* Always break a word between syllables.
* Do not break a one-syllable word.
* Do not leave just one letter of a word on a line.
13. **Indirect Objects**

Like a direct object, an indirect object is needed to complete the meaning of a sentence. The indirect object is also a noun or pronoun. The indirect object names the person, place, or thing indirectly affected by the verb. In the following sentences, direct objects are underlined and indirect objects are in gray.

Examples of indirect objects:
- She gave us a test.
- Kaitlyn left the mail for him.
- The teacher gave the class a difficult quiz.
- Andre left her the car keys.

14. **Irregular Plural Nouns**

Plural means “more than one.” Irregular plural nouns are those that do not follow the same rules as regular plural nouns. These nouns have unusual plural forms.

Examples of **irregular plural nouns**:
- Noun ends with -fe: Change -f to -v and add -s. knife → knives
- Noun ends with -o: Add -es. tomato → tomatoes
- Noun ends with -f: Change -f to -v and add -es. loaf → loaves
- Noun ends with -is: Change -is to -es. analysis → analyses
- Noun ends with -y: Change -y to -ies. baby → babies

In some irregular plural nouns, the vowel or word needs to be changed. For example: man → men, tooth → teeth, mouse → mice. Plural nouns that do not change: deer, sheep, blues.

15. **Irregular Verbs**

Irregular verbs are those that do not have the suffix -ed at the end to form their past tense and past participle forms. To achieve these tenses, the middle vowel sounds or the entire word changes.
15. **Irregular Verbs (cont.)**

Examples of *irregular verbs: (present, past tense, past participle)*

- speak, spoke, spoken
- write, wrote, written
- take, took, taken
- go, went, gone
- drink, drank, drunk
- swim, swam, swum
- see, saw, seen
- sing, sang, sung
- fall, fell, fallen
- hide, hid, hidden
- drive, drove, driven
- wear, wore, worn
- tear, tore, torn
- shake, shook, shaken
- am, was, been
- has, have, had

Verbs that do not change: burst, cost, cut, hurt, let, put, set, spread.

16. **Phrases**

A phrase is a group of words that has meaning within a sentence but does not make a complete sentence because it does not have both a subject and a verb.

Examples of *phrases:*

- to the store (no subject or verb)
- near the lake (no subject or verb)
- the five students (possible subject but no verb)
- without their shoes (no subject or verb)

The phrases above would have meaning within a sentence but could not stand alone as complete sentences.

17. **Possessives**

Possessive nouns are nouns that show ownership. The word with the apostrophe is the owner.

Examples of *possessive nouns:*

To form a singular possessive, add an apostrophe and an -s.

- My mother's hobby is scrapbooking.
17. Possessives (cont.)

If a plural noun ends in an -s or -z, just add an apostrophe.

- The girls’ locker room is neat and organized. (plural)

If a singular noun ends in an -s or -z, add an apostrophe and an -s.

- Chris’s hair is short and brown.

For plural nouns that do not end in -s, add an apostrophe and an -s.

- The children’s playground is closed because it is raining.

To form shared possessives, add an apostrophe and an -s to the last noun only.

- Tina, Greg, and Will’s project earned an A+.

To form the possessive with an indefinite pronoun, add an apostrophe and an -s.

- Somebody’s lunch was left in the cafeteria.
- It was everyone’s idea to play tag at recess.

18. Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Pronouns replace the antecedent. The antecedent is the noun or noun phrase that has already been mentioned in the writing. Pronouns are used when writers do not want to repeat a noun in a sentence or paragraph.

Examples of pronouns with antecedents:

- Alex stood on her head, balancing herself with the bedpost.
  In the example above, the pronouns herself and her replace the proper noun Alex later in the sentence. Therefore, Alex is the antecedent of the pronouns herself and her. The pronouns and antecedent agree, because they are singular.

- Alex and her friend stood on their heads, balancing themselves with the bedpost.
  The pronouns and antecedent agree, because they are plural.
19. **Proper Nouns**

Proper nouns are the names of particular people, places, and things. They always begin with a capital letter. In the following sentences, the proper nouns are in gray.

Examples of proper nouns:
- **people**: Will Smith
- **places**: Jamaica
- **things**: Chex Mix

20. **Pronouns**

Pronouns are words used in place of nouns when writers do not want to repeat nouns in a sentence or paragraph. Pronouns can be singular or plural and can be first, second, or third person. Pronouns: her, she, you, they, I, he, him, we, them, everybody, everyone, it, itself, me, mine, no one, nobody, ours, ourselves, myself, somebody, theirs, us.

Examples of pronouns:
- I made a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. (singular, first person)
- We left for the zoo early in the morning. (plural)
- “Sandra, have you decided what you want to do today?” (second person)
- Dan said that he likes to play baseball. (third person)

21. **Quotation Marks and Italics**

Quotation marks are used with the titles of poems, songs, newspaper and magazine articles, episodes of television series, chapters of books, and short stories.

Italics are used when a certain word or words need to stand out, or be emphasized.
- He managed to eat ten cookies.

Italics are, also, used when writing titles of complete works of: books, films, or musical compositions.
22. **Regular Plural Nouns**

Plural nouns name more than one person, place, thing, or idea. They are created by changing the ending of the noun. Common endings: -s, -es

Examples of **regular plural nouns**:

- Cloud (singular) + -s = clouds (plural)
- Nouns that end in -s, -x, -z, -ch, -tch, -sh become plural by adding -es.
- Glass (singular) + -es = glasses (plural)
- Lunch (singular) + -es = lunches (plural)

23. **Regular Verbs**

Regular verbs are those that add the suffix -ed at the end to form their past tense and past participle forms.

Examples of **regular verbs**:

- Look (present tense) + -ed = looked (past tense)
- Laugh (present tense) + -ed = laughed (past tense)
- Work (present tense) + -ed = worked (past tense)

24. **Suffixes Added to Base Words**

A suffix is an ending that is added to a word to change the form of the word and the way it is used in a sentence.

Examples of **adding suffixes to base words**:

- Suffix -y: Shine + -y = Shiny, health + -y = Healthy, skin + -y = skinny
- Suffix -ing: Drink + -ing = Drinking, sit + -ing = sitting, go + -ing = going
- Suffix -ed: Help + -ed = helped, smile + -ed = smiled, love + -ed = loved
- Suffix -s: Eat + -s = eats, run + -s = runs
- Suffix -er: Cold + -er = colder, warm + -er = warmer
- Suffix -est: Easy + -est = easiest, sad + -est = saddest
25. **Spelling of High-Frequency Words**

High-frequency words are those that are used often in spoken or written language. The spelling of these words is important. Be sure to look the word up in the dictionary to determine the correct spelling.

Some high-frequency words:
- about, don’t, everything, it’s, its, are, also, no, their, there, they’re, what, when, where, also, was, want, said, people, who, have, I’m, with, because, won’t, one, our, write, won’t, can’t, before, pretty, your, you’re, didn’t, question, could, really, doesn’t, through, threw, wouldn’t, whether, weather, thought, friend, exciting, myself, went, something, laughed, getting, anyone, again, let’s, enough, almost, beautiful

26. **Spelling Patterns**

Word families are letter patterns within a word that appear often.
- For example: -ing: thing, sing, swing, ring, king; -et: met, let, set, get; -ice: rice, nice, dice, spice, slice; -ay: play, say, way, today

Position-based spelling refers to the position of letters in a word that determines its spelling and produces a unique sound.
- For example: -ck may appear in the middle (package) or end of a word (pick) but never in the beginning.

Syllable patterns in words help the writer sound out and spell words.
- In a consonant-vowel-consonant word, the vowel has a short sound: b-a-t.
- In a consonant-vowel-consonant-e word, the vowel has a long sound and the -e is usually silent: h-o-m-e.
- In a consonant-vowel-vowel-consonant word, the first vowel has a long sound: g-r-a-i-n.

Ending rules determine how a word is spelled.
- Words that end with an “i” sound are often spelled with a -y at the end: shy, my.
- Words that end in a vowel followed by a -y can add the suffix -ed or -ing without changing the word: Play becomes played.

Meaningful word parts are roots of words that are seen in more than one word.
- The word heal is the root of the word health.
27. **Subject-Verb Agreement**

Subject-verb agreement states that a singular subject must be paired with a singular verb and a plural subject with a plural verb. For example, he and she are singular subjects; they is a plural subject. In the singular present tense form, verbs add an -s. In the plural present tense form, verbs subtract an -s. In the following examples, subjects are underlined and verbs are in gray.

Examples of subject-verb agreement:

- He **chases** the cat. (singular)
- They **chase** the cat. (plural)
- The **student** **sings**. (singular)
- Your children **sing**. (plural)

28. **Subordinating Conjunctions**

Subordinating conjunctions introduce dependent clauses in complex sentences. Some examples include after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so, that, though, unless, when, where, until, while, whereas, as long as.

Examples of subordinating conjunctions:

- Our flight was delayed **when** the thunderstorm hit.
- We could not swim in our pool **until** it was summer.