Grammar & Punctuation
Curriculum: NOVICE and ADVANCED
Created by: Dar Bagby

NOTE: People dedicate their entire lives to studying these two topics. Because of the overwhelming amount of information and the intricacies available about them, it should be noted that this lesson will include only the mention of most of the items, and will be limited in its coverage of the major items necessary for developing writing skills. Furthermore, I suggest that the enthusiasts have access to *The Elements of Style,* Fourth Edition, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, when writing and when proofreading and self editing.

Grammar
Definition (Greek, *grammatikē technē*, "art of letters"): a set of rules governing the composition of words, phrases, and clauses in any given language.

Punctuation
Definition: a recently standardized system of inserting small marks into texts to indicate proper interpretation through the clarification of syntax. (Punctuation was not used in great part until the rise of printing in the 14th and 15th centuries.)

Goals: 1) Be able to identify errors of grammar and punctuation.
2) Be able to write a paragraph with proper grammar and punctuation.

Tools: 1) dry erase board (or flip-chart) and appropriate marker
2) a copy of the HANDOUTS (#1 and #2) and writing utensils for each enthusiast

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Ice Breaker
1) Write the following on the board (or chart):
Charles the First walked and talked half an hour after his head was cut off. Ask one of the enthusiasts to read it aloud. Ask the enthusiasts if they think the sentence portrays exactly what happened, then go to the board (or chart) and add punctuation so it reads as follows:
Charles the First walked and talked; half an hour after, his head was cut off. Ask if they don't agree that it now makes more sense. Impress upon them that this is why punctuation is necessary.

2) Write the following on the board (or chart):
He learned to shoot his dad taught him how when he was in the third grade. Ask one of the enthusiasts to read it aloud. Ask the enthusiasts, "Who was in the third grade, the boy or his dad? How can we rearranged this sentence and punctuate it so it makes sense?"

It should read: *He learned to shoot when he was in the third grade; his dad taught him how.*

3) Read the following aloud and ask the enthusiasts to correct the grammar mistakes.

I looked outside and seen that it had snowed. (change <u>seen</u> to <u>saw</u>)

Julia had went to school early. (omit <u>had</u> or change <u>went</u> to <u>gone</u>)

Asa did good on his assignment. (change <u>good</u> to <u>well</u>—this requires an adverb, not an adjective)

There are less marbles in this jar then in that one. (change <u>less</u> to <u>fewer</u>—because the contents are countable; change <u>then</u> to <u>than</u>)

A group of boys are going on a field trip. (change <u>are</u> to <u>is</u>—subject and verb must match, and in this case, <u>group</u> is the subject, which is singular and requires <u>is</u> instead of <u>are</u>)

<u>Grammar Lesson</u>
Distribute HANDOUT #1 and ask the enthusiasts to follow along as you discuss the lesson. Encourage them to take notes on the HANDOUT pages.

I. Concrete language vs. vague language
  A. Concrete states the facts without leaving the reader with questions (e.g., Time zones are based on when the sun rises and sets.)
  B. Vague raises questions (e.g., The time is different in different zones because of the daylight.)
II. Active voice vs. passive voice
  A. In active voice the subject <u>performs</u> the action. (e.g., The car [subject] hit [verb] a snake.)
  B. In passive voice the subject <u>receives</u> the action. (e.g., The snake [subject] was hit [verb] by a car.)

III. Sentence fragments and run-on sentences
  A. If only a phrase or dependent clause is present and an independent clause is missing, the result is a sentence fragment (e.g., Before the classroom door was opened.)
  B. A run-on sentence exists when two or more independent clauses or sentences are joined without the use of a conjunction. (e.g., Ray and Greg went fishing they didn't catch anything.)

IV. Word order
  A. When starting a sentence with an incomplete phrase or clause, it must be followed as closely as possible by the person or thing it describes. (e.g., Although we tried everything we could think of to hold **them** up, **the decorations** kept falling down.)
  B. Participles (adding *–ing* to a word) can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs; if used at the beginning of a sentence, it MUST be immediately followed by the actor. (e.g., INCORRECT: While sitting on Santa's lap, the camera caught my

baby sister off guard. CORRECT: While sitting on Santa's lap, my baby sister was caught off guard by the camera.)

V. Modifiers
    A. Descriptive words
    B. Place them as close as is practical to the word/phrase they describe. (e.g.,
        INCORRECT: **I have** a pair of shoes Mick shined for me **in my suitcase**.
        CORRECT: **In my suitcase I have** a pair of shoes Mick shined for me.)

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    A. Generally confusing to a reader unless it is required in the process of developing a character. (e.g., I have some cucumbers, but Sean doesn't have none. – *Is this dialect, or does it mean Sean actually does have some?*)
    B. Using two negatives to make a positive is sometimes desirable. (e.g., The old wooden walkway is not well kept but not uninviting.)

VII. Parallel construction
    A. Use consistent grammatical form.
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VIII. Pitfalls and problems
    A. Homophones (e.g., to, two, too; whose, who's, who, whom; I, me; less, fewer; its, it's; their, they're, there; like, as: Several of **their** homework assignments have been strewn around the messy room, but **they're** going to be picked up and put over **there** on the instructor's desk.)
    B. Split infinitives (e.g., INCORRECT: She asked if I was actually wantng **to eagerly go** to the cemetery. CORRECT: She asked if I was actually **eager to go** to the cemetery."
    C. Dangling participles (e.g., INCORRECT: Munching on the dew-covered grass, the hunter saw the deer. CORRECT: The hunter saw the deer munching on the dew-covered grass.)
    D. Subjunctive mood
        1. Used to express possibilities, wishes, suggestions, doubts, etc.
        2. Normally requires the word "were" (e.g., I wish it were my birthday.)
    E. Pleonasms
        1. Unnecessary words
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    F. Capitalization (e.g., INCORRECT: The Eastern section of Town was full of locals, all wanting to get a good look at secretary of state, Ellen Watson. CORRECT: The eastern section of town was full of locals, all wanting to get a good look at Secretary of State, Ellen Watson.)

IX. Some other topics of grammar that have an impact on writing (not covered in this lesson)
      A. Conjunctive adverbs
      B. Helping verbs
      C. Gerunds
      D. Predicate complements
      E. Inflections in English
      F. Direct and indirect objects
      G. Grammatical case in English
      H. Transitive and intransitive verbs
      I. Mood vs. tense
      J. Four kinds of morpheme
      K. The parts of a word
      L. Object pronouns vs. subject pronouns
      M. Linking verbs and action verbs
      N. Types of phrasal verbs
      O. Expletives
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      R. Interjections
      S. Articles
      T. Adjectives
      U. Adverbs
      V. Prepositions
      W. Pronouns
      X. Plural form of nouns

Punctuation Lesson
(HANDOUT #1 contains this lesson)

I. Fourteen most used punctuation marks in American grammar
      A. Period (**.**): found at the end of a declarative sentence and in many abbreviations
      B. Question mark (**?**): found at the end of an interrogatory sentence
      C. Exclamation point (**!**): found at the end of a sudden outcry or a sentence when a
             writer wants to add emphasis (**<u>NOTE</u>:** USE ONLY ONE exclamation point at the
             end of a sentence)
      D. Comma (**,**)
            1. Indicates a series (e.g., Chelsea put blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries on
                her ice cream.)
            2. Indicates a separation of ideas (e.g., I wound up, swung the club, and watched
                the ball bounce onto the green.)
            3. Used between two complete clauses in a sentence (must include a conjunction

before the second clause; e.g., Nettie played hard with her friends all afternoon, and by suppertime she was tired and irritable.)
4. Used after the salutation and closing in a personal letter

E. Semicolon (**;**): connects independent clauses but shows a closer relationship between the clauses than a period would. (e.g., Christopher forded the icy river; the water froze his feet and lower legs.)

F. Colon (**:**)
1. Found after a word that introduces a quotation, a series, or an example. (e.g., Leana left three things in her dorm room when she left: an old worn-out sofa, a broken microwave oven, and a toy lion that was losing its stuffing.)
2. Often found after the salutation of a **business** letter
3. Found in an expression of time, separating hours, minutes, and seconds (e.g., 10:42:07 A.M.)

G. Dash: used in both writing and printing
1. Endash (–): used to connect numbers or elements of a compound sentence
2. Emdash (—)
   a. indicates a break in sentence structure
   b. indicates a break in thought
   c. introduces a phrase that is added for emphasis, explanation, or definition

H. Ellipsis (**…**) [pl. ellipses]: indicates an omission of letters or words (e.g., She said, "If you are only going to meet me halfway…" Then she threw her hands into the air and stomped out of the room.)

I. Hyphen (**-**)
1. Used between the parts of compound words (e.g., one-on-one)
2. Used between parts of a compound name (e.g., Sheila McVogel-Hudson)
3. Used between syllables of a word when divided at the end of a line of text

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1. Used to qualify remarks; for example, Olivia only wanted more attention (I had seen her use this act before), so I looked the other way.
2. Make sure they cannot be replaced by commas (they can in most cases)

K. Brackets **[ ]**
1. Found in technical descriptions
2. Used for parenthetical phrases or clauses found within other parenthetical phrases/clauses; for example, She was not the least bit frightened (she wasn't aware of the creature [alien] hiding in the corner of the room.)
3. Enclose the word [*sic*] in brackets to indicate mistakes within quotations when they are not your typos but are part of the actual quotation (e.g., In his most recent article the paleontologist wrote, "The relics mentioned in my previous article were discovered in an Inca settelment [*sic*] in 1981.")

L. Braces **{ }**
1. Used to show that two or more lines of text are a single unit
2. Rare in most writing
3. Seen mostly in computer programming

M. Quotation marks (" ")
   1. Mark the beginning and end of dialogue
   2. Mark the beginning and end of a quote
   3. Used to indicate an unusual or dubious status of a word (e.g., It was apparent that he "worshipped" his mother's red velvet cake.)
   4. Single quotation marks (' ') are most frequently used to indicate a quote within a quote (e.g., "I'm not lying to you; Frank told me, 'You can leave if you want,' so I didn't waste any time.")
N. Apostrophe (')
   1. Indicates the omission of a letter or letters from a word (e.g., nat'l)
   2. Indicates possessive case (e.g., Megan's tablet, the dentist's instruments)
   3. May be used to indicate a plural for symbols, numbers, and for both lowercase and uppercase letters (e.g., **symbols:** +'s and –'s, **numbers:** 12's and 14's, **lowercase letters:** mind your p's and q's, **uppercase letters:** all of the YMCA's and YWCA's in the country)

II. Other items used to indicate forms of punctuation
   A. *Italics*
   B. **Boldface**
   C. SMALL CAPITALS
   D. Numerals (e.g., 81, eighty-one)
   E. Fractions (e.g., 3/4; three-fourths)
   F. Dates (e.g., Nov. 13, 1950; 11/13/50; 11-13-50; 11.13.50)
   G. Diacritics (shown below in larger print to make them more easily recognizable)

á	acute accent
à	grave accent
â	circumflex accent
ü	diaeresis, trema, umlaut
ñ	tilde
ç	cedilla
å	ring, bolle
ø	slash, solidus, virgule

   H. Additional marks on most computer keyboards that are typically used in today's communication (shown below in larger print to make them more easily recognizable)

%	per cent sign
$	dollar sign

£	pound sign
¢	cent sign
#	hash mark (in computer parlance, the `pound sign')
*	asterisk (in the US, informally called a `bug')
@	at sign
&	ampersand, and sign
¶	paragraph mark, blind, pilcrow
§	section mark
‖	parallel mark
^	caret
_	underbar or underscore
<	less-than sign
>	greater-than sign
< >	angle brackets
« »	guillemets (French quotation marks)
» «	reversed guillemets (German quotation marks)
+	plus sign
±	plus-or-minus sign
=	equal sign
\	backslash
|	pipe

III. Other cases that require special use of punctuation marks
    A. Footnotes
    B. Bibliographies
    C. Titles

D. Headings
E. Paragraphs
F. References to published works
G. Letter writing
H. Essays
I. Research papers

NOTE: When listening to speech, you don't have to stop and think about whether a sentence contains a subject and a verb, if it's in subjunctive mood, or if there are grammatical errors, because it simply sounds right. It is, therefore, easy to use grammar in speech without being familiar with the formal rules. However, in a written work the opposite is true. Grammar and punctuation mistakes cause the meaning to be fuzzy and will probably create confusion in the reader's mind. Grammatical inconsistencies slow the reader down and become a distraction from the main story and the plot.

Proper grammar and punctuation are key to being a <u>successful</u> author.

Activity: Distribute HANDOUT #2. Giving the enthusiasts 5 minutes, have them answer the first 9 questions. Go over the answers, discussing any questions the enthusiasts may have. Then work with them aloud to complete the **BONUS**.

Answer key:
1. A question mark always appears at the end of _____ .
   A. an interrogatory sentence.
   B. an independent clause.
   C. a quote
2. Which words are modifiers in this sentence: *The golden clouds reflected the colors of the beautiful sunset.*
   A. reflected and colors
   B. golden and sunset
   C. golden and beautiful
3. *She handwrote a letter to him in her own handwriting.* This is an example of a _____ .
   A. neoplasm
   B. pleonasm
   C. anachronism
4. Is this sentence written in active or passive voice? *Sara's husband was told not to enter his wife's hospital room without protective clothing.*
   A. active
   B. passive
5. Which words in this sentence are homophones? *Bess was still too wired to calm down even at two in the morning.*
   A. still, calm, even

B. wired, morning

C. too, to, two

6. Which words in this sentence need commas after them? *Before taking a shower I made sure the doors were locked the window blinds were pulled down and the TV was turned off.*
   A. *Before* and *down*
   B. *sure* and *locked*
   C. locked and down

7. Which words need an apostrophe? Toms bed and nightstand were items that had belonged to his wifes parents, Will and Irene Peters.
   A. Toms and wifes
   B. Toms and Peters
   C. items and wifes

8. Read the following conversation:
   "I don't believe you punched me!"
   "Really?!"
   "I didn't see that coming," he said, rubbing his jaw!
   "Well, you deserved it!"
   Which words should NOT have exclamation points after them?
   A. *me* and *jaw*
   B. *Really* and *it*
   C. Really and jaw

9. Adding *–ing* to a word makes it a _____.
   A. participle
   B. pronoun
   C. preposition

BONUS: A paragraph has been started for you below with the sentence, *Natalie hated the weather in the oklahoma panhandle.* Rearrange the following sentences to complete a paragraph that makes sense. Add correct punctuation and correct any grammar mistakes.

Rachel her friend was being blown backwards her hair standing straight out in the raging wind

She decided they would just have to reach an underground shelter just thinking that would be their best chance just in case the worstest happened

She looked at her friends expression and she knew her and Rachel were in for a long scaredy sleepless night

Natalie wondered what would be their best chance of surviving

Lightning lit up the sky and loud thundering crashes pierced her ears her eardrums felt like they were exploding

Natalie hated the weather in the Oklahoma panhandle. Lightning lit up the sky, and loud thundering crashes pierced her **ears**; her eardrums felt like they were exploding! Rachel, her friend, was being blown backwards, her hair standing straight out in the raging wind. Natalie wondered what their best chance of surviving would be. She decided they would have to reach an underground shelter, thinking that would be their best chance if the worst happened. She

looked at her friend's expression, and she knew she and Rachel were in for a long, scary, sleepless night.

Discussion: 1) What is meant by "a **successful** author?"
2) Why should an author be concerned about grammar and punctuation?
3) Why is it necessary to fix all of the grammar and punctuation mistakes in your manuscript before sending it to a professional editor/proofreader? Isn't it their job to correct all of an author's mistakes?

Grammar & Punctuation – HANDOUT #1
Handout: NOVICE and ADVANCED
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III. Other cases that require special use of punctuation marks
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C. Titles
D. Headings
E. Paragraphs
F. References to published works
G. Letter writing
H. Essays
I. Research papers

NOTE: When listening to speech, you don't have to stop and think about whether a sentence contains a subject and a verb, if it's in subjunctive mood, or if there are grammatical errors, because it simply sounds right. It is, therefore, easy to use grammar in speech without being familiar with the formal rules. However, in a written work the opposite is true. Grammar and punctuation mistakes cause the meaning to be fuzzy and will probably create confusion in the reader's mind. Grammatical inconsistencies slow the reader down and become a distraction from the main story and the plot.

Proper grammar and punctuation are key
to being a __successful__ author.