

common sentence errors

Understanding and Avoiding Common Sentence Errors for Clearer Writing

In the vast landscape of written communication, clarity reigns supreme. Yet, many aspiring writers and even seasoned professionals find themselves stumbling over common sentence errors that can muddy their message and diminish their credibility. From subject-verb agreement mishaps to the perplexing world of misplaced modifiers, these grammatical pitfalls are prevalent and can significantly impact how your ideas are perceived. This comprehensive guide aims to demystify these frequent mistakes, offering clear explanations and practical strategies to help you identify and correct them. By mastering the art of avoiding common sentence errors, you can elevate your writing from merely functional to truly impactful, ensuring your message resonates effectively with your intended audience. Let's dive into the nuances of sentence construction and equip you with the tools to write with precision and confidence.

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Mastering Subject-Verb Agreement: The Foundation of Clear Sentences

Subject-verb agreement is a fundamental principle of English grammar that dictates that the verb in a sentence must agree in number with its subject. In simpler terms, singular subjects require singular verbs, and plural subjects require plural verbs. This might sound straightforward, but several factors can complicate this seemingly simple rule, leading to common sentence errors. Understanding these complexities is crucial for ensuring your sentences are grammatically sound and easy to comprehend. When a subject and verb are out of sync, it creates a jarring effect for the reader, making the sentence awkward and, at times, even nonsensical. Let's explore the most frequent scenarios where subject-verb agreement goes awry.

Singular Subjects with Singular Verbs

The most basic form of subject-verb agreement involves a singular subject paired with a singular verb. For example, "The dog barks" or "She sings." The challenge often arises when the subject is not immediately adjacent to the verb, or when compound subjects or collective nouns are involved. It's essential to identify the true subject of the sentence, regardless of intervening phrases or clauses. This foundational understanding forms the bedrock of accurate sentence construction.

Plural Subjects with Plural Verbs

Conversely, plural subjects demand plural verbs. "The dogs bark," "They sing." Similar to singular subjects, the difficulty emerges when phrases separate the subject and verb. Recognizing the plural nature of the subject is paramount. For instance, "The students in the class are learning" – "students" is plural, so "are learning" is the correct plural verb form.

Compound Subjects

Compound subjects, which consist of two or more nouns or pronouns joined by a conjunction like "and," "or," or "nor," can be tricky. When joined by "and," compound subjects are typically plural and require plural verbs. For example, "John and Mary are going to the park." However, when joined by "or" or "nor," the verb agrees with the subject closest to it. Consider "Neither the teacher nor the students understand the complex instructions." Here, "students" is plural, so the plural verb "understand" is used. If the sentence were structured as "Neither the students nor the teacher understands," then "understands" would be correct because "teacher" is singular and closer to the verb.

Subjects Joined by "Or" or "Nor"

As mentioned, conjunctions "or" and "nor" necessitate agreement with the nearest subject. This rule is a frequent source of common sentence errors. When the subjects are of different numbers, the plural subject should be placed closer to the verb to maintain grammatical correctness. For instance, it's better to say, "The cats or the dog is in the yard" than "The dog or the cats is in the yard." The latter is incorrect because the plural "cats" is not closest to the verb "is."

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns, such as "team," "family," "committee," or "audience," can pose challenges because they represent a group of individuals but are grammatically singular. Whether to use a singular or plural verb depends on whether the group is acting as a single unit or as individual members. If the collective noun is acting as a single entity, use a singular verb. "The team wins the championship." If the members of the group are acting individually, use a plural verb. "The committee members disagree on the proposal." Recognizing this subtle distinction is key to avoiding common sentence errors related to collective nouns.

Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns like "everyone," "everybody," "anyone," "anybody," "someone," "somebody," "no one," "nobody," "each," "either," "neither," and "one" are always singular and require singular verbs, even if they refer to multiple people or things. For example, "Everyone enjoys a good book." Pronouns like "both," "few," "many," and "several" are always plural and take plural verbs. "Few understand the intricacies of the system." Pronouns like "all," "any," "more," "most," "none," "some," and "such" can be singular or plural depending on the noun they refer to. If they refer to an uncountable noun, they are singular. "Some of the water is spilled." If they refer to a countable noun, they are plural. "Some of the students are absent."

Sentences Starting with "There" or "Here"

In sentences that begin with "there" or "here," the subject follows the verb. Therefore, you must locate the subject to determine the correct verb form. For example, "There is a book on the table." "Book" is singular, so "is" is used. "There are books on the table." "Books" is plural, so "are" is used. This construction is a common area where common sentence errors occur if the subject is not correctly identified.

Navigating Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement: Ensuring Clarity and Cohesion

Pronoun-antecedent agreement is another critical aspect of clear writing, ensuring that a pronoun correctly refers back to its antecedent (the noun or noun phrase it replaces). When this agreement is faulty, it can lead to confusion and ambiguity, contributing to common sentence errors. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender, and person. This rule helps readers understand precisely who or what the pronoun is referring to, maintaining a logical flow within your sentences and paragraphs.

Singular Antecedents Require Singular Pronouns

Just as subjects and verbs must agree, pronouns and their antecedents must also align in number. If the antecedent is singular, the pronoun referring to it must also be singular. For instance, "The student submitted **his** or **her** assignment on time." Note the use of "his or her" to maintain gender neutrality and singular agreement when the antecedent is singular and the gender is unknown or inclusive. However, singular pronouns like "it," "he," "she," "his," "her," "him," and "his" are used for singular antecedents.

Plural Antecedents Require Plural Pronouns

When the antecedent is plural, the pronoun that refers to it must also be plural. Examples include "they," "them," and "their." For example, "The employees received **their** bonuses." "Employees" is plural, and "their" is the corresponding plural possessive pronoun.

Compound Antecedents

Similar to compound subjects, compound antecedents joined by "and" are typically plural and require plural pronouns. "Sarah and John shared **their** research findings." However, when antecedents are joined by "or" or "nor," the pronoun agrees with the antecedent closest to it. "Neither Maria nor her sisters brought **their** books." Here, "sisters" is plural, so the plural pronoun "their" is used.

Collective Nouns as Antecedents

Collective nouns can also be antecedents for pronouns. If the collective noun is treated as a singular unit, the pronoun should be singular ("it"). If the members are acting individually, the pronoun should be plural ("they"). For example, "The jury delivered **its** verdict promptly," treating the jury as a single entity. However, "The committee members presented **their** individual

reports," emphasizing the individual actions of the members.

Indefinite Pronouns as Antecedents

Indefinite pronouns as antecedents require careful attention. Singular indefinite pronouns like "everyone," "everybody," "anyone," and "nobody" require singular pronouns ("his or her," "his," "her," "it"). For example, "Everyone should bring **his or her** own lunch." However, it is increasingly common and acceptable to use the singular "they" to avoid gender bias when referring to an individual of unknown gender, such as "Everyone should bring **their** own lunch." Plural indefinite pronouns like "both," "few," "many," and "several" require plural pronouns ("they," "them," "their"). "Many of the participants shared **their** experiences."

When Antecedents are Unclear (Ambiguous Pronoun Reference)

A significant source of common sentence errors is ambiguous pronoun reference, where it's unclear which noun a pronoun refers to. This often happens when there are multiple potential antecedents. For instance, "When Sarah spoke to Emily, **she** was very upset." Who was upset, Sarah or Emily? To avoid ambiguity, rephrase the sentence: "Sarah was very upset when **she** spoke to Emily," or "Emily was very upset when Sarah spoke to **her**." Clearly identifying the antecedent is crucial for smooth communication.

Maintaining Tense Consistency: A Smooth Narrative Flow

Tense consistency is vital for a logical and coherent narrative. It ensures that the time frame of your writing remains clear and that the sequence of events is easy to follow. Shifting tenses unnecessarily within a sentence or paragraph can confuse readers and lead to common sentence errors. Generally, you should maintain the same tense throughout a piece of writing unless there is a clear reason to change it, such as describing a past event within a present narrative.

Consistency in Simple Narratives

In most straightforward narratives, you should stick to one primary tense. If you are recounting events that have already happened, the past tense is usually appropriate. For example, "The team prepared for the competition. They practiced diligently and strategized their approach. On the day of the event, they felt confident." All verbs are in the past tense, creating a

consistent timeline.

Shifts in Time Frame

While consistency is key, shifts in time frame are sometimes necessary. However, these shifts must be clearly signaled and logically explained. For example, if you are discussing a current situation and then want to refer to a past event that influenced it, you would introduce the past event with appropriate temporal markers. "Currently, the project is ahead of schedule. However, last month, the team **faced** significant setbacks that they have since overcome." The shift to the past tense with "faced" is justified by the temporal marker "last month."

Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences, which often involve hypothetical situations, have specific tense requirements. For example, in the second conditional ("If I had more time, I would study more"), the past subjunctive is used in the "if" clause, and the conditional present is used in the main clause. Misusing these tenses is a common sentence error.

Reporting Speech

When reporting what someone else said (reported speech), tense shifts often occur. If the reporting verb is in the past tense (e.g., "He said"), the verb in the reported clause often shifts back one tense. For example, direct speech: "She said, 'I am tired.'" Reported speech: "She said that she **was** tired." This is a rule-based shift and not an error when done correctly.

Demystifying Modifiers: Avoiding Misplaced and Dangling Errors

Modifiers are words, phrases, or clauses that provide additional information about another word in the sentence. They add detail, description, and clarity. However, when modifiers are not placed correctly, they can lead to confusion, ambiguity, and the dreaded common sentence errors known as misplaced and dangling modifiers.

Misplaced Modifiers

A misplaced modifier is a word or phrase that is placed too far from the word it modifies, causing the sentence to make unintended or illogical sense. This often happens with descriptive phrases or adverbs. For example, "He bought a

used car from a salesman with a dent in the fender." Does the salesman have a dent in his fender? The intended meaning is that the car has a dent in its fender. To correct this common sentence error, place the modifier as close as possible to the word it modifies: "He bought a used car with a dent in the fender from a salesman."

Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a phrase that modifies a word that is not clearly stated in the sentence. The modifier "dangles" without a logical word to attach to, creating an awkward and often humorous effect. For example, "Walking down the street, the buildings looked very tall." Who was walking down the street? The sentence implies the buildings were walking, which is impossible. To fix this, the subject that the modifier is intended to describe must be included. Corrected: "Walking down the street, **I** thought the buildings looked very tall." Or, restructure the sentence entirely: "As **I** walked down the street, the buildings looked very tall."

Adverb Modifiers

Adverbs that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs also need to be placed correctly. Misplaced adverbs can change the meaning of a sentence. Consider "I only want to eat pizza." This implies that eating pizza is the only thing the speaker wants to do. If the speaker means they want to eat only pizza and nothing else, they should say, "I want to eat only pizza." The placement of "only" is crucial in conveying the intended meaning and avoiding common sentence errors.

Essential vs. Non-Essential Modifiers

Understanding the difference between essential (restrictive) and non-essential (non-restrictive) modifiers is also important. Essential modifiers provide information that is necessary to identify the noun or pronoun they modify and are not set off by commas. "The student **who wrote the essay** received an award." The clause "who wrote the essay" is essential to identify which student. Non-essential modifiers provide extra, but not critical, information and are set off by commas. "My brother, **who lives in California**, is visiting next week." The clause "who lives in California" provides additional information but is not essential to identify which brother.

Conquering Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences: Achieving Sentence Integrity

Comma splices and run-on sentences are among the most common sentence errors

writers make, directly impacting the clarity and structure of their writing. Both occur when two or more independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined incorrectly.

Understanding Independent Clauses

An independent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a complete sentence. For example, "The sun shines brightly."

Comma Splices

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined only by a comma. This is grammatically incorrect because a comma alone is not strong enough to separate two complete thoughts. Example: "The weather was beautiful, we decided to have a picnic." This is a comma splice.

Run-On Sentences (Fused Sentences)

A run-on sentence, or fused sentence, occurs when two or more independent clauses are joined with no punctuation or conjunction at all. Example: "The dog barked loudly the cat ran away." This is a run-on sentence.

Correcting Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences

There are several effective ways to correct these common sentence errors:

- **Use a period:** Separate the independent clauses into two distinct sentences. "The weather was beautiful. We decided to have a picnic."
- **Use a semicolon:** If the two independent clauses are closely related in meaning, a semicolon can be used to join them. "The weather was beautiful; we decided to have a picnic."
- **Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction:** Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) can be used with a comma to join independent clauses. "The weather was beautiful, so we decided to have a picnic."
- **Use a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb:** Conjunctive adverbs (however, therefore, moreover, consequently, etc.) can be used with a semicolon and a comma to join independent clauses. "The weather was beautiful; therefore, we decided to have a picnic."
- **Make one clause subordinate:** Turn one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause by adding a subordinating conjunction (e.g., because,

although, since, when, if). "Because the weather was beautiful, we decided to have a picnic."

Eliminating Sentence Fragments: Ensuring Completeness

A sentence fragment is a piece of a sentence that is punctuated as if it were a complete sentence, but it lacks a subject, a verb, or both, or it is a subordinate clause trying to stand alone. Fragments can sometimes be used for stylistic effect, but in most cases, they are considered common sentence errors that detract from clarity and professionalism. Identifying and correcting fragments is essential for strong writing.

What Constitutes a Fragment?

Fragments can take several forms:

- **Dependent Clauses:** "Because the train was late." This is a dependent clause; it cannot stand alone as a complete thought. It needs an independent clause to make it complete: "Because the train was late, we missed our appointment."
- **Phrases without Subjects or Verbs:** "Running quickly through the park." This phrase lacks a subject and a complete verb. To make it a complete sentence, add a subject and a conjugated verb: "The child was running quickly through the park."
- **Phrases lacking a complete verb:** "The students, excited about the field trip." This phrase has a subject ("students") but lacks a complete verb. The participle "excited" needs a helping verb: "The students, excited about the field trip, boarded the bus."

Correcting Sentence Fragments

To correct sentence fragments, you can typically:

- **Combine the fragment with a nearby complete sentence:** "The train was late, causing us to miss our appointment."
- **Add the missing subject or verb:** "The students boarded the bus, excited about the field trip."

- Rewrite the fragment as a complete sentence: "The weather was surprisingly pleasant."

Achieving Parallel Structure: Balanced and Rhythmic Sentences

Parallel structure, also known as parallelism, is the principle of using the same grammatical form for elements that have the same function within a sentence. This creates a sense of balance, rhythm, and clarity, making your writing more engaging and easier to read. When parallel structure is not maintained, it results in awkwardness and is considered one of the common sentence errors.

Lists and Series

Parallel structure is particularly important in lists or series of words, phrases, or clauses. All items in the list should have the same grammatical form. For example, instead of "She likes to read, to write, and painting," the parallel structure would be "She likes to read, to write, and **to paint**," or "She likes reading, writing, and **painting**."

Comparisons

When comparing two or more items, they should be presented in parallel form. For instance, "He prefers driving to **fly**" is not parallel. The corrected version is "He prefers driving to **flying**," or "He prefers to drive rather than **to fly**."

Clauses and Phrases in Compound Sentences

In compound sentences, the clauses or phrases joined by coordinating conjunctions should ideally be parallel. "The team celebrated their victory, and **they** had a party" is parallel. However, "The team celebrated their victory, and **celebrating** was important" is not.

Common Errors in Parallelism

Common sentence errors related to parallelism occur when writers mix grammatical forms within a list or comparison, such as using a noun, then a gerund, then an infinitive. Always check that your parallel elements are indeed parallel in structure.

Combating Wordiness and Redundancy: Concise and Powerful Expression

Wordiness and redundancy occur when a sentence contains more words than necessary to convey its meaning, or when the same idea is repeated using different words. While not strictly grammatical errors in the same vein as comma splices, they significantly hinder clarity and impact, making sentences less effective. Concise writing is powerful writing.

Identifying Unnecessary Words

Look for phrases that can be replaced by single words, excessive adverbs, and weak constructions. For example, "due to the fact that" can be replaced by "because." "In order to" can often be shortened to "to." "At this point in time" can simply be "now."

Eliminating Redundant Phrases

Redundancy involves saying the same thing twice. Examples include "added bonus," "future plans," "end result," and "completely unique." Removing these redundancies tightens your prose.

Using Strong Verbs

Weak verbs often lead to wordiness. Instead of "He made an announcement," use "He announced." Instead of "She is going to be a doctor," use "She will be a doctor." Strong verbs make sentences more direct and impactful.

Avoiding Passive Voice (When Appropriate)

While passive voice is not inherently wrong, overusing it can make writing wordy and indirect. Compare "The report was written by the committee" with "The committee wrote the report." The active voice is generally more concise and direct.

Active vs. Passive Voice: Choosing the Right Emphasis

The choice between active and passive voice can significantly influence the tone, emphasis, and conciseness of your writing. While active voice is generally preferred for its directness and clarity, understanding when and

why to use passive voice is also important. Misusing them can contribute to common sentence errors related to clarity and flow.

Active Voice

In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action. The structure is typically Subject + Verb + Object. Active voice is usually more direct, concise, and engaging. Example: "The author wrote the book." Here, "author" is the subject performing the action of writing.

Passive Voice

In passive voice, the subject of the sentence receives the action. The structure typically involves a form of the verb "to be" and the past participle of the main verb, often followed by a "by" phrase indicating the performer of the action. Example: "The book was written by the author." Here, "book" is the subject, and it receives the action of being written. The performer, "author," is in a "by" phrase.

When to Use Active Voice

Use active voice for most of your writing to make it more vigorous, clear, and concise. It directly answers the question "Who or what is doing the action?"

When to Use Passive Voice

Passive voice can be useful in specific situations:

- **When the actor is unknown or unimportant:** "The window was broken." We don't know who broke it, and it might not matter.
- **When you want to emphasize the recipient of the action:** "The award was presented to the deserving student." The focus is on the student.
- **When you want to create a more objective or formal tone, often in scientific or technical writing:** "The experiment was conducted under controlled conditions."
- **To avoid assigning blame:** "Mistakes were made."

Overreliance on passive voice can make writing sound hesitant, indirect, and wordy, making it a common sentence error to avoid in most contexts.

Effective Proofreading Strategies: Catching Common Sentence Errors

Even the most skilled writers can overlook errors. Developing effective proofreading strategies is the final, crucial step in ensuring your writing is polished and free from common sentence errors. Proofreading is not just a quick glance; it's a deliberate and systematic process.

Read Aloud

Reading your work aloud forces you to slow down and engage with each word and sentence. You'll often hear awkward phrasing, missing words, or grammatical mistakes that you might miss when reading silently.

Read Backwards

Reading your sentences from the end to the beginning can help you focus on individual sentences without getting caught up in the overall meaning or flow. This is particularly effective for catching spelling errors and subject-verb agreement issues.

Focus on One Type of Error at a Time

Instead of trying to catch everything at once, conduct multiple proofreading passes, dedicating each pass to a specific type of error. For instance, one pass for comma splices, another for misplaced modifiers, and another for spelling.

Take Breaks

Step away from your writing for a period before proofreading. Fresh eyes are more likely to spot errors. Even a short break can make a significant difference.

Use Technology Wisely

Grammar and spell checkers can be helpful tools, but they are not foolproof. They can miss context-dependent errors or suggest incorrect changes. Always review their suggestions critically and rely on your own judgment.

Print Your Work

Proofreading a physical copy of your work can reveal errors that you might overlook on a screen. The different medium can help you see your writing from a new perspective.

Seek a Second Opinion

If possible, have someone else proofread your work. Another reader may catch errors that you have consistently missed.

Conclusion: Mastering Sentence Structure for Impactful Communication

Navigating the intricacies of sentence structure and avoiding common sentence errors is an ongoing process, but one that yields significant rewards. By diligently applying the principles of subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, tense consistency, correct modifier placement, proper sentence joining, and parallel structure, you can transform your writing. Eliminating wordiness and understanding the nuances of active and passive voice further enhance clarity and impact. Remember that effective proofreading is your final safeguard against errors. Mastering these elements empowers you to communicate your ideas with precision, confidence, and authority, ensuring your message is not just heard, but truly understood and appreciated by your audience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the difference between 'affect' and 'effect'?

'Affect' is typically a verb meaning to influence or produce a change. 'Effect' is usually a noun meaning the result or consequence of an action. For example, 'The weather will affect our plans,' and 'The weather had a negative effect on our plans.'

When should I use 'its' versus 'it's'?

'Its' is the possessive form of 'it' (belonging to it). 'It's' is a contraction of 'it is' or 'it has'. Remember: if you can replace it with 'it is,' use 'it's'.

What is a dangling modifier and how can I avoid it?

A dangling modifier is a phrase or clause that doesn't clearly modify a specific word in the sentence, often leading to confusion. To avoid it, make sure the word being modified is close to the modifying phrase. For example, instead of 'Walking down the street, the buildings were tall,' write 'Walking down the street, I saw that the buildings were tall.'

What is a comma splice and how do I fix it?

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined only by a comma. You can fix it by using a period, a semicolon, or a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (like 'and,' 'but,' 'or').

Explain the correct usage of 'their,' 'there,' and 'they're.'

'Their' is possessive (belonging to them). 'There' indicates a place or is used as an expletive. 'They're' is a contraction of 'they are'. Example: 'They're going to put their bags over there.'

What's the common mistake with subject-verb agreement?

The most common error is failing to match the verb with the subject in number. Singular subjects take singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs. For example, 'The dog barks' (singular) not 'The dog bark,' and 'The dogs bark' (plural) not 'The dogs barks.'

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to common sentence errors, each with a short description:

1.

The Comma Catastrophe: A Guide to Punctuation Predicaments

This book dives deep into the often-misunderstood world of commas. It explores how misplaced or missing commas can lead to nonsensical sentences and unintended humor. You'll learn the rules for comma usage in lists, clauses, and introductory phrases, transforming your writing from chaotic to clear.

2.

Semicolon Shenanigans: Mastering the Middle Ground

Semicolons can be tricky, but this book demystifies their power. It explains how semicolons connect closely related independent clauses, preventing run-on sentences without the abruptness of a period. Discover how to use them effectively to create more sophisticated and flowing prose.

3.

Dangling Modifiers: When Your Words Lose Their Way

This title tackles the perplexing issue of dangling and misplaced modifiers. It provides hilarious real-world examples of how these errors can create bizarre and unintended meanings. Learn to anchor your descriptive phrases correctly, ensuring your sentences accurately reflect your intended message.

4.

Pronoun Predicaments: Who is "It" Anyway?

This practical guide focuses on common pronoun errors like unclear antecedents and pronoun-antecedent agreement. It breaks down how to ensure your pronouns clearly refer to their nouns, avoiding confusion for your reader. Master this to make your writing logically sound and easy to follow.

5.

Verb Tense Turmoil: Navigating the Timeline of Your Prose

Explore the complexities of verb tenses and how inconsistency can derail your narrative. This book offers clear explanations and strategies for maintaining a consistent and logical flow of time in your writing. Learn to avoid jarring shifts and create a smooth, cohesive reading experience.

6.

Subject-Verb Agreement Snafus: The Plural of "Me"

This essential resource addresses the common pitfalls of subject-verb agreement. It provides straightforward rules and practice exercises to help you ensure your verbs correctly match their subjects, whether singular or plural. Eliminate this common error for grammatically sound sentences.

7.

Run-On Sentence Ruckus: Taming the Endless Word Train

Overcome the challenge of run-on sentences and comma splices with this comprehensive guide. The book offers practical techniques for breaking down

overly long sentences into manageable, clear components. Learn to identify and correct these errors, bringing order to your writing.

8.

Parallelism Problems: When Your Structure Goes Awry

Discover the importance of parallel structure for clarity and elegance in your writing. This book explains how to maintain consistent grammatical form for similar ideas within a sentence or list. Achieve balance and rhythm in your sentences by mastering this key stylistic element.

9.

Apostrophe Agonies: Possessives, Contractions, and the It's/Its Conundrum

This book provides a focused look at the often-misused apostrophe. It clarifies the rules for possessives, contractions, and the notoriously tricky "its" versus "it's." By the end, you'll be confident in your apostrophe usage, avoiding common mistakes that detract from your credibility.

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