

Rules to Remember FOR GRAMMAR AND USAGE

- Homophones, or words that sound alike but are spelled differently, are tricky. Check your work to make sure you have used common homophones correctly.

Examples:

People have a responsibility to put their dirty clothes in the right place.

There is no way I would put my dirty socks on the table.

They're right here, in my own dirty-clothes hamper.

- Verb tenses help show time in a piece of writing. For example, you would use verbs in the past tense to describe events that took place during the Civil War. The key to helping readers make sense of the time in your writing is using the tenses consistently.

Examples:

I walk to school in the morning and take the bus home. (present tense)

I drove to the airport and flew to California. (past tense)

- Every subject and its verb must also be in agreement, so that singular and plural nouns are matched to verbs with correct endings.

Example:

Dogs love chocolate but it makes them sick. (dogs love = plural; it makes = singular)

- Apostrophes can be used to show possessives and contractions.

Examples:

Bailey's favorite pastime is sleeping on my bed, curled up with my other cat.

It's a nice life if you're a cat.

- Pronouns and their antecedents (the word they stand for) should always agree. The pronouns *who*, *what*, and *that* can show relationships in a sentence when they're used correctly. Make sure that you
 - (a) match the pronoun with its antecedent;
 - (b) use *who* to refer to specific people and animals with names;
 - (c) use *what* to refer to inanimate objects;
 - (d) use *that* to refer to generic animals, things, and people, too.

Examples:

The man was snoring so loudly, he woke up everyone in the bus depot.

Mr. Rimbaldi, who was snoring, made everyone laugh out loud.

What is that funny sound Mr. Rimbaldi is making?

I've heard a lot of snores in my life, but that really takes the cake.