

The Twelve Rules of Good Writing **Writing for Standardized Tests Text**

1. Avoid slang and colloquialisms. **Topic 13 pg 53**
 - He is really into skateboards.
 - She plays a wicked game of tennis.
2. Avoid fragments and run-on sentences. **Topic 28 pg 133**
 - Global warming. That is what the scientists and journalists are worried about this year.
 - Seattle is a wonderful place to live. Having mountains, ocean, and forests all within easy driving distance. If you can ignore the rain.
3. Use commas correctly. **Topic 17 pg 65**
 - My investment advisor recommended that I construct a portfolio of, stocks, bonds, commodities futures, and precious metals.
 - I can't believe that you sat through that long, dull, uninspired, movie three times.
 - The newspaper, that has the most insipid editorials, is the *Daily Times*.
 - Having watered his petunias every day during the drought Harold was very disappointed when his garden was destroyed by insects.
4. Use semicolons correctly. **Topic 17 pg 65**
 - Whooping cranes are an endangered species; and they are unlikely to survive if we continue to pollute.
5. Use colons correctly. **Topic 17 pg 65**
 - I want: a slice of pizza and a small garden salad.
6. Use hyphens and dashes correctly.
 - Sixty five students constituted a majority.
 - The constitution protects against self incrimination.
7. Use apostrophes correctly.
 - You're chest of drawers is ugly.
 - The dog hurt it's paw.
8. Pay attention to subject-verb agreement. **Topic 20 pg 91**
 - The joys of climbing mountains, especially if one is a novice climber without the proper equipment, escapes me.
 - A group of jockeys who have already finished the first race and who wish to have their pictures taken are blocking my view of the horses.
9. Use modifiers correctly. **Topic 29 pg 139**
 - Cheung and Martha sat talking about the movie in the office.
 - The dentist instructed him regularly to brush his teeth.
10. Use pronouns correctly. **Topic 25 pg 117 and Topic 27 pg 129 (who vs. whom)**
 - The teacher told the student he was lazy.
 - Sara knows more about history than Irina because she learned it from her father.
11. Pay attention to parallelism. **Topic 31 pg 151**
 - They are sturdy, attractive, and cost only a dollar each.
 - All students should learn word processing, accounting, and how to program computers.
12. Don't shift narrative voice. **Topic 26 pg 123**
 - In my lifetime, I have seen many challenges to the principle of free speech. We can see how a free society can get too complacent when free speech is taken for granted.
 - Just by following the news, you can readily see how politicians have a vested interest in pleasing powerful interest groups. But one should not generalize about this tendency.

Common Usage Mistakes

1. Subject-Verb Agreement When Subject Follows Verb **Topic 20 pg 91**
 - Despite an intensive campaign to encourage conservation, there is many Americans who have not accepted recycling as a way of life.
 - High above the Hudson River rises the gleaming skyscrapers of Manhattan.
2. Subject-Verb Agreement When Subject and Verb Are Separated **Topic 20 pg 91**
 - The local congressman, a reliable representative of both community and statewide interests, are among the most respected persons in the public sector.
 - The collection of paintings entitled “Clammy Clam Clams” are one of the most widely traveled exhibits in recent years.
3. Subject-Verb Agreement When Subject Seems Plural **Topic 20 pg 91**
 - Neither ambient techno not trance were a part of mainstream listening habits in the United States 10 years ago.
 - Poor pitching, along with injuries and defensive lapses, are among the problems that plague last year’s championship team.
4. Confusion of Simple Past and Past Participle **Topic 21 pg 97**
 - Several passersby seen the bank robber leaving the scene of his crime.
5. Confusion of Infinitive and Gerund
 - Team officials heralded Cap Day as an attempt at attracting a larger turnout of fans.
 - Surveillance cameras are frequently placed in convenience stores to prevent customers to shoplift.
6. Non-Idiomatic Preposition After Verb **Topic 24 pg 113**
 - City Council members frequently meet until the early morning hours in order to work in their stalemates.
 - The singer’s new CD was frowned at by many parents because of its violent lyrics.
7. Number Agreement Problems **Topic 25 pg 117**
 - The advertisement in the newspaper requested that only persons with a high school diploma apply for the position.
 - The economies of Romania and Albania are considered by many to be a symbol of the failure of the command market structure.
8. Pronoun in the Wrong Number **Topic 25 pg 117**
 - The typical college student has difficulty adjusting to academic standards much higher than those of their school.
9. Pronoun in the Wrong Case in Compound Noun Phrases **Topic 26 pg 123**
 - Him and the rest of the team stopped by the malt shop for milkshakes after the game.
 - Uncle John and Aunt Rosie join my parents and I for dinner every Thursday.
10. Pronoun Shift **Topic 26 pg 123**
 - One cannot sleep soundly if you exercise vigorously before retiring to bed.
 - If someone loses his way in the airport, they can ask any employee for directions.
11. Faulty Comparison **Topic 30 pg 145**

Elie Wiesel’s name is less well known than last year’s Heisman Trophy winner.
12. Misuse of Adjective or Adverb **Topic 22 pg 103**

The applicants hoped to buy decent built houses for their families.
13. Double Negative **Topic 23 pg 109**

James easily passed the biology exam without hardly studying his lab notes.