



Top 10 Grammar Mistakes on the ACT/SAT

10 Concept Guide to Boost Your Score

Scholar's Edge Test Prep



Introduction

Welcome! This guide will help you tackle the most common grammar pitfalls on the ACT and SAT. These tests are designed to catch students slipping up on subtle grammar rules. Knowing these 10 traps can give you the edge you need.

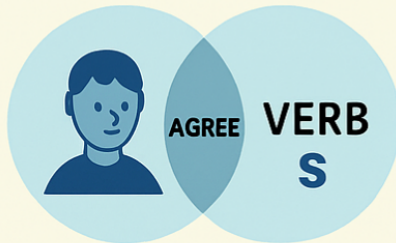
Each section includes:

- A definition
- Quick tips
- Easy examples
- Test-maker tricks
- Extra examples for clarity
- Practice questions to test your understanding

Let's sharpen your grammar skills and get you test-day ready!



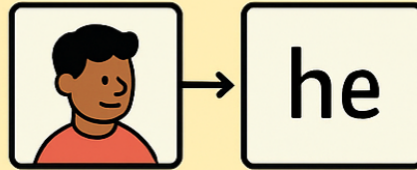
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT



SUBJECT

The cat **sleeps** all day.

PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT



ANTECEDENT

PRONOUN

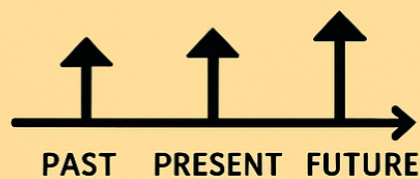
Each student must complete **his** homework.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS



She **almost** drove for six hours.

VERB TENSE CONSISTENCY



Last night, we **watched** a movie.



Subject-Verb Agreement Definition: The verb must agree in number (singular/plural) with the subject.

Quick Tip: Cross out prepositional phrases and extra info to isolate the true subject.

Examples:

1. Incorrect: The group of students *are* going on a trip.
Correct: The group of students *is* going on a trip.
2. Incorrect: Each of the players *have* a locker.
Correct: Each of the players *has* a locker.
3. Incorrect: The bouquet of roses *smell* lovely.
Correct: The bouquet of roses *smells* lovely.

Trick Alert: Test-makers add distractions between the subject and verb to throw you off.

Practice Questions:

1. The box of ornaments (is/are) in the attic.
2. Neither of the answers (seem/seems) correct.
3. A team of engineers (was/were) assigned to the project.



SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Subjects and verbs must match in number.

Singular

A student
works hard.

Plural

Students
work hard.





Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement Definition: Pronouns must agree in number and gender with the noun they replace.

Quick Tip: Match the pronoun directly to its noun (antecedent).

Examples:

1. Incorrect: Every student must bring *their* pencil.
Correct: Every student must bring *his or her* pencil.
2. Incorrect: The players took *his* gear to the field.
Correct: The players took *their* gear to the field.
3. Incorrect: Neither of the girls said *they* were responsible.
Correct: Neither of the girls said *she* was responsible.

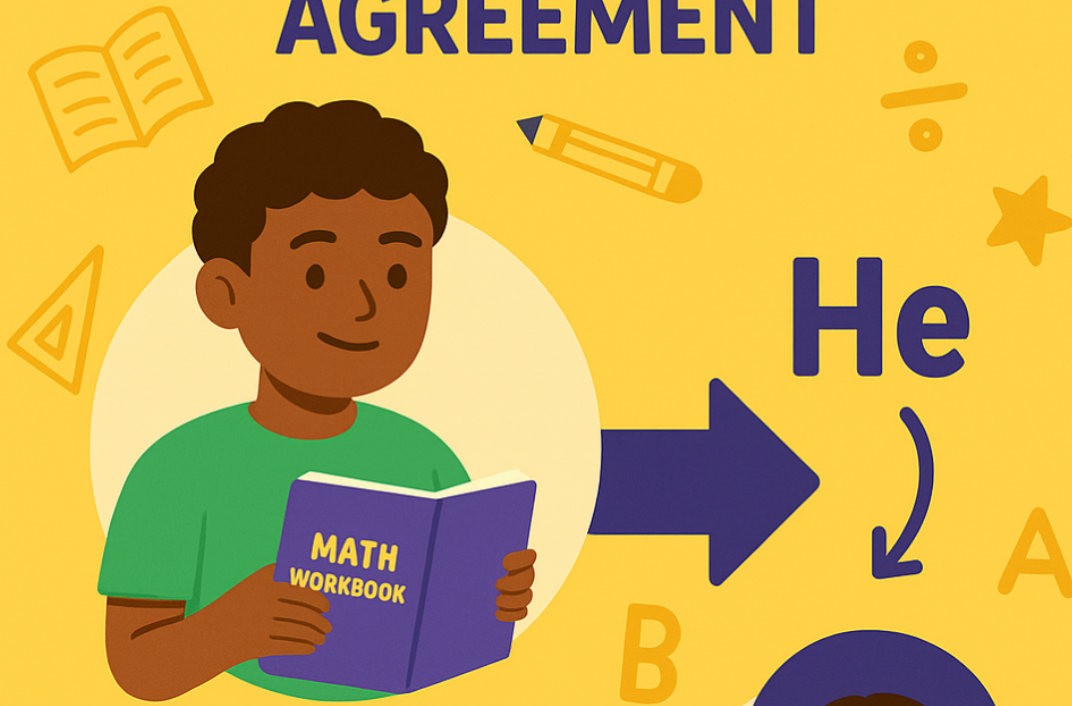
Trick Alert: Indefinite pronouns like "everyone," "each," and "nobody" are singular.

Practice Questions:

1. If anyone has a question, (he or she/they) should raise their hand.
2. Both the boys and the girls brought (his/their) uniforms.
3. Each of the students turned in (their/his or her) paper.



PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT



ANTECEDENT

Pronouns must agree in number and gender with the noun they replace.

- ✓ Each student must complete his or her homework.



- ✓ The players took their gear to the field.



PRONOUN





Misplaced Modifiers Definition: Modifiers must be placed next to the word they describe.

Quick Tip: Ask yourself: What is being described?

Examples:

1. Incorrect: Running to catch the bus, the backpack flew off her shoulder.
Correct: Running to catch the bus, *she* lost her backpack.
2. Incorrect: Covered in syrup, Jenny ate the pancakes.
Correct: Jenny ate the pancakes, which were covered in syrup.
3. Incorrect: While driving to work, a deer crossed the road.
Correct: While *she* was driving to work, a deer crossed the road.

Trick Alert: Long introductory phrases are often tested with misplaced modifiers.

Practice Questions:

1. Walking through the park, the birds (sang/sang to her).
2. Glancing at the clock, the class (was dismissed/dismissed the students).
3. Exhausted from the trip, (my bed/the suitcase) looked inviting.

Verb Tense Consistency Definition: Stay consistent with verb tense unless the time frame clearly changes.

Quick Tip: Match all verbs in the sentence unless a shift is necessary.

Examples:

1. Incorrect: He *was running* and *jumps* over the fence.
Correct: He *was running* and *jumped* over the fence.
2. Incorrect: She *studies* for hours but *forgot* to eat.
Correct: She *studied* for hours but *forgot* to eat.
3. Incorrect: They *eat* dinner and then *watched* a movie.
Correct: They *ate* dinner and then *watched* a movie.

Trick Alert: Watch for time clues like "last year," "now," "currently," etc.

Practice Questions:

1. I *walked* to school and then *see/saw* my friends.
2. She *finishes* her homework and *went/goes* to bed.

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3. The dog *barked* and *chases/chased* the squirrel.

Faulty Comparisons Definition: Only compare similar items.

Quick Tip: Make sure the items being compared are logically parallel.

Examples:

1. Incorrect: The math score was higher than English.
Correct: The math score was higher than *the English score*.
2. Incorrect: Her love for books is greater than movies.
Correct: Her love for books is greater than *her love for movies*.
3. Incorrect: I like apples more than my brother.
Correct: I like apples more than *my brother does*.

Trick Alert: Test-makers leave out part of the comparison to trip you up.

Practice Questions:

1. I enjoy history more than (science/my brother).
2. The school is larger than (last year/its rival school).
3. Her skills are more advanced than (anyone/her classmates).

Parallel Structure Definition: Items in a list or comparison must follow the same grammatical structure.

Quick Tip: Use the same verb form or part of speech for all items.

Examples:

1. Incorrect: She likes dancing, to swim, and biking.
Correct: She likes dancing, swimming, and biking.
2. Incorrect: The manager is smart, effective, and knows how to lead.
Correct: The manager is smart, effective, and *a strong leader*.
3. Incorrect: He wants to win the game, to impress his coach, and fame.
Correct: He wants to win the game, to impress his coach, and *to gain fame*.

Trick Alert: Lists are often hidden in long sentences.

**Practice Questions:**

1. My hobbies include reading, writing, and (to draw/drawing).
2. The job requires you to be organized, motivated, and (have/having) experience.
3. She wants to study law, medicine, and (become/to become) a professor.

Apostrophe Use (Its vs. It's) Definition: "It's" = "it is"; "its" = possessive.

Quick Tip: Read "it's" as "it is"—if it doesn't work, use "its."

Examples:

1. Incorrect: The cat chased it's tail.
Correct: The cat chased *its* tail.
2. Incorrect: Its going to rain today.
Correct: *It's* going to rain today.
3. Incorrect: Every dog has it's own leash.
Correct: Every dog has *its* own leash.

Trick Alert: Possessive pronouns (his, hers, its) do NOT use apostrophes.

Practice Questions:

1. The tree lost (its/it's) leaves.
2. (Its/It's) important to study for the test.
3. The dog wagged (its/it's) tail.



Apostrophe Use

Possessive Noun

The **dog's** leash is red.



Contraction

They're at the park



Plural of a Letter

There are two **m's**.

m.

Comma Splices & Run-ons Definition: Two independent clauses cannot be joined by just a comma.

Quick Tip: Use a period, semicolon, or conjunction (and, but, etc.).

Examples:

1. Incorrect: I love pizza, it's my favorite food.
Correct: I love pizza. It's my favorite food.
2. Incorrect: She went to the store, she forgot her wallet.
Correct: She went to the store, but she forgot her wallet.
3. Incorrect: The test was hard, I passed anyway.
Correct: The test was hard; I passed anyway.



Trick Alert: If both sides of the comma can stand alone, it's likely a splice.

Practice Questions:

1. I finished the essay, I turned it in. (Fix this.)
2. The sun set, we kept hiking. (Fix this.)
3. He studied all night, he was ready. (Fix this.)

Redundancy & Wordiness Definition: Don't say the same thing twice or use more words than necessary.

Quick Tip: The most concise grammatically correct answer is usually right.

Examples:

1. Incorrect: She made a final conclusion at the end.
Correct: She concluded.
2. Incorrect: The reason why is because he was late.
Correct: He was late.
3. Incorrect: In my personal opinion, I think we should go.
Correct: I think we should go.

Trick Alert: The ACT and SAT LOVE trimming unnecessary phrases.

Practice Questions:

1. Replace with a better version: "He returned back home."
2. Replace with a better version: "At this point in time, we need to act."
3. Replace with a better version: "In the event that it rains, we'll cancel."

Thanks for reviewing with Scholar's Edge! For more tips, tutoring, or practice resources, visit:



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