

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement – The antecedent (the word that a pronoun refers to) must agree in number with the pronoun.

This type of error sometimes occurs when the antecedent seems to be plural but actually denotes a **group** or **unit**—*one* group or unit as a whole.

Singular Antecedent (1 Group) Plural Pronoun

Incorrect – The team scored *their* final goal in overtime.

Singular Antecedent Singular Pronoun

Correct – The team scored *its* final goal in overtime.

This type of error can also occur when the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun (i.e., refers to nonspecific persons or things) and seems to have a plural meaning but actually is singular.

Singular Antecedent (Each individual person) Plural Pronoun

Incorrect – In this class, everyone performs at their fitness level.

Singular Antecedent Singular Pronouns

Correct – In this class, everyone performs at her or his fitness level.

Run-on Sentences – Run-on sentences fuse two independent clauses (a word group that can stand alone as a sentence) incorrectly.

Incorrect – I went to the store I bought bread. [A conjunction is missing.]

When two independent clauses appear in one sentence, they must be joined in one of these ways:

Use a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet)

Correct – I went to the store, **and** I bought bread.

Use a semicolon. A semicolon joins two independent clauses.

Correct – I went to the store; I bought bread.

Sentence Fragments – A sentence fragment is only part of a sentence. It can be a dependent clause (has a subject and verb but begins with a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun) or a phrase that lacks either a subject or a verb.

Incorrect – Because the torrential downpour ruined the fields. [This is a dependent clause.]

Correct – Because the torrential downpour ruined the fields, the games were canceled.

Incorrect – That failed to meet the teacher's expectations. [This is a dependent clause.]

Correct – The boy had to redo the assignment that failed to meet the teacher's expectations.

Incorrect – Waited all day long until the line finally dwindled. [A subject is missing.]

Correct – She waited all day long until the line finally dwindled.

Incorrect – The brown sweater that was in my closet last night. [A verb is missing.]

Correct – The brown sweater that was in my closet last night is now missing.