

Bracken Business Communications Clinic

10 MOST COMMON WRITING ERRORS

From: St. Martin's Handbook, Lunsford and Connors

1. **Missing comma after an introductory element**

Wrong: Before signing up for classes check the current schedule to see if they offer that course.

Right: Before signing up for classes, check the current schedule to see if they offer that course.

2. **Vague pronoun reference**

Wrong: Teresa and Katelyn both had quite a bit of accounting experience; she was the city auditor for five years.

Right: Teresa and Katelyn both had quite a bit of accounting experience; Katelyn was the city auditor for five years.

3. **Missing comma in compound sentence**

Wrong: Please look at the enclosed list of web-based businesses and then choose one for the topic of your term paper.

Right: Please look at the enclosed list of web-based businesses, and then choose one for the topic of your term paper.

4. **Wrong word**

Wrong: The board's vote was anonymous.

Right: The board's vote was unanimous.

5. **Missing comma(s) with nonrestrictive element**

Wrong: Joan Smith who started a successful computer company from her kitchen table now teaches management classes.

Right: Joan Smith, who started a successful computer company from her kitchen table, now teaches management classes.

6. **Wrong or missing verb ending**

Wrong: She believe she should have received a higher grade.

Right: She believes she should have received a higher grade.

7. **Wrong or missing preposition**

Wrong: He refused to comply to university regulations.

Right: He refused to comply with university regulations.

8. **Comma splice**

Wrong: I really enjoyed his class, he often used relevant examples from his own business.

Right: I really enjoyed his class; he often used relevant examples from his own business.

9. **Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe**

Wrong: She is one of the Bobcat's strongest players.

Right: She is one of the Bobcats' strongest players.

10. **Unnecessary shift in tense**

Wrong: When the students arrive at their dorms, they stopped in the lobby for their room assignments.

Right: When the students arrive at their dorms, they stop in the lobby for their room assignments.