

BBC 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.

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