BASIC STRATEGIES

LESS IS MORE	CROSS OUT THE CRAP	READ VERTICALLY	WHEN IN DOUBT
Go with the shortest answer possible. Ignore this rule if the shortest answer makes no sense.	Whenever you are hunting down the subject, or whenever you think a grammar question is tricky, **CROSS OUT THE CRAP.**	Use the answer choices to help you determine the skill being tested.	If there is a **NO CHANGE** option, it is right 25% of the time.
The original (NO CHANGE) answer may already be the shortest.	Crap includes: prepositional phrases, non-essential phrases, and descriptions	More than one skill can be tested at a time.	If there is an "OMIT" option, that is right 50% of the time.

SENTENCES

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT	COMPLETE SENTENCES	TRANSITION WORDS
Subjects agree with their verbs in number (singular or plural).	A complete sentence as three requirements.	Read the previous sentence.
EXAMPLE: The friends are robbing banks.	A **subject**: The *dog* sought shelter from the storm.	Two agreeing sentences: **consequently, thus, therefore, because of, furthermore, in fact, indeed, moreover**
Subjects can be nouns or pronouns.	A **verb**: Manny proudly *carried* his bucket of lobsters.	EXAMPLE: He studies; **thus**, he gets good grades.
EXAMPLE: They are terrorizing the Midwest.	A **complete thought**: Kyle seemed *lost in thought*.	Two disagreeing sentences: **conversely, despite, ironically, however, still, though, yet, nonetheless, in spite of, nevertheless**
Watch out for prepositional phrases!	A **complete thought** is a collection of words that is fully understandable.	EXAMPLE: Sam interviewed for the job; **however**, he did not get called back.

SENTENCES (cont)

EXAMPLE: The butterfly *with the bright colors* is beautiful.	A **complete thought** could also just be one subject and one verb, as long as it makes sense.	Other transitions: **in closing, generally, as, after, while, until, before

COMPOUND SENTENCE

Two complete sentences joined together to create one sentence.

COMMA+FANBOYS: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**

EXAMPLE: Savannah likes soccer and tennis, but she loves pro-wrestling more.

SEMICOLON: No comma or FANBOYS needed

EXAMPLE: Savannah likes soccer and tennis; she loves pro-wrestling more.

COMPLEX SENTENCE

One incomplete sentence and one complete sentence joined together to create one sentence.

COMMAS are only used if the incomplete sentence comes first.

EXAMPLE: *Because Savannah loved pro-wrestling,* she went to Buffalo Jim's Wrestling School.

PARALLEL STRUCTURE

IF YOU START ONE WAY, YOU KEEP IT THAT WAY

Verbs: He was **walking, talking,** and **smiling.**

Punctuation: He smiled -- roguishly, strangely -- at the woman in the coffee shop.

Voice: One will find that the library is a great place for one to study.

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MODIFIERS

MODIFIERS ARE ADJECTIVES/ADVERBS/DESCRIPTIVE PHRASES	SUPERLATIVES
EXAMPLE: **Elegantly dressed,** the queen floated into the room.	Superlatives are just modifiers that distinguish differences between things or ideas.
A MODIFYING CLAUSE GOES NEXT TO WHAT IT MODIFIES	When comparing two things, use **-er/-ier, more, or less**.
EXAMPLE: **Driving home late after work,** he proceeded cautiously.	When comparing three or more things, use **-est/iest, most, least.**
BAD EXAMPLE: **Racing through the red light,** the police officer pulled Liam over.	EXAMPLE: I like chocolate ice cream **more** than vanilla, but peanut butter chocolate ice cream is my **most** favorite.

COMMAS

SEPARATE ITEMS IN A LIST	INTRODUCTORY PHRASES	NON-ESSENTIAL PHRASES
Millie remembered to bring her toothbrush, face wash, and sword.	Over the weekend, Millie slayed many a demon.	Millie, smart and brave, was soon praised by all in the town.

APOSTROPHES

CONTRACTIONS	POSSESSION
When checking whether a word is a contraction or not, try pulling it apart into two words.	If one owner: **'s**
EXAMPLES: **it's (it is), you've (you have), you're (you are), they've (they have), we've (we have), he's (he is), it's (it is), who's (who is)**	If more than one owner: **s'**
WEIRD POSSESSIONS: its, whose, your, their, ours	

SEMICOLONS, COLONS, AND LONG DASHES

SEMICOLONS	COLONS	LONG DASHES
Semicolon = ;	Colon = :	Long Dash = --
They can only be used to CONNECT TWO COMPLETE SENTENCES.	A COMPLETE SENTENCE must come BEFORE the colon.	If using a single long dash, a COMPLETE SENTENCE must go BEFORE it.
Often, they are used to connect transitions as well.	Colons are used to set off: lists, explanations, definitions, quotes, etc.	If you want to add some drama, you can replace two commas with two long dashes for effect.
EXAMPLE: Mike was very worried about Will**; in fact,** he couldn't even sleep because of it.	EXAMPLE: Papa could often be heard singing his favorite song: "You are My Sunshine."	EXAMPLE: The Rainbow Room **-- deadly quiet, hauntingly still --** was not as empty as it seemed.

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COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Then/Than	Its/It's	Two/To/Too	There/Their/-They're
Then refers to time.	**Its** is possessive pronoun.	**Two** is a number, as in **2**.	**There** usually refers to a place, like *here and there*.
EXAMPLE: He went to the store; **then** he went home.	EXAMPLE: I love **its** color!	**To** is a preposition or the beginning of an infinitive.	**Their** is a possessive pronoun.
Than is a compar-ison.	**It's** is a contraction that means *it is*	**Too** means also or to indicate a large amount.	**They're** is a contraction of *they are*
EXAMPLE: She like big dogs more **than** little ones.	EXAMPLE: **It's (It is)** so good to see youi!	EXAMPLE: **Two** monsters went **to** Tokyo **to destroy** it, but Tokyo was **too** far away, and they had bellyaches, **too**.	EXAMPLE: **They're (They are)** going over **there** to get **their** money back.

PRONOUNS

PRONOUNS MUST BE CLEAR	WHO VERSUS WHOM
It needs to be obvious what the pronoun is referring to.	**Who** is a subject. Subjects get to do things.
EXAMPLE: **Bob and John** went shopping and **they** bought too much junk food.	EXAMPLE: **Who** will be singing for us tonight?
PRONOUNS MUST AGREE IN NUMBER/GENDER BASED ON ITS ANTECEDENT (THE NOUN THAT COMES BEFORE IT)	EXAMPLE: I know this guy **who** will eat anything for a dollar.
EXAMPLE: The new **store** sits between buildings more than twice **its** height.	**Whom** is an object. Objects get stuff done to them.
EXAMPLE: The first chair **trombonist** from Pea Ridge was very happy with **his/her** contest score.	EXAMPLE: To **whom** are you speaking?

PRONOUNS (cont)

IRREGULAR VERBS

Today, I...	Yesterday, I...	For years, I...
begin	began	have begun
break	broke	have broken
bring	brought	have brought
build	built	have built
choose	chose	have chosen
go	went	have gone
lead	led	have led
ring	rang	have rung
rise	rose	have risen
run	ran	have run
see	saw	have seen
seek	sought	have sought

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IRREGULAR VERBS (cont)

shrink	shrank	have shrunk
sing	sang	have sung
sink	sank	have sunk
speak	spoke	have spoken
swim	swam	have swum

THESE ARE NOT WORDS -- SO, STOP USING THEM

irregardless, funner, where at, its', could of, kinda, boughten

PREPOSITIONS



CAN A SQUIRREL DO THIS WITH A TREE?

PREPOSITIONS

about	above	across	after	against	around
along	among	at	behind	before	beneath
beside	between	beyond	by	down	during
except	for	from	in	near	of
off	on	opposite	out	outside	over
past	regarding	round	since	to	through
under	until	up	with	within	

The squirrel and tree metaphor doesn't always work, but it's still helpful.

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