

the little *blue* book



how to make
your writing *sing*

Greg Byrne

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Before we start

I wrote this book for you. It is for two purposes: to help you to write well, and to help you to teach others to write well. I can't help you with the actual content of what you are writing - the *what* to write part, but I **can** help you with *how* to write it.

Originally, this book began in a university classroom, where I realised that students needed some basic writing tools to be able to communicate their ideas effectively. Many of them appeared not to have learnt how to write basic sentences, or use commas, or vary their sentence structures so, after marking papers one year, I decided to write this book specifically for those students. However, the more I spoke to teachers, writers, professionals and anyone who wrote on a regular basis, the more I realised that this little book might have a wider audience. I then took out the university-related elements, and made this book simply about constructing good, strong sentences.

Whether you are a student or a teacher, a businessperson or a writer, or just a regular person interested in writing, we are going to look at quite a few things here, and some of it might challenge what you have thought about English for some time. As a result, there may be some *unlearning* to do. Some of it, on the other hand, will hopefully give you some lightbulb moments when you see how English really works.

(Mind you, if you are a grammatical expert, this book is not for you. It is for people who want to write better, not for people who want to study grammar for its own sake.)

So. If you are one of those people who view writing with fear and loathing, I hope I can help you. On the other hand, if you race through your writing with ease, there still might be something in here that will make things easier.

I should point out here that this book is a growing thing. Whereas the author of a paper book can never change it once it is published, I most certainly plan to add to this book in several different ways: through embedded audio, video and other interactive devices. In that way, you can listen to explanations of how things work and even see short videos of key points.

Check back to the www.gramatica.com.au website whenever you can for these additions. Your license (individual or school) will enable you to do this for one year from purchase.

This book is also best viewed via a desktop machine or a tablet. It is certainly possible to view it with one of the larger smart phones, but the text and graphics become unreadably small.

About Greg

Greg's happy place is in front of a classroom, helping students of all ages learn, achieve and succeed. He has been a teacher almost all his professional life, and has taught students at all ages, from five years old to seventy, and all levels, including primary, secondary, English as a Second Language adults, teacher training, and university.

After gaining his Diploma of Teaching in 1983 (later converted to a Bachelor of Education), he began his teaching career in 1984, and spent four years in primary schools around the State before leaving to join his family business in educational travel. By happy chance in 2002, he fell in love with ESL teaching, completed his CELTA later that year, and then spent the next 15 years in several Perth ESL colleges teaching English to students from over fifty different countries, from Argentina to Vietnam, to all levels, from Elementary to advanced exam levels, and all ages from 15 to 70.

Fascinated by the secrets of English, and aware of the tremendous need for English around the world, he laid out the foundations for what was originally called Shoebox Grammar (and later Gramatica), a visual, hands-on and revolutionary way of teaching English, both as a first and second language. Over the years to come, he worked on it, adding teaching and learning cards, lesson plans and other resources.

In 2011, he began lecturing and tutoring in the Bachelor of Education (both primary and secondary) degree course at Edith Cowan University where he taught in English, History, Assessment and Education units. While marking university papers in 2015, he began work on *The Little Blue Book*, a Gramatica-inspired text to help undergraduate students write better, and this was released online in July 2017.



Early in 2015, he responded to a request from a Perth tertiary college and wrote a 20 week Gramatica English course (now government approved) for international students, who would then have sufficient English to enter mainstream courses at the college.

In 2016, he completed his Master of Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Western Australia, studying Shakespeare, medieval history, the origins of languages, and *Beowulf*, where his thesis proposed that the 9th century *Beowulf* poet used what appears to be foreshadowing techniques now often used by modern Hollywood scriptwriters.

In late 2017, Shoebox became Gramatica, a name that was chosen simply because it was the word for *grammar* in 39 languages around the world.

In order to promote Gramatica around the world, Greg has spoken at several conferences and training courses in Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne, New Orleans (the photo on the previous page, where he was enjoying breakfast with conference presenters at the Court of Two Sisters restaurant on Royal St, New Orleans), the Philippines and England, and he has plans for many more. Although he has prepared hundreds of Gramatica teaching and learning resources, he is still learning, developing new techniques, improving pedagogy, and probing the deeper secrets of his beloved English language.

In his spare time, he writes novels, and his first, a thriller called *Nine Planets* was published in 2014 by Dragonwell. He has three unpublished high fantasy novels as well, and has mapped out elements of a young adult adventure thriller for the future. He is married with three adult children, lives in Perth, and loves travelling, AFL, rugby, languages, learning, chocolate, history and good movies. He has no plans to retire or stop what he is doing. Life is far too wonderful to waste.

November, 2018
Perth, Western Australia



Why this book?

Even though you may have no interest whatsoever in English, spelling, grammar, punctuation, you actually need to know how English works for one simple reason.

It is the language that you use to write, and you almost certainly write *something*: academic essays, facebook posts, job applications, novels, diary entries, instructions, letters, office memos, student reports, business proposals, blog entries, journal articles, dissertations, short stories, screenplays and many others as well.

In order to write these, it is vitally important, therefore, to know how English works. You could buy a grammar book which goes into detail on all the technical aspects of grammar, or you could get a book on different types of writing. This is neither.

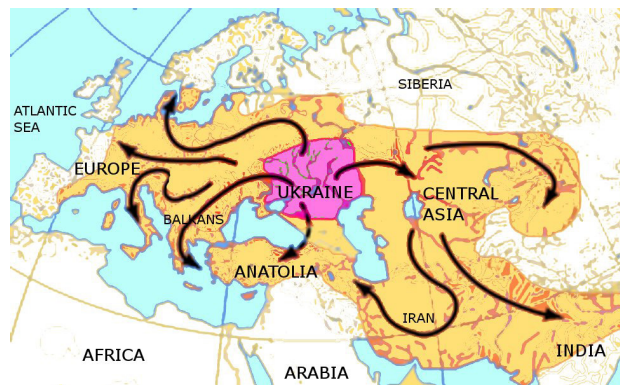
This book shows you what the basic building blocks of English look like, how to construct them, and how to write with them. Armed with these fixed and reliable structures and your thoughts and creativity, you can write absolutely anything! English is MUCH easier than you think. Now let's go and find out.



English from England, right?

No. English does not come from England, at least not originally. Get ready for a surprise because very few people in the English speaking world today know this. In all the years I have been teaching English, I have asked this question many times - *Where did English first come from?* - and no-one of any age or nationality has ever answered correctly.

The answer is not England, although the language certainly passed through that country. Neither is it Italy, Germany or Greece, the other three common answers I get. It *is* Europe, but not where you might think. The earliest echoes and hints of English actually came first from what is now modern Ukraine, almost 5000 years ago, although it wasn't called English then, but Proto-Indo-European. You can see this on the map¹ below.



From Ukraine, it moved to Europe (and many other places as well), then Germany, where the people who spoke it over two millennia ago lived in a place in northern Germany called Angeln (it is still there today, as you can see on this modern map²). These people were called the Angles, and the language they spoke was called Angl-isc.



1 From www.lumineboreali.net/threads/indo-european.600/

2 From www.dolleruper-schaufenster.de/Landschaft_Angeln/landschaft_angeln.html

The Angles took this language to Britain, where it became English (Angl-isc → Engl-isc → English), and the country then took on the name England, derived from the language of the Angle invaders. Usually, a language takes its name from the country, but here, it was the other way around. The name of the Angles also lives on in *Anglo-Saxon*. By the way, the original language of England was Brythonic, from which we get *Britain* and also *Brittany*.

From England, a tiny country on the edge of Europe, English spread out all over the world, to the USA, South-east Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and all the nations represented in the Commonwealth Games. It also became a second language for dozens of countries as well, and is now one of the main languages of trade, politics, film aviation and diplomacy all over the world.

And that, dear reader, is your language. Let me show you how it works.

Building Blocks and Principles

Here's another secret for you. The English language has had mixed reviews for quite some time. On the negative side, English spelling and pronunciation is a strange mishmash of odd rules, incomprehensible exceptions and peculiar bits and pieces that baffle both those who are learning English as a second language as well as native speakers! There are, as a rather extreme example, quite a few different ways of pronouncing the letters *ough*. Try it with these words: *through, though, thought, thorough, rough, cough, bough, lough* and *hiccough*. No wonder spelling and pronunciation is difficult!

Fortunately, English grammar, the set of rules that governs English, is MUCH simpler than we have been led to believe for so long. It is like a strong, solid house that is built with combinations of just two building blocks and one principle. If you learn these two, you can write any sentence you like. That's very good news for students learning how to write better!



Two Building Blocks

Firstly, every correct English sentence is built with just two building blocks. Yes, just two. In fact, every correct English sentence in *existence*, in every novel, text book, newspaper article, essay, letter, facebook post, text and any other form of delivery is built on these two building blocks, and these two alone. There isn't anything else.

These two building blocks are the essential structures that underpin all of English. Since English is one of the major international languages around the world, we need these building blocks to be the same for everyone. If different groups of people used different structures or interpreted the structures in different ways, it would be difficult to make yourself understood. Therefore, we all need to write (and speak) our sentences based on the same structure.

And some good news: these building blocks are very simple to learn and use.

English has only two building blocks

One Principle

Secondly, English is also built on one simple principle. Remember the idea that English is like a house? Let's extend this metaphor a little, and say that the two building blocks of English (combined) are like the bare structure of the house: the bare floor, walls and roof that you see when you walk into your new house for the first time. Everything smells of concrete, bricks and newness. The house is undecorated and ready for you to paint and decorate with your own style. We build the structure of the house first and decorate it second.

In the same way, English gives you two structural building blocks for sentence making (Main Clauses and Supporting Clauses) and lets you add your own meaning (your words, phrasing, special vocabulary, repetition, metaphor, simile and other writing devices). These building blocks don't change at all, but the words you add into these building

blocks to show your meaning certainly do.

Therefore, our principle is this.

Decide the structure of your sentence first. Add your meaning second.

Let's now go and meet these two building blocks and see how you can use them to make your writing sing.

The old way of learning grammar

In the late 1960s, an educational movement began in schools around the world that advocated the end of traditional grammar teaching. Many teachers were delighted! The traditional method used rather mindless rote learning and repetitive ‘drill and kill’ methodology, and these teachers wanted a better way. (I am actually a student of this generation, and I remember being disappointed in the year when the grammar books that I so enjoyed were abandoned and these new books introduced. Yes, even at an early age, I was interested in the way that English worked.)

However, the better way did not really offer a replacement method for *teaching* grammar. Instead, the educational authorities of the day believed that students would *learn* grammar by simply absorbing grammatical principles and structures through their reading. As a result, we had the rise of USSR - Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading, usually after lunch, when sweaty kids fresh from the playground would open their books and read. (For those who have done their history, USSR was also the name of Communist Russia, so the name later became simply SSR.) Some schools also called it DEAR - Drop Everything And Read.

The other result of this educational movement was that many teachers were no longer required to teach grammar at all, and universities stopped training pre-service teachers in it as well. As a result, grammar *rules* and *principles* tended to become forgotten, and curious urban English myths crept in like “Commas show you where to breathe.” Primary teachers, who had put aside the traditional and rather academic grammar textbooks and who had not been trained in any form of replacement, simply repeated these myths to their students. As a result, students did not really learn in primary school how to write well at all.

In high school, teachers assumed that all the grammar learning had been done in primary school, and so when these students reached university, the very place where good writing skills could make or break an undergraduate course, many of them, quite simply, did not know how to write well.

Now let me show you a new and *much better* way.

A new way of *thinking*

You'll notice that the title above has nothing to do with learning grammar at all. Some of you are no doubt rather pleased with that, and rightly so. You are almost certainly not interested in grammar for its own sake. (Leave that to grammar nerds like me.) No. Grammar is really just a set of tools we all use every day to express ourselves effectively, even though we are not aware of the grammar at all as we do so. It is much like driving a car without understanding the mechanics of what's happening under the bonnet, or breathing without comprehending the amazing dance of air and lungs and heart and blood.

Grammar is a **communication** tool. However, just as you would not, and *should* not, build a beautiful wooden dinner table without knowing how to use the tools necessary for such a job, you really should learn how to use the English language's set of strong and reliable grammar tools before you write anything. And since writing is a reflection of your thoughts, it is *very* important that you learn how to use these grammatical tools to transfer your thoughts onto the page or screen effectively.

However, I suspect that many of you have never been taught this critically important thinking process, so let's remedy that right now. And let's make things even easier, because the thinking process I am about to show is exactly the same process that you have used all your life. In fact, we are born with this deep, instinctive, natural way of doing things, so you should be able to do it easily.

Let's use romance as an example. You love someone dearly and need to show this person how you feel. You know that roses, chocolates or flowers make no impact on this person, but acts of service *do*. You therefore decide to take your cleaning tools over one afternoon while your beloved is out, and spend several hours cleaning the house (and car) from top to bottom. When your loved one returns, your feelings are clear.

Let's summarise that

Need → Choose.

You **needed** to declare your love for this person. You **chose** to do this by cleaning house and car. When your beloved returned, your expression of love was clear. (The wedding was attended by hundreds, by the way, and you spent many happy weekends in the years that followed discussing eco-friendly cleaning products.)

In the same way in a real life setting, you **need** to express your ideas on the page for your reader and audience. You **choose** the appropriate grammatical tools to do so. When your reader reads it, she appreciates the way you have expressed your ideas effectively and powerfully, and commends you highly.

Let's use exactly this same process for writing, but we are going to add an extra step.

Need → Choose → Protect

Once I have shown you these three steps, there are three more optional steps as well.

→ Add → Protect → Fix.

If this doesn't look much like grammar or writing at the moment, stay with me. All will become clear soon.

1	Need	<i>. . . to write my Main Idea</i>
	Introduction	

This is where you start your thinking process. The first step when writing any correct English sentence is to think what your sentence is going to be about. You might ask yourself, *“What do I need to say here?”* This is your Main Idea. Remember that we are not talking here about the main idea of your whole novel, essay, diary entry or piece of writing; that comes later. This is just the Main Idea of a *sentence*.

This Main Idea could be anything. It might be simple or complex. It might be the central thrust of your writing or something inconsequential. It might be something you have been thinking about for some time, or it might be a beautiful flash of insight that comes to you quite unexpectedly. Whatever it is, it exists inside your brain in the form of electro-chemical reactions, but it doesn't exist in reality until you give it form and shape and put it on paper or the screen. It certainly doesn't have a fixed structure.

But when it comes time to write this Main Idea down, English jumps up and demands your attention. *Stop!* it says. *The only way you can write down your Main Idea is with one of my two Building Blocks.* (You met these two earlier.) *You have to fit your Main Idea into one of my Building Blocks.*

Which Building Block? Let's go and meet it.

2	Choose	<i>. . . the Main Clause</i>
	Principles	

Remember first that we only have two building blocks in English, and these are called the Main Clause and the Supporting Clause. That's all there are. Only two. Every essay, novel, cookbook, newspaper article, kids story, diary entry, textbook and facebook post is built with various combinations of these two. There aren't any hidden clauses anywhere. Some grammar books divide the Supporting Clause into different categories, but they are all just variations of the same thing. Grammarians are interested in such things, but we aren't.

So if you want to write your Main Idea, which one do you choose? Well, the name gives it away, making the choice really simple. If you want to write your Main Idea, you need a Main Clause. And don't worry! The news is all good here, for several reasons.

The Main Clause is universal

The Main Clause is a fixed, unchanging structure used all across the English speaking world. It's the vehicle that English has chosen as a universally accepted way of carrying meaning. Everyone understands a Main Clause and everyone instinctively recognises it as the correct way of showing meaning.

It's central

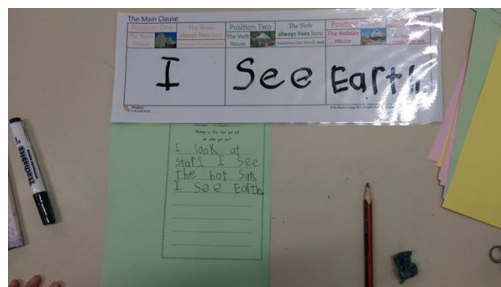
In fact, the Main Clause is actually the single structure around which the *entire English language* is built. Every single correct English sentence in the world has the Main Clause at its centre.

It's unique

There is **only one** way to write a Main Clause, so once you have learned it and mastered it, every one of your future sentences will be built on a firm foundation. And if your lecturers or colleagues have ever written something like *I don't understand this sentence* on your pieces of writing, they never will again.

It's simple

Even better than that, the Main Clause is actually so simple that I have taught it to five year old pre-primary students, and one of them used it, as you can see in the image below. I was visiting a pre-primary centre that was using Gramatica, and this pre-primary girl was just doing her daily writing. She thought of her Main Idea, wrote it on the laminated Main Clause card, checked with her teacher if she was unsure, then transcribed it to her green writing journal below.



Sentences and Clauses (IMPORTANT!)

Let's just press PAUSE here for a moment. You will no doubt have noticed in the last few pages that we have referred to *Sentences* and *Clauses* as ***two different things***. Indeed they are, and the reason for this is simple. Clauses are the building blocks of Sentences. Although a Clause can sometimes be a Sentence on its own, Clauses are mostly just ***parts*** of Sentences.

Later in the book, we will look at the three different types of Sentences - Simple, Compound and Complex - and see what combinations of Clauses make them up.

2	Choose . . . <i>the Main Clause</i>
	The Three Houses / Simple Sentence

Before we start, I should point out that the Main Clause, the central building block for the entire English language, is also called a Simple Sentence. This is the only time when a Clause can be both a Clause **and** a Sentence. So how exactly do you **make** a Main Clause?

In order to show you how, I'm firstly going to ask you to be ready to *unlearn* things, and it might be a little challenging to change what you might have thought about sentences for a long time. As I have mentioned before, grammar has not been properly taught in schools for many years, so it is not your teachers' fault. They were just teaching what they had learned, even though elements of it were incorrect.

So get ready! Get yourself in a good space for learning a new way. Be prepared to unlearn incorrect things and take on a new, clean, straight and strong way of thinking.

To do this, we are going to use some simple metaphors and ideas that everyone can easily understand: *streets, houses, residents, friends, colours and numbers, start and stop, live and visit, work and holidays.*

Main Clause Avenue

Let's imagine the Main Clause as a street called Main Clause Avenue, which has three houses on it, numbered One, Two and Three. (For those of you who need visual detail, the Houses are all on one side of the road and there is a park on the other side.)

Number 1, Main Clause Avenue: The Noun House



The first House is called the Noun House. It is painted yellow, and a Noun always lives there. If you go and knock on the door, a Noun will always answer. The Noun only has one job. He names things. When he has difficulty doing this job by himself, he calls his friends and brothers (a metaphor for other words that help the Noun) to visit sometimes and help him. We'll meet these friends later.

Just a note on the colours in case you are thinking that these represent traffic light colours. They don't, at least not this one. Yellow just means yellow. Since the Noun occupies the first House on the Avenue, he thinks he is really important, so he gets the capital letter.

In grammatical terminology, this House is called the Subject or the Noun Phrase.

Number 2, Main Clause Avenue: The Verb House



The second House is the Verb House. It is painted green, and a Verb always lives there. If you need to find the verb in a Main Clause and you go to the Verb House, you can count on the Verb to be home all the time. She never leaves. Unlike the Noun, the Verb is a multi-tasker. She does several different jobs at the same time. When she has difficulty with these jobs on occasion, she calls her friends and sisters to come and visit to help, and we'll catch up with them later too.

Here the colour green means two things. Green means GO, as it does with traffic lights, and green means GROW, as it does with plants. There’s always a lot of activity going on in the Verb House.

In grammatical terminology, this is also called the Verb.

Number 3, Main Clause Avenue: The Holiday House



The third house, though, is a different story. This is the Holiday House and it is painted red. As the name implies, words only visit sometimes when they are on holiday. As a result, no-one lives there all the time, so it is sometimes empty. But who visits? The Noun and his friends do. The Verb is very busy in her own house and never visits, although some of her friends drop by every now and then.




Here, and you may have spotted this already, red means STOP, just as it does with traffic lights. As a result, just as the Main Clause comes to a **complete halt** here, that’s exactly where you put the **full stop**. Americans call this the **period**, a word that is derived from the Ancient Greek word *periodos*. But that’s another story.

In grammatical terminology, this House is also called the Object. Traditional grammar also combines the Verb and the Object and calls them both the Predicate. We are not going to use any of these terms in this book, except for the term *Verb*.

So how does this apply to your Main Idea? Since you **must** express your Main Idea with a Main Clause, it means this:

*Your Main Idea **must** have, at the very least,
a Noun in the Noun House first and
a Verb in the Verb House second.
It might have a Noun in the Holiday House third.*

And here it is in graphic form as well.

Main Idea / Main Clause			
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
CL	Noun’s friends and brothers sometimes visit	Verb’s friends and sisters sometimes visit	Noun’s friends and brothers sometimes visit
			
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional

2	Choose	<i>. . . the Main Clause</i>
	Definitions	

Well, that seems straightforward enough, you are probably thinking now.

When I want to write a Main Idea, I need a Main Clause, which means I need . . .

1		A Noun in the a Noun House first, where the Noun always lives and his friends and brothers sometimes visit.
2		A Verb in the Verb House second, where the Verb always lives and her friends and sisters sometimes visit.
3		I don't always need anything in the Holiday House, where the Noun's friends and brothers visit sometimes.

You are probably remembering your primary school definitions of nouns and verbs right now, and you almost certainly have these definitions in your mind:

A Noun is a naming word (?)
A Verb is a doing word (?)

The question mark (?) next to each one above means that these definitions are only partly correct, as we are about to see.

2	Choose	<i>... the Main Clause</i>
	Nouns	


We have already seen that our teachers didn't provide us with the full picture of how to use grammar effectively as a tool for communicating ideas. When it came to Nouns, for example, they only taught us to answer the question **What do Nouns do?** *Nouns name things*, we learned, and a Noun is a person, place, thing, idea or a pronoun. Up to a certain point, this is certainly true.


However, it is not *all* of the truth, and it limits our understanding quite considerably. We also have to ask a second question, which very few English speakers actually know or use. This question is, **Where do Nouns live?** The answer, as we have just seen, is **in the Noun House**. Of course, we also know that **Nouns visit the Holiday House**.

When we use this second definition, things open up quite considerably. Instead of trying to make words twist and wriggle into this idea of *Meaning*, which can be rather challenging at times, we make things much easier for ourselves by using *Structure*. Here's a new definition.

If it lives permanently in the Noun House, it's a Noun.

Let's go now and use part of the two step thinking process of *Need* → *Choose* (we won't need → *Protect* just yet) to look at a better way of thinking about nouns.


Nouns are naming words
Truth
True, but not the whole truth




<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to write about a Noun that is one of a kind.</p> <p>You need a <i>Unique Noun</i>.</p> <p>(You might also know this as a <i>Proper Noun</i>.)</p>
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A Noun is unique if it is the only one of its kind in existence. You are unique. You might share your name with other people, but you most certainly don't share your unique DNA. You are wonderfully, amazingly, beautifully unique, the only person just like you in all history past and future. Companies and people and cities and countries are also unique. The Earth is unique, and you can no doubt think of others.




Visual marker

If you want to use a Unique noun in your sentence, you need to show it is unique with a capital letter. That's your visual marker. A Unique Noun has a capital letter at the start of a sentence, or anywhere else it goes in the sentence.

Here is a Main Clause with the Unique Noun **George** in the Noun House.

Main Idea / Main Clause			●	
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		
CL				
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		
George	teaches	sport		

And here's a second Main Clause with the very same Unique Noun **George** visiting the Holiday House, where it keeps its capital letter.


Main Idea / Main Clause			●	
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		
CL				
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		
His students	love	George		

Think about the noun you are writing now. Is it unique, like *George*, *Perth*, *Paris*, *Toyota*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Samsung* and many others? If it is, it always gets a capital letter, wherever it is in the sentence.

And let's start a table to show the five different types of Nouns. Why are they Nouns? Not only because they name

things (this was what you learned in primary school) but because they can all *live* on their own permanently in the Noun House, and they can also *visit* the Holiday House.

Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">CL</p>			<p style="text-align: center;"><i>George</i> <i>Paris</i> <i>Australia</i> <i>Samsung</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Unique</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Capital letter</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>it can live here</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>It can visit here</i></p>	




<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to write about something that is common.</p> <p>You need a <i>Common Noun</i>.</p>
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A Noun is common if it is one of many in existence that share the same common name and basic identity, and a Common Noun can be a person, place or thing (like the goldfish above!) While you are unique, and you have some capital letters to prove it, you are also common because you are a person, and there are many of those. By the way, a Common Noun transforms into a Unique Noun when it gets its own name (and capital letter.)




Visual marker

If you want to use a Common Noun in your sentence, you need a lower case letter. That’s your visual marker. If you write a Common Noun at the *start of a sentence*, you need a capital letter because everything has a capital letter at the start of a sentence. However, if you write a common noun anywhere else in the sentence, it gets a lower case letter.

Here is a Main Clause with the Common Noun **Teachers** in the Noun House.


Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	Teachers	love	chocolate	

And here’s a second Main Clause with the very same Common Noun **teachers** visiting the Holiday House.

Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	Everyone	needs	teachers	

Think about the noun you are writing now. Is it common, like a *person (including teachers!), city, company, country, object* and many others? If it is, it always gets a lower case letter, unless it starts the sentence, when it gets a capital letter. And this is our table with Common Nouns.




Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
				<p><i>person</i></p> <p><i>city</i></p> <p><i>country</i></p> <p><i>company</i></p>
Common	lower case letters	it can live here	it can visit here	

<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to write about an idea (from the mind) or a feeling (from the heart).</p> <p>You need an <i>Abstract Noun</i>.</p>
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A Noun is abstract if it comes from your mind or heart. These are things that we cannot see, like ideas and feelings, and these could include such things as *education, mercy, politics, history, love* and *inspiration*.

If you want to use an Abstract Noun in your sentence, you need a lower case letter. That's your visual marker. An Abstract Noun has a capital letter at the start of a sentence because everything has a capital letter at the start of a sentence, but a lower case letter everywhere else in the sentence.

Here is a Main Clause with the Abstract Noun **Education** in the Noun House.

Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	Education	is	important	


And here's a second example with the very same Abstract Noun **education** visiting the Holiday House.

Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	Everyone	needs	education	

Think about the noun you are writing now. Is it an idea or feeling, like *education, mercy, politics, history, love* or *inspiration*? If it is, it always gets a lower case letter, unless it starts the sentence, when it gets a capital letter.

And this is our table with Abstract Nouns included.




Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: orange;">lcl</p>			<p><i>education</i></p> <p><i>pedagogy</i></p> <p><i>humour</i></p> <p><i>memory</i></p>
<p>Abstract</p>	<p>lower case letters</p>	<p>it can live here</p>	<p>it can visit here</p>	

<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to write about the name of an action.</p> <p>You need an <i>Action Noun</i>.</p> <p>Also known as a <i>Gerund</i>.</p>
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It is HIGHLY unlikely that you have ever heard the *name* of this type of noun before, but you have actually been using it all your life, quite without realising. An Action Noun is simply the name of a regular physical, mental or emotional action, like *dancing, cooking, running, studying*. You might look at these words and think, *No! Those are verbs!* Well, they certainly *look like* Verbs. However, in order to be verbs, they would need to be in the Verb House, and these are most definitely not. These words live in the Noun House or visit the Holiday House, so they are most definitely Nouns. Check the examples below. Action Nouns are constructed by adding *ing* to the *end of verbs* and placing them in the Noun House or Holiday House.

If you want to use an Action Noun in your sentence, you need two visual markers. The first is a lower case letter. An Action Noun has a capital letter at the start of a sentence because everything has a capital letter at the start of a sentence, but a lower case letter everywhere else in the sentence. The second visual marker is the actual *form* of the Action Noun itself, which is this: Action Noun = *verb + ing* in either the Noun House or the Holiday House. If you see this visual marker, you know the word is an Action Noun. This type of word tends to confuse people because it looks so much like a Verb. However, since it is living all on its own in the Noun House, it is most definitely NOT a Verb. It is, beyond any shadow of a doubt, a Noun.

Here is an example with the Action Noun **Travelling** in the Noun House.




Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	Travelling	is	fun	


And here's a second example with the very same Action Noun **travelling** visiting the Holiday House.

Main Idea / Main Clause				
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				●
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	I	enjoy	travelling	

Think about the noun you are writing now. Is it the name of an action, like *dancing*, *cooking*, *running*, *studying*? If it is, it always gets a lower case letter, unless it starts the sentence, when it gets a capital letter.

And this is our table with Action Nouns included.

Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
	<div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: orange;"> cl</div>  <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">+ ing</div>			<div style="color: orange; font-style: italic;"> <p>dancing</p> <p>learning</p> <p>remembering</p> <p>enjoying</p> </div>
Action	<div style="text-align: center;">lower case letters</div> <hr/> <div style="text-align: center;">verb + ing</div>	it can live here	it can visit here	




<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to write about the name of an idea.</p> <p>You need an <i>Idea Noun</i>.</p> <p>Also known as an <i>Infinitive</i>.</p>
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It is HIGHLY unlikely that you have ever heard of this type of noun either, but once again, you have actually been using it all your life, quite without realising, just as you have with the last noun type. This noun type covers names of regular physical, mental and emotional actions, although these are slightly different from the Action Nouns that we just met. Idea Nouns are constructed by adding *to* to the *beginning of verbs* and placing them in the Noun House or Holiday House.




A Noun is an Idea Noun if it looks like this: *to dance*, *to cook*, *to run*, *to study*, and it is in the Noun House or the Holiday House. You might look at these words and think, *No! Those are verbs!* Again, the second part of an Idea Noun certainly *looks like* a Verb. However, Idea Nouns are in the wrong House for verbs since these Nouns are either in the Noun House or the Holiday House.

If you want to use an Idea noun in your sentence, you need two visual markers. The first is a lower case letter. An Idea Noun has a capital letter at the start of a sentence because everything has a capital letter at the start of a sentence, but a lower case letter everywhere else in the sentence. The second visual marker, like the Action Noun, is the actual form of the Idea Noun itself, which is this: Idea Noun = *to + verb* in either the Noun House or the Holiday House. . If you see this visual marker, you know it is an Idea Noun.

Here is a Main Clause with the Idea Noun **To be a teacher** in the Noun House.


Main Idea / Main Clause			
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
CL			
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional
	To be a teacher	is	my dream

And here's a second example with the very same Action Noun **to be a teacher** visiting the Holiday House.



Main Idea / Main Clause			
	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
CL			
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional
	My dream	is	to be a teacher


We usually find this type of Noun visiting the Holiday House. He can live in the Noun House, but we don't often find him there.

This is our table with Idea Nouns included.

Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
	lcl  + ing			<i>to be</i> <i>to think</i> <i>to go</i> <i>to teach</i>
Idea (Infinitive)	lower case letters to + verb	it can live here	it can visit here	





And now that we have met all the different Noun types, here is the complete list.

Noun type	Visual marker	Noun House	Holiday House	Examples
				
Unique	capital letters	it can live here	it can visit here	<i>George, Paris, Australia,</i> <i>Samsung</i>
Common	lower case letters	it can live here	it can visit here	<i>person, city, country,</i> <i>company</i>
Abstract	lower case letters	it can live here	it can visit here	<i>education, pedagogy,</i> <i>humour, memory</i>
Action (gerund)	lower case letters verb + ing (in the Noun House or Holiday House)	it can live here	it can visit here	<i>dancing, learning,</i> <i>remembering, enjoying</i>
Idea (Infinitive)	lower case letters to + verb	it can live here	it can visit here	<i>to be, to think,</i> <i>to go, to teach</i>

<h1>2</h1> <p>Nouns</p>		<p>You want to <i>refer</i> to a Noun.</p> <p>You need an <i>Pronoun</i>.</p>
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This is our last 'type' of Noun, although the Pronoun is not actually a *real* noun so much as a *shadow* of a noun. A pronoun just *represents* a noun. It's a placeholder, if you like, that we use to *refer* to a noun, or so we don't have to write the same noun twice. It often works like this. You use a Noun in your story by writing it in all its full glory. Then you finish that clause or sentence and think, *Hmmm. I actually need to write that noun again.* But if you do, it looks rather repetitive, and that's where the pronoun steps in.

The Pronoun is your multi-purpose handyman. It can represent any of the Nouns we have just looked at, and it takes different forms depending on which House it is in. Consider the table below.

		Single Noun		Multiple Nouns	
		Noun House	Holiday House	Noun House	Holiday House
					
pronouns for person/people		I	me	we	us
		you	you	you	you
		he	him	they	them
		she	her	they	them
pronouns for objects/other nouns		it	it	they	them
		this	this	these	these
		that	that	those	those

-self and -selves




I need to take a moment here and explain this little word *myself* and its related pronouns that end with *-self* or *-selves*. (The technical name for these *-self* and *-selves* words, by the way, is *reflexive* pronouns.)

A modern and common error is to use *myself* in place of *I* or *me* in the Noun House. People tend to think it sounds more stylish, professional or polite, and say things like, *Myself and my colleagues are teachers.* However, it is, *in fact*, just wrong.





The way to use *-self* and *-selves* words is simple, and links up neatly with the **Noun House** and the **Holiday House**. It works like this. When you have the same Noun in both Houses, use a regular Noun or pronoun in the **Noun House**,

and use *-self* or *-selves* in the **Holiday House**.

Here are some examples where a Noun appears in both Houses. In the Noun House, we use a regular Noun or pronoun. However, in the Holiday House, we use a *-self* or *-selves* pronoun.

Main Idea / Main Clause		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
		
Pronoun	Verb	Reflexive Pronoun
<i>compulsory</i>	<i>compulsory</i>	<i>optional</i>
<u>They</u>	drove	<u>themselves to the beach.</u>
<u>She</u>	helped	<u>herself up.</u>
<u>It</u>	collapsed	<u>on itself.</u>
<u>I</u>	cooked	dinner for <u>myself.</u>

This is the complete table of all the reflexive Pronouns

	Single Noun		Multiple Nouns	
	Noun House	Holiday House	Noun House	Holiday House
reflexive pronouns for person/people				
	I	myself	we	ourselves
	you	yourself	you	yourselves
	he	himself	they	themselves
reflexive pronouns for objects/other nouns	she	herself		
	it	itself	they	themselves
	this		these	
that	those			

Lastly, *-self* and *-selves* words **NEVER** go as the Main Noun in the Noun House.

2	<p style="color: #008080; font-weight: bold;">Choose</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">... the Main Clause</p>
<p style="color: #FFA500; font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">The Noun's friends and brothers</p>	

The Noun lives in the Noun House alone, but many Main Clauses have more than just a Noun there. On many occasions, the Noun needs help in saying what he wants to say, so he calls upon his friends and brothers, who sometimes visit. Let's meet these words briefly here. We won't worry too much about them now, but here is a sentence to give you an idea of how some of them work.

Main Clause						
Noun House					Verb House	Holiday House
						
<i>compulsory</i>					<i>compulsory</i>	<i>optional</i>
Noun, his friends and brothers					Verb	Noun, his friends and brothers
<u>Relaxing</u>	<i>with</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>friends</i>	<u>is</u>	<u>fun.</u>
Main Noun	Noun's Friend	Noun's Friend	Noun's Friend	Noun's Brother.		
	<i>Preposition</i>	<i>Counter (also known as the Quantifier)</i>	<i>Possessive</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Existence Verb</i>	<i>Adjective.</i>
I need this in the Noun House. We could take out all the other words in the Noun House except this one and the sentence would still make sense.	This links the Main Noun with the other Friends and Brothers in the Noun House.	This tells me <i>how many</i> friends.	This tells me <i>whose</i> friends.	This is another Noun, the Main Noun's brother.		This describes the Noun over in the Noun House.

2	Choose	. . . the Main Clause
	Verbs	

Just as our teachers taught us that a *Noun is a naming word*, they also taught us that a *Verb is a doing word*. Just like the Noun definition, this one is also correct, but only in part. In fact, it only gives us a third of the actual picture, and this definition has resulted in many hundreds of incorrect (and sometimes *incomprehensible*) sentences in undergraduate papers that I have marked over the years. We know now that this *Verb is a doing word* definition is only part of the whole picture, and it only answers the question **What do Verbs do?**

As we have just seen with Nouns, we must also ask the question **Where do Verbs live?** and answer it with **in the Verb House**.

I mentioned earlier that Verbs are multi-taskers. We will only look at this idea briefly, but Verbs tell me three different things at the same time: the **Verb** itself, the **Time** of the verb, and whether the verb is **Finished** or not. Consider this sentence, for example. Remember




If it lives permanently in the Verb House, it's a Verb.



Verbs are doing words

Truth

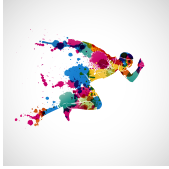
True, but not the whole truth.

Main Idea / Main Clause		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
		
Noun	Verb	extra information
compulsory	compulsory	optional
He	is cooking	dinner.

In this sentence, the two words in the Verb House do three jobs at the same time.

Job	Question	Answer	What tells me this?
Tell me the Verb itself	What is the Verb ?	<i>cook</i>	the word part <i>cook</i>
Tell me the Time of the verb	What Time is the verb?	Now	the word <i>is</i>
Tell me whether the verb is Finished or not.	Is the verb Finished ?	It is Unfinished	the word part <i>ing</i>

Let's go now and use part of the three step thinking process of *Need* → *Choose* → *Protect* to look at a better way of thinking about Verbs.

<h1>2</h1> <p>Verbs</p>		<p>You want to write about a verb that you can <i>do</i> with your <i>body</i>.</p> <p>You need an <i>Action Verb</i></p>
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This is the old definition - *Verbs are Doing Words* - that we all learned in primary school. It's certainly true for some verbs, but not for all verbs, and we'll meet these other kinds soon. For the moment, an Action Verb is one you do with your body.

Visual marker

Action Verbs have no visual marker. They almost always carry a lower case letter except in one strange case when they have a capital letter. Here is the strange case. It's actually the shortest complete sentence in English, and it only has the one Action Verb *Go* in it. You might be thinking that there has to be a Noun in the Noun House, and here there is. The Noun is *You* and he's there in his House, as he always is. He's just not visible in this sentence because, as a metaphor, he's just *sleeping* at the moment. He is *implied*. We use these implied Noun / Action Verb sentences a lot in daily life: *(You) Come here! Stop! Don't move!*

Main Idea / Main Clause		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
Noun	Verb	extra information
<i>compulsory</i>	<i>compulsory</i>	<i>optional</i>
(You)	Go!	


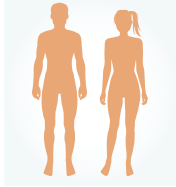

What does an Action Verb?


Your body does, and it can do many, like *dance, run, see, kick, draw*. Other physical objects can also do Action verbs, like plants that *grow*, the Sun that *shines*, and water that *flows*.

Can I see an Action Verb?

Yes, you can. Because the body is doing this verb, you can also *see* it. For those who have done undergraduate units with me, you will know that I demand that your lesson plans, forward planning documents and rubrics contain Action Verbs because these are the only verbs you can see, and are therefore the only verbs you can *assess*. You cannot assess what you cannot see.

And let's start a table to show the three different types of Verbs. Why are they Verbs? Not only because they show action (this was what you learned in primary school, and Verbs do much more than that) but because they can all live on their own permanently in the Verb House.

Verb type	Visual marker	What does it?	Can I see it?	Examples
 Action	lcl lower case letter	 the body	yes	<i>dance</i> <i>run</i> <i>see</i> <i>draw</i>
		 a physical object	yes	<i>grow</i> <i>shine</i> <i>flow</i>

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Verbs</p>		<p>You want to write about a verb that you can <i>think</i> or <i>feel</i>.</p> <p>You need a <i>State Verb</i></p>
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This is similar to the old definition we all learned in primary school, but it's also very different. Whereas you can do Action Verbs with your body (and physical objects can do them as well with their 'bodies'), we do State Verbs with our *minds* and *hearts*. As a result, they are not visible. Yes, you might be able to visibly trace the electro-chemical currents that flow through a human brain when it does the verb *think*, but you are seeing a current there, not the thought itself. (I'm always amazed at the way that the brain works, and modern neuroscience is expanding our knowledge of this astonishing structure all the time.) Therefore, you can *do* State Verbs with your mind or heart, but you certainly can't see them.

Visual marker

State Verbs have no visual marker. They almost always carry a lower case letter except for the strange case we saw earlier. We use these Implied Noun / State Verb sentences a lot in daily life: *(You) Enjoy! Think about it!*




What does a State Verb?


Your mind or heart does, and it can do many, like *love, enjoy, like, understand, recognise, think*.

Can I see a State Verb?

No, you can't. Because the mind or heart is doing this verb, you can't see it. For those who have done undergraduate units with me, you will know that I demand that you change all instances of invisible State Verbs like *understand* in your lesson plans, forward planning documents and rubrics to visible Action Verbs, because these are the only verbs you can see. You cannot assess what you cannot see.

And let's add the State Verb, the second type.

Verb type	Visual marker	What does it?	Can I see it?	Examples
 State	lcl lower case letter	 mind	no	<i>think</i> <i>know</i> <i>understand</i> <i>recognise</i>
		 heart	no	<i>love</i> <i>enjoy</i> <i>like</i> <i>adore</i>

<h1>2</h1> <p>Verbs</p>		<p>You want to write about a Verb that just <u>is</u>.</p> <p>You need an <i>Existence Verb</i></p>
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This is where the old definition we all learned in primary school fails utterly and completely. In the case of the Existence Verb, *A Verb is (most certainly not) a Doing Word*. There is nothing at all about these verbs that you can *do* with your body, mind or heart. Neither can you see them. These verbs, like the name implies, just *are*. They *exist*, like rocks and atoms and planets and everything in the universe exists.

Visual marker

Existence Verbs have no visual marker. They almost always carry a lower case letter except for the strange case we saw earlier. We use these implied Noun / Existence Verb sentences a lot in daily life: *(You) Be good!*

What does an Existence Verb?


Everything. Everything exists. At the very lowest form of *verb-ness*, everything *is*.

Can I see an Existence Verb?

We won't get into metaphysics here and talk about whether you can see someone *be* or not. The usual answer, though, is *No*.

As I mentioned before, leave all instances of these out of your lesson plans, forward planning documents and rubrics to visible Action Verbs, because you cannot see Existence Verbs, and you cannot assess what you cannot see.

And let's add to our table the Existence Verb, the third type.

Verb type	Visual marker	What does it?	Can I see it?	Examples
 Existence	<h2>lcl</h2> lower case letter	everything	<h1>no</h1>	<i>am, are, is was, were, have exist contain represent</i>

MYTH

Verbs are doing words.

Truth


Not for this verb.

And here is the whole table for your reference.

Verb type	Visual marker	What does it?	Can I see it?	Examples
Action	lower case letter	the body	yes	<i>dance, run, see, kick, draw</i>
		a physical object	yes	<i>grow, shine, flow</i>
State	lower case letter	mind	no	<i>think, know, understand</i>
		heart	no	<i>love, enjoy, like</i>
Existence	lower case letter	everything	no	<i>am, are, is, was, were, have, exist, contain, represent</i>

I must mention here that the little word *is* (together with its friends *am, are, was, were*, and others) has two jobs, and here are two sample sentences to demonstrate.

Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		What is <i>is</i> called in this sentence?	What does <i>is</i> do in this sentence?
She	<i>is</i>	a student.	Job One	<i>is</i> is the Main Verb	<i>is</i> tells me the verb
She	<i>is</i> dancing.		Job Two	<i>is</i> is an Auxiliary	<i>is</i> helps the Main Verb

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Verbs</p>		<p>You want to <i>refer</i> to a Verb.</p> <p>You need an Auxiliary.</p>
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This is our last type of Verb, although the Auxiliary is not actually a *real* verb so much as a *shadow* of a verb. An auxiliary just *represents* a Verb, just like a Pronoun represents a Noun. It's a placeholder, if you like, that we use so we don't have to write the same Verb twice. It often works like this. You use a Verb in your essay by writing it in all its full glory. Then you finish that clause or sentence and think, *Hmmm. I actually need to write that Verb again.* But if you do, it looks rather repetitive, and that's where the auxiliary steps in.

An example might be, **Parents teach their children. Teachers do too.** Here the auxiliary **do** just repeats the earlier verb **teach**.




Other examples include such words as *am, are, is, was, were, have*

The auxiliary is your multi-purpose handyman, and it also tells us the time of a sentence. There are too many examples to list here, but you can see in the sentences below how the auxiliary tells us the time.

Past	Parents taught their children. Teachers <u>did</u> too.
Now	Parents are teaching their children. Teachers <u>are</u> too.

2	Choose . . . <i>the Main Clause</i>
	The Verb's friends and sisters

Now the Verb also has friends, and here is a sentence to introduce some of them as well. Again, we won't worry too much about them. This is about improving your writing, not grammar!

Main Clause							
Noun House	Verb House						Holiday House
							
<i>compulsory</i>	<i>compulsory</i>						<i>optional</i>
<u>You</u>	<i>really</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>cry</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>mourn.</i>	
Pronoun	adverb	modal	negative	verb	conjunction	verb	
This is the Main Noun.	This describes the verb.	These two together tell me that the verb <i>cry</i> is a bad idea.		This is the Main Verb.	This joins the two sisters.	This is the Main Verb's sister.	We don't need anything here, although we could add something if we wanted to.

Up to this point, you have completed two of the steps: **Need** and **Choose**. Everything to this point has been productive. You have thought of what you **Need** to say, and **Chosen** your grammatical tools to do so. Your Main Clause is there on the screen or page in all its glory.

Before you go on to **Step Three: Protect**, though, you need to check over what you have said to check whether it is what you want to express. Will a reader understand you? Will you get that good mark or result you have been aiming at? If not, you might need to go back and check.

If your Main Clause does what you want it to, though, it is time to move to Step Three and get ready to **Protect**.

3	Protect	<i>. . . the Main Clause</i>
	. . . with capitals and punctuation	

Remember our metaphor of Main Clause Avenue with its Three Houses? Let's add to it a little.

Let's imagine that Main Clause Avenue is a pretty windy place. For as long as anyone can remember, there has been a constant wind blowing, but only in one direction, starting out to the left of the Noun House, blowing across the Verb House and the Holiday House, and then out into the wild grammatical forests.

A long time ago, the residents of Main Clause Avenue decided that they needed some protection from this never-ending wind, so they decided to put up two protective structures, one to the left of the Noun House and one to the right of the Holiday House. The wind was stronger to the left of the Noun House, so the Noun wanted something big and strong there, but the Holiday House didn't need as much protection, and it was sometimes empty, so the residents decided that just a low fence there would be fine. The residents also realised that the wind blew over the top of the Houses in a rather straight jet stream, which meant that they didn't need to put up any fences *between* the Houses.

Can you see where this is going?

Main Clause	
<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Reality</i>
The wind	the way we read our sentences, from left to right.
The large protective fence to the left of the Noun House	the capital letter.
The low fence to the right of the Holiday House	the fullstop.
The lack of fences <i>between</i> the Houses	no fullstops, commas or semi-colons within the Main Clause.

A few extra details.

Capital letter

First of all, the Main Clause, when it stands alone as its own sentence, always starts with a capital letter. There is no exception to this. Fortunately, many word processors automatically insert capitals at the start of a sentence, so you don't need to really think too much about this. I have, though, seen essays where students have turned off this feature so that their sentences start with lower case letters, which is both confusing and incorrect.

Commas

Secondly, the Main Clause almost never has any commas between the Capital Letter in the Noun House and the fullstop at the end of the Holiday House. The only exception is when you use commas if you have a list of Nouns in the Noun House or the Holiday House. We'll come to those naughty little squiggles later. For now, though, remember that commas do NOT show me where to pause or breathe. (More about this soon too!) None of these sentences,

therefore, make any sense.

~~I, taught my students History.~~





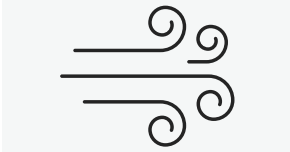

~~All, of my friends like, chocolate.~~

~~She wants to go to, Paris next year for her, birthday.~~

Fullstops

Thirdly, Main Clauses (MC) finish with fullstops. This little dot after a Main Clause is a little visual signal that tells me exactly what its name says. It tells me that my Main Clause, which contains my main idea, has just come to a complete halt, a *full stop*. You might also have spotted the fact that the Holiday House is red, and that is simply because red traffic lights tell us to *stop*. The fullstop also tells me that a new Main Clause is coming soon.

Let's summarise these first with a graphic.

Main Clause				
Noun House		Verb House	Holiday House	
				
Capital letter	Noun	Verb	(optional)	fullstop
CL	MC			•
				

and then with a little mathematical formula.

MC.

I've also noticed over my many years of marking student papers that some students are not quite sure where the spaces go at the end of a Main Clause, which results in sentences like these.

Teachers are wonderful people .They work hard .

Here's how it should work.

Teachers are wonderful people. They work hard.

4	Add	... a second Main Clause
... in two different ways		



Now that you know how to express your Main Idea with a Main Clause, and then to protect it with a capital letter and a fullstop, you will no doubt be also thinking: *Greg, I can't write all my essays just with main ideas. They would sound very simplistic. I need to add other things as well.*

And you are correct. There are times in your writing when you have one Main Idea/Main Clause and you want to link it up with another Main Idea/Main Clause. When you think about these two Main Clauses, their two Main Ideas work better together, so it makes sense to join them.

So let's take this step by step so that you know how to organise your thinking.

Step One

You have a Main Clause. It is protected by a capital letter at the start and a fullstop at the end. It looks like this





Main Idea / Main Clause			●
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
I	watched	the movie	
.			.

Or as a kind of mathematical formula, this:

MC.

Step Two

Let's now take your second complete and protected Main Clause and add it to this first one. Now we have this.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			●	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2			●
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL				CL			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
I	watched	the movie		It	was	fun	
.			.	.			.

Or as a kind of mathematical formula, this:

MC. MC.

The problem here is that they are not joined at all. Instead, the fullstop tells the reader that the first Main Idea / Main Clause is over and that we are about to meet a new and different Main Idea / Main Clause. In summary, the fullstop *separates* these two Main Ideas *and* Main Clauses. We, on the other hand, need a way of *joining* them.

In the past, many of you would have joined them with commas. After all, you were possibly or probably taught in primary school that *commas show you where to pause, or where to breathe*. Your sentence would then look like this .

..

~~MC, MC.~~

... but that is very, VERY wrong. Before we go into the correct way of joining two Main Clauses, let's press Pause (unintentional pun) for a moment and examine the curious case of commas.



Commas ,

These tricky little squiggles have confused both students of all ages and teachers for many years. When someone asks you about commas, you might think back to your primary school days when your teachers told you that commas were there for two reasons: to separate items in a list, and to show you where to pause or breathe. We will meet list commas later, but let's look at this idea of *commas = breathe* and pause for a moment. You might have believed this for years or even decades. Unfortunately, it is just dead wrong. However, it's not your teachers' collective fault. Most of them were not taught correctly in the first place.

~~Commas show us where to breathe or pause~~

Commas = Breathe

Let's look first at breathing. This idea is not only wrong but *unnecessary*. I have to say here that my lungs already have the job of telling me when to breathe and they do it very nicely, thank you very much. They have actually been doing it without any trouble all my life, and yours do probably a very similar job to mine. Every time I need more air, my lungs suck it in, even when I don't tell them to, and even more amazingly, they even do it all on their own, without any conscious guidance, when I'm asleep! So why do I need a *comma* to tell me to do something that my lungs already have under control? And what do I do when there aren't any commas in the text I am reading? Do I hold my breath and hope frantically there will be some commas floating about? I'm becoming a little crazy here, but you should be able to see that this idea of *commas = breathe* is also rather crazy.

Commas = Pause

So let's now look at the (equally incorrect and unnecessary) idea that we use commas to show me where to pause. Well that presents a problem too because, when I'm reading silently, I hardly ever pause. If I do, it's not because there's a comma there. It might be because I didn't quite understand what I just read, or because my phone rang, or perhaps because the thing I just read was so beautiful that I wanted to read it again. I'm sure you don't pause when you are reading silently and see commas either.

Well, you might say, commas are for reading aloud, not for silent reading. Indeed, they might be, but I have two questions then for you. Firstly, when was the last time you read something aloud? Secondly, what would happen if you were reading aloud and decided to pause where there wasn't a comma? Or what would happen if you just wanted to read it quickly and not pause at all because you were under time pressure? Would the grammar police come and get you for breaking some kind of arcane grammatical law? Would you destroy the meaning of the sentence that the writer intended? Would the people listening to you not understand you? And would you fall into a comma *coma*? Sorry about that last one. I've wanted to use that for years.

So. If commas don't serve any pausing purpose when I'm reading silently, and my lungs are just doing that breathing thing all by themselves when I'm reading aloud *or* silently, why bother putting commas in at all?

This whole idea of *commas = breathe* or *pause* is just silly. It makes no sense on any level. It also makes my job as

MYTH

Commas show us where to breathe or pause

Truth

They do nothing of the sort.

Commas separate clauses and list items.

a marker of university assignments so difficult when I'm marking student papers and I find sentences that have commas randomly distributed throughout where students think I should pause. It becomes very hard to know where one sentence / thought / idea stops and the next one starts.

The other problem with the idea of *commas = breathe or pause* is that the English language really doesn't like leaving really important grammatical devices as commas to personal preference. It MUCH prefers to give us solid, reliable, permanent rules and structures that everyone can use in exactly the same manner. That way, there is no chance for confusion. We will come to commas soon and learn what they really do, but in the meantime

Main Clause 1, Main Clause 2

Never join two main clauses with just a comma.

The Oxford comma

While we are looking at commas, let's consider this curious device. You may have heard of it, although many native English speakers have not. We all know that commas separate list items, but the Oxford comma takes it to a new level. It is used after the second last noun in a list, and it can radically change the meaning of a sentence.

In the following sentence (with the nouns in **bold**). . .

Jane turned around to see her friend Peter, a police officer and a martial arts master . . .

. . . it appears that there are only two people in the room, and that Jane's friend Peter is both a police officer and a martial arts master. This is because there is no comma between the two nouns **police officer and a martial arts master**, which means that the two nouns appear to be linked in some way. Remember that commas *separate* things.

Now let's add the Oxford comma after **a police officer**, which now makes the sentence . . .

Jane turned around to see her friend Peter, a police officer, and a martial arts master . . .

Now there are four people in the room, with one of them representing the law and the other looking decidedly threatening. Here, the addition of the little Oxford comma has changed things dramatically.

Getting back to joining two Main Clauses, so how *do* we do this? Fortunately, English has two structures already in place for this. They are fixed, so you can trust them, and universal, so everyone understands them. So let's press Resume and meet them.



4

Add

... a second Main Clause

... with FANBOYS alone / Compound Sentence

Before we start, you can see from the title above that this is our second sentence type out of three. When we add a second Main Clause to our first Main Clause, we form a Compound Sentence.

English actually has two ways of joining two Main Clauses, and for both of these ways, we need to meet the **fanboys**. No, these are not a group of people who keenly follow a star or a brand or something else, at least not here. They are simply a group of words that we use to join two Main Clauses. The technical name is *coordinating conjunctions*, if you are keen on that sort of thing. The easier name is the acronym **fanboys**, as we can see below.

f	or
a	nd
n	or
b	ut
o	r
y	et
s	o

We use some of these a lot - *and*, *but* and *so* - and the others more infrequently. You might think that words like *because* should be in this list, but they aren't and they shouldn't. *Because* and its friends *as*, *although*, *while*, *after* and several others all belong in a separate list, and we will meet them later.







Remember how the fullstop tells the reader visually that the Main Idea / Main Clause has come to a **complete halt**, a **full stop**? The reader then knows that, after the full stop, there is going to be a *new* Main Idea / Main Clause. The two Main Ideas / Main Clauses here are *different* and *separate*.

A fullstop separates two different Main Ideas / Main Clauses
MC1. MC2

English uses **fanboys** in a similar way. A **fanboys** word does two jobs. Firstly, it tells the reader that your first Main Idea / Main Clause is finished. Secondly, **fanboys** also tells the reader that the next thing he reads is going to be a *linked* Main Idea / Main Clause. The two Main Ideas / Main Clauses here are *linked*.

A fanboys word joins two linked Main Ideas / Main Clauses
MC1 fanboys MC2

Let's see it first as a graphic with some examples. (You'll notice the capital letter on Main Clause 2 has gone.)

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			f a n b o y s	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
CL 						
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional
We	went	to the beach	but	we	didn't swim	
Esther	saw	the movie	and	she	really enjoyed	it
Everyone	was	very tired	so	they	went	home

We saw the mathematical formula earlier, but here it is again.

MC1 fanboys linked MC2.

Earlier, I mentioned two different ways of joining two Main Ideas / Main Clauses, with **fanboys** involved in both. Let's meet the first of these.

4	Add	. . . <i>a second Main Clause</i>
. . . with comma + FANBOYS / Compound Sentence		

The reason I have a fence around my house is to show where my property ends and my neighbour's starts. It helps with things like weeds and plants and trees and reticulation. Surprisingly, English provides a parallel with writing sentences, and commas take the place of fences. You might even like to be slightly poetic and call a comma a 'sentence fence.'


Before I explain how this works, I need to point out another educational myth that many teachers have been teaching for many years, if not decades. The myth is this: we can't say *comma + and*, and we can't say *comma + but*. Since *but* and *and* are both in the **fanboys** group, I imagine this ban extends to the other words in the group as well: *for*, *nor*, *or*, *yet* and *so*.

All of these "rules" are **completely false**. Let me explain the real rules. We can join two Main Ideas / Main Clauses with two methods.

Method One

The writer *doesn't* need to show the reader the end of the first Main Clause.

Check out the examples below, and you will notice that it is pretty easy to see where Main Clause One ends. When this happens, you, the writer, don't need a comma to show the reader this boundary. The reader can do this unassisted and a simple **fanboys** word will do the job of announcing the end of Main Clause One all by itself. (You'll notice that the **fanboys** word *nor* behaves a little oddly here with the auxiliary *does* dropping unannounced into the Noun House. Interestingly, it is also used less often in modern English.)








**You can't use
*comma + and***

**You can't use
*comma + but***

Truth

You can.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			f a n b o y s	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
CL						
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
Emily	passed	her exam well	for	she	had studied	for weeks
New York	is	an amazing city	and	my family and I	visited	it twice
Hannah	doesn't like	opera	nor	does she	like	ballet
Hector	might teach	in the city	or	he	might decide	to go country
We	went	to the beach	but	we	didn't swim	
Judith	just got	married	so	she	is	elated
Matthew	loves	PE	yet	he	doesn't enjoy	maths

Method Two







The writer *needs* to show the reader the end of the first Main Clause

Sometimes, though, things are not as simple as the examples above. If the first Main Clause is too long to comprehend at a glance you, the writer, need to assist the reader a little and show the reader where Main Clause One finishes and Main Clause Two starts. As a metaphor, imagine two houses side by side, but with wide sweeping lawns between them and no fence. It would be difficult to know where one property ends and the other begins.

You therefore need to put a fence up to show the reader the *boundaries* between Main Clauses One and Two. You do this in two stages. Firstly, you insert a comma immediately after Main Clause One. This tells the reader that Main Clause One has just finished.

Secondly, you insert a *fanboys* combination as a visual signal that tells your reader that the *linked* Main Clause Two is about to start.

Here is an example.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			c o m m a	f a n b o y s	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2			f u l l s t o p
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House			Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 			,	but				●
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional			Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
Martin and all his friends from school	decided	to go to the beach to have a barbecue after a long week's preparation for the forthcoming exams			the weather forecast	predicted	heavy rain	







Or, as a general principle,

commas show where clauses start, pause or finish







It's worth noting here that some American textbook and grammatical authorities are now recommending that writers use this second method all the time. Whenever you want to join any two Main Ideas / Main Clauses of any length, therefore, they tell you to use *comma + fanboys*. In Australia, we don't have this principle.

However







Just before we finish this section, I should point out this much misused word *however*. *However* and *but* have almost the same meaning, but they use different structures. We have just met *but* as part of the **fanboys** group, so you would recognise it in the sentence below.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			f a n b o y s	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2			f u l l s t o p
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 							
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		
I	love	rock music	but	I	don't like	rap	.

Here, we can join the two Main Clauses with *but* as they are short and easy to remember and I don't need to see a visual marker for the end of the first Main Clause. Sometimes, though, you might want to add some drama to your second Main Clause as though it were a big announcement. In this case, then, you would write the two Main Clauses as separate sentences, and use *however* to link them. Let's add some length to the first Main Clause and use *However*.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			f u l l s t o p	However	,	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2			f u l l s t o p
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House				Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 									
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional				
I	love	rock music for its high energy and driving beat.	.	However	,	I	don't like	rap	.

We can also embed *however* **into** the Main Clause to achieve a similar effect. Consider this sentence.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2							
			f u l l s t o p							f u l l s t o p
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House			Verb House	Holiday House		
										
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		Compulsory			Compulsory	Optional		
I	love	rock music for its high energy and driving beat.	•	All my friends	,	however	,	like	rap	•

In summary, make sure you use *however* in one of these two formats.

Incidentally, the comma here shows me where the Main Clause *pauses* to add some extra information. We'll come to this extra information shortly.

For all those who enjoy rap, my apologies. It was just an example.

4	Add	<i>. . . a second Main Clause</i>
	<i>. . . with that</i>	

This section really does a little more than just *adding* a second Main Clause. Here, we are going to see how to *introduce* a second Main Clause with the powerful little word *that*.

We use this word in different ways, so the *material that follows* is not the only way of using *that*. As you might have seen from the prior sentence, we can use *that* to provide more information (it *follows*) about the noun *material*.

Here, though, we are going to use *that* to *introduce* a second Main Clause. In the examples that follow, you will see that we use **Main Clause One** to do the introducing part and **Main Clause Two** to give the actual content, the part that we really want to say.

Main Clause One		Main Clause Two
<i>Introduce the content</i>		<i>Deliver the content</i>
You will see	that	we use Main Clause One to do the introducing part.
I really think	that	she is a great teacher.
I would like to say	that	travelling is my favourite hobby.
We all believe	that	you can do it!
She hopes	that	she can reach her goals.

You might notice a few things here.

Firstly, we could just as easily drop Main Clause One and still get most of the necessary Main Clause Two information across. Main Clause One doesn't tell us anything new. It just introduces Main Clause Two.

Secondly, many English speakers often drop the word *that* between the two Main Clauses. If you hear someone say *We all believe you can do it!*, you would understand perfectly. In such a sentence, the word *that* is still there, but it is *implied*.

You will also note that we are limited in the Main Clause One *verbs* that we can use in this structure. The examples above use *see*, *think*, *say*, *believe* and *hopes* because these verbs introduce the Main Clause Two things that you want to tell us about. However, you could not use a Main Clause One verb like *go* or *do*. It just wouldn't work.

4	Add	<i>. . . a third Main Clause</i>
	. . . in a list	

You might remember from primary school days that we use commas to separate items in a list, as we can see in this sentence.

John went to Venice, Rome and Tuscany.

For this, we use the mathematical formula below, where the word *and* always goes just before the last list item.

List item 1, list item 2 and list item last.

However, you may not have learned that you can also treat *Main Clauses* as list items as well. Check this sentence.

John went to Venice, Murray went to New York and Rick went to London.

For this, we would use the mathematical formula,

Main Clause 1, Main Clause 2 and Main Clause 3.

Main Clause 1	,	Main Clause 2	and	Main Clause 3
John went to Venice		Murray went to New York		Rick went to London.

Note here that we can add **three or more** Main Clauses in a list, but **not** two. If we were to join just two Main Clauses, we would use **fanboys** by itself or **comma + fanboys**. We saw these two structures earlier.

That's all good so far but let's now add some extra information to the second Main Clause about Murray's adventure in New York. This extra information is a **Supporting Clause**, and we will meet this structure later. To make things visually easier, let's also change the colours of the Three Houses here to the colours of the two Clauses, where **Main Clauses are blue** and **Supporting Clauses are purple**.

Main Clause 1	<i>John went to Venice.</i>
Main Clause 2	<i>Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York.</i>
Main Clause 3	<i>Rick went to London.</i>

Now let's join them together in a single sentence, and let's use commas to separate the Main Clauses as list items.

John went to Venice, Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York, and Rick went to London.

In this new sentence, things become a little more confusing, as commas are doing two different jobs, and it's not clear which job is which. Firstly, commas are separating **Main Clauses**, as we learned earlier on this page, but they are also separating the **Supporting Clause** from the **Main Clause** in which it is embedded. I've made this sentence relatively short, but if we were to make it longer and add multiple commas, some readers might misinterpret some of the commas and get confused.

Fortunately, English has an answer. In sentences like these, we tell the comma to do only *one* job, not two, and we introduce the semi-colon to help out with the other job. Check out the sentence below for how this works.

John went to Venice; Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York and Rick went to London.

Here, we use the semi-colon to separate the Main Clauses and the comma to separate the Supporting Clause from the Main Clause in which it is embedded.

4	Add	<i>. . . extra information</i>
	. . . to the Noun House / Complex Sentence	

Now you know how to write one Main Clause and also to join two Main Clauses together, so let's now go to the next level and start adding information to the *Noun* in the *Noun House*. We just saw an example of this in the last section with *Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York*. This purple part of the sentence is called a *Supporting Clause*.

However, before we do, let's just press Pause for a moment, and look at some definitions.

Gramatica uses the following definition for a Supporting Clause. The Supporting Clause is a group of words with two characteristics, and let's compare the Main Clause and Supporting Clause to see these.




The Main Clause . . .	The Supporting Clause . . .
can stand alone.	cannot. It needs to attach itself to a <i>Main Clause</i> to survive.
starts with a <i>compulsory Noun</i> , continues with a <i>compulsory Verb</i> and finishes with <i>optional Holiday House word/s</i> .	does not.
has a fixed, reliable structure.	does not.
carries your <i>Main Idea</i> .	carries your <i>supporting ideas</i> .

Note the colours here for the *Main Clause* and *Supporting Clause*.




For those who know some technical grammar, this next part is for you. Gramatica believes that most students and teachers will never study grammar as a subject, and will instead only use it as a tool for writing. When they leave school, the overwhelming majority of them will stop thinking about grammar completely.

Therefore, Gramatica deliberately avoids difficult and complex grammatical terminology and concepts, and makes grammar a set of simple, colour-coded visual tools to be *used* rather than a difficult, word-based subject to be *studied*. As an example of this, Gramatica does not use the term *Phrase*, which is present in most grammar books. Gramatica simply bundles Phrases into the Supporting Clause group because both Phrases and Supporting Clauses do the same thing: add supporting information to Main Clauses. You can find out more about Phrases in well-respected grammar texts.

Now let's return to adding extra information to the Noun House, and we will first carefully step through the decision-making process by starting with a Main Clause.

Main Idea				f u l l s t o p	
Main Clause					
CL	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		
					
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		
	<i>The students</i>	<i>passed</i>	<i>their exams</i>	•	

Now perhaps you want to tell me something more about these students. Perhaps you want to say that . . .

Main Idea				f u l l s t o p	
Main Clause					
CL	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		
					
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		
	<i>The students</i>	<i>studied hard</i>	<i>for many weeks</i>	•	




We have seen already that you could simply add these two Main Clauses together with the **fanboys** so and, since we can comprehend the whole thing at a glance, you wouldn't need a comma. You might also change the second Common Noun *The students* to the pronoun *they*. You would then have this:

The students studied hard for many weeks so they passed their exams.

But this isn't exactly what you want. You want to attach this extra information directly to the Noun in the Noun House. Wonderfully, English has a way. Here's how it is done.

Step One

Choose one of the two Main Clauses to be your Main Idea. In this case, you might like the idea that they passed their exams, so let's install that one as our Main Idea. Now we have this:

Main Idea				f u l l s t o p •
Main Clause				
CL	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
				
	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
	<i>The students</i>	<i>passed</i>	<i>their exams</i>	




Step Two

Now we want to add the second Main Idea that we met earlier: they *studied hard* for many weeks. In doing so, we discover that both Main Clauses share a common noun: *the students*. It makes sense, then, that if we are going to attach the *studied hard* part, we should attach it where it fits best, and that is to *the students*.

So now we have a Main Clause *The students passed their exams*, and extra information *they studied hard for many weeks* that we want to attach to *The students*.






Step Three

Now we need to do some surgery. First, let's insert some space into our Main Clause so we have room to attach our extra information right next to *The students*, where it needs to go. Remember that this extra information is a Supporting Clause, and a Supporting Clause is defined as a group of words that cannot stand alone. Let's then drop in the extra information to the space we just inserted. It's not ready yet, but at least it's in the right place.

Main Idea						f u l l s t o p •
Main Clause						
CL	Noun House	Extra information (Supporting Clause) Any group of words that cannot stand alone.		Verb House	Holiday House	
						
	Compulsory		Compulsory	Optional		
	<i>The students</i>		<i>passed</i>	<i>their exams</i>		

Step Four






Clearly, we can't leave it like this! We need to do two more steps to make it look sweet and elegant. The first is to add two commas. Remember that these are visual signals to show that we are pausing the Main Clause after the Noun House to add extra information, and then resuming the Main Clause after the extra information is done. It's rather like pausing a movie to get a cup of coffee and then resuming it when you come back. So let's add those. (Mind you, pausing doesn't mean a pause in reading; it just means a pause in the Clause. It's a Clause Pause!)

Main Idea							
Main Clause							
CL	Noun House		Extra information		Verb House	Holiday House	f u l l s t o p
			Any group of words that cannot stand alone.				
	Compulsory		Compulsory		Optional		
	<i>The students</i>	,	<i>they studied hard for many weeks</i>	,	<i>passed</i>	<i>their exams</i>	•

Step Five

It's looking pretty good at the moment, but one thing is still missing. The extra information we inserted is a Supporting Clause, and Supporting Clauses cannot stand alone. Yet this one *is* standing alone. So let's make one final change.

The word *they* needs to go. We still want it to point to the Main Clause noun *The students* but not in its current form. We need a pronoun that will refer to the Person Noun *The students*. So let's change it to *who*.

Main Idea							
Main Clause							
CL	Noun House		Extra information (Supporting Clause)		Verb House	Holiday House	f u l l s t o p
			Any group of words that cannot stand alone.				
	Compulsory		Compulsory		Optional		
	<i>The students</i>	,	<i>who studied hard for many weeks</i>	,	<i>passed</i>	<i>their exams</i>	•

And that's it. For those interested, the name of this Supporting Clause is a *Non-Defining Relative Clause*, but I would guarantee that most native English-speaking people would not have the slightest clue as to what that term means, even though they use it every day.

Actually, there's one more thing. If your Main Clause noun is a person, you can use *who*, as we have done here. But if it is a different type of noun, you will need to use the Relative Pronouns in the following table.

Noun	Relative Pronoun	Example
person / people	who	<i>The students, who</i> studied hard for weeks, <i>passed their exams.</i>
place	where	<i>The restaurant, where</i> I proposed to your mother, <i>is still there.</i>
	that	<i>That French restaurant, that</i> opened in June, <i>is a great place for romance.</i>
	which	<i>The restaurant, which</i> we had never visited before, <i>was a great place to propose.</i>
object idea feeling	that	<i>My smart phone, that</i> was made by HTC, <i>is very powerful.</i>
	which	<i>My car, which</i> is about three years old, <i>is a Hyundai.</i>
ownership (person or thing)	whose	<i>The Ferrari, whose</i> engine was very old, <i>still drove beautifully.</i>

4	Add	. . . essential information
. . . to the Noun House / Complex Sentence		

We have seen how we can add *extra* information to the Noun in the Noun House with a couple of commas. We start with our Noun, then press **Pause** with our first comma, insert the extra information, press **Resume** with the second comma, and then continue with the Verb and the rest of the Main Clause.



Vygotsky

,
who wrote on constructivism
,
was born
in 1896.

You can see here that you can take out the Extra Information of this sentence and the Main Clause stands up perfectly well without it. It doesn't require the Extra Information at all. This Extra Information is not at all essential to the Main Clause. It's foreign, if you like, to the Main Clause.




And that is why it needs commas. The commas show us that this Extra Information is not an original part of the Main Clause. It's like a supporter from an out of town football club standing among the (rather hostile) supporters of the local football club and surrounding himself with two bodyguards. Commas are those bodyguards.

When you have Extra Information that you want to insert into your Main Clause, use commas to show that it is different and not an essential part of the original Main Clause.

Adding *Essential* Information

However, sometimes the information we add to our Noun is not extra or foreign at all. It is an essential part of the Noun. It's a supporter of the local football team standing among a group of his fellow supporters, all from the same, local football team. As a result, it doesn't need bodyguards or commas. It's an essential part of the Noun House.

Consider this sentence. You can see that **The man** is the Noun here and **who met me at the airport** is essential information about **The man**. Since this is essential information about **The man** and cannot really be separated from the sentence without damaging the meaning, it has no commas.




Main Idea / Main Clause			●
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
The man who met me at the airport	took	me to the hotel.	

The trick here is to decide whether your information is Extra, in which case it needs those commas, or Essential, in which case it doesn't.




I am adding Extra Information to the Noun	I need two commas around my Extra Information
I am adding Essential Information to the Noun	I don't need any commas around my Essential Information.

4	Add	<i>... extra information to a Main Clause</i>
... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence		

So far, we have seen how you can add Extra information to the Noun in the Noun House . . .

Main Idea							f u l l s t o p
Main Clause							
CL	Noun House	⏸	Extra information	⏹	Verb House	Holiday House	•
			Any group of words that cannot stand alone.				
	Compulsory		The students		who studied hard for many weeks	Compulsory	

and also Essential Information . . .

Main Idea / Main Clause			
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	•
			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
The man	took	me to the hotel.	




However, here we are just adding this information to **one part** of the Main Clause, the **Noun House**. Quite often, though, we need to add extra supporting information to the **whole Main Clause**.

This extra supporting information could take many forms. You might want to tell your reader the *time* of your Main Clause, or *how* your Main Clause happened, or *who* was responsible for it, or *when* and *where* it happened, or something that is harder to describe but which you just know that you have to add.

So this is how you should think

I Need to add some supporting information → I Choose a Supporting Clause

So let's use the Main Idea example here: *Teachers should set a positive classroom tone.* I have chosen the Main Clause as my structure for communicating this, protected my Main Idea / Main Clause with a capital and a fullstop, and all looks well. Now I want to add some extra meaning. There are **MANY** different sorts of extra meaning, but I have chosen the following ones because they all answer questions.

CL		Extra Information	c o m m a	Main Idea			f u l l s t o p	
		Supporting Clause		Main Clause				
Question	Answer	A group of words that cannot stand alone.	,	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	.	
								
					Compulsory	Compulsory		Optional
when?	time			As soon as they start teaching	teachers	should build		a happy classroom
why?	reason			In order to make students confident	teachers	should build		a happy classroom
where?	place			In every classroom in the school	teachers	should build		a happy classroom
how?	method	By using various teaching methods	teachers	should build	a happy classroom			
who?	person	Alone or with their colleagues	teachers	should build	a happy classroom			

You will notice here that Supporting Clauses can't stand alone. Only Main Clauses can do that. If a Clause does not obey Main Clause structure, it's a Supporting Clause, and cannot, therefore, stand by itself. It needs to attach itself to a Main Clause in order to survive.




Let's make a little mathematical formula for the structure above where the Supporting Clause comes first:

SC, MC.

In the real world, as you are doing your writing, it is sometimes good practice to write your Main Clause first. Get it established on the page or screen, and make sure it obeys the structure I have outlined already. Having done that, *then* add your supporting ideas in the shape of a Supporting Clause.

You might have spotted in the examples above that you can actually reverse the two Clauses and have the Main

Clause first and the Supporting Clause second. Let's have a look to see what happens.

CL		Main Idea			no c o m m a	Extra Information	f u l l s t o p
		Main Clause				Supporting Clause	
		Noun House 	Verb House 	Holiday House 		Any group of words that cannot stand alone.	
Question	Answer	Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional			
when?	time	Teachers	should build	a happy classroom		as soon as they start teaching	
why?	reason	Teachers	should build	a happy classroom		in order to make students confident	
where?	place	Teachers	should build	a happy classroom		in every classroom in the school	
how?	method	Teachers	should build	a happy classroom		by using various teaching methods	●
who?	person	Teachers	should build	a happy classroom		alone or with their colleagues	

You will notice here that several things have happened.

Firstly, the comma disappears altogether. It's not controlling my pausing or breathing, after all! Remember that the comma shows me where the Main Clause ends, and in the sentences above, the Main Clauses don't end with the word *classroom*. They end with the fullstop.

Secondly, and as a result, the new sentence is still protected by the capital letter at the start and the fullstop at the end, but the words that were once a separate Supporting Clause have now just become part of the Holiday House.

Thirdly, both versions - MC SC and SC, MC - both mean the same thing. You can choose which way you want to write them. Sometimes, writing the Supporting Clause first adds a little dramatic buildup to the Main Clause because you are making the reader wait for your Main Idea / Main Clause. Experiment a little to see what works for you.

In this case, our next mathematical formula looks like this

MC no comma SC.

4	Add	<i>. . . supporting ideas</i>
	. . . with ON A WHITE BUS / Complex Sentence	

You may remember that your teachers told you in primary school that you can't start a sentence with *Because*. If we ever questioned it, they just told us that it was a rule. I could never work out why it was a rule, but I didn't know why it wasn't until I started exploring our beautiful but baffling language and building Gramatica. It was then that I discovered that English *loves* structure, and that some "rules" like this, which were based entirely on personal interpretation rather than structure, were rather difficult to justify. It turned out that *Because* is one of a group of words that often start sentences, and here's a fine, valid, perfectly good example.

Because the rain was too heavy, we stayed home.

So let's look at this word *because* and some of his buddies to learn how to make your sentences more vibrant and powerful. *Because* is one of a group of words that you might find ON A WHITE BUS, a rather neat acronym that is explained in a rather large graphic on the next page, and you will also see some interesting things there.

Firstly, when you add an ON A WHITE BUS word to a **Main Clause** (note the colours here,) it turns it into a **Supporting Clause**. The Main Clause *The rain was too heavy* can stand alone quite happily, but adding *Because* to the beginning turns it into the Supporting Clause *Because the rain was too heavy*.

Secondly, this Supporting Clause cannot stand alone at all, and so it must attach itself to another Main Clause. Fortunately, we have one, as we can see above.

Thirdly, our two clauses are reversible. We could just as easily say *We stayed home because the rain was too heavy*. It is up to you which order you choose. Sometimes, placing the Supporting Clause first can add some spice and mystery to lead into your Main Clause. Remember where your commas go, though.

Let's have a look at the full list of these ON A WHITE BUS words and the overall structure below. By the way, the technical name for these words is *Subordinating Conjunctions*.



You can't start a sentence with *because*.

Truth

Yes, you can.

ON A WHITE BUS + **Main Clause**
= **Supporting Clause**

Main Clause




O	Only if
N	Now that

A	Although
	After
	As

Wh	When
	Whenever
	Wherever
	While
	Whereas
	Whether or not
I	If
	in case
T	Though
E	Even though
	Even if
	Ever since

B	Because
	Before
U	Unless
	Until
S	So

Main Idea / Main Clause		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
		
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional

Main Idea / Main Clause		
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House
		
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional

Because	the rain was too heavy	,	we stayed home.
Even though	we stayed home	,	we had a great time.
After	we had a great time	,	we went to bed.

	4	Add	. . . <i>time information to a Main Clause</i>
			. . . with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence

Sometimes, you might want to tell your reader **when** the Main Clause happened, and there are quite a few different ways of doing this, as you can see below. You will also notice that you can reverse the Main Clause and Supporting Clause. You will notice that some of the Supporting Clauses are made up of **ON A WHITE BUS** words + a Main Clause, and some just use **Nouns**.

			Extra Information Supporting Clause		Main Idea Main Clause			
			Any group of words that cannot stand alone.		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL	Question	Answer			 Compulsory	 Compulsory	 Optional	f u l l s t o p
	when?		time	As soon as they start teaching	c o m m a	<i>teachers</i>	<i>should build</i>	<i>a happy classroom</i>
		period	When the movie finished	,	<i>we</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>the cinema</i>	
			At 7pm		<i>everyone</i>	<i>arrived</i>	<i>for dinner</i>	
			On Christmas Day		<i>they</i>	<i>woke</i>	<i>to snow</i>	
			For many years		<i>she</i>	<i>worked</i>	<i>at the bank</i>	
			Between lunch and dinner		<i>the baby</i>	<i>slept</i>		
			While I was teaching		<i>the</i>	<i>rain</i>	<i>started</i>	●
		event	Whenever his team loses		<i>he</i>	<i>yells</i>	<i>at the TV</i>	
			Before he started his degree		<i>he</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>a bricklayer</i>	
		other	After he finished		<i>he</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>the best teacher ever</i>	
			Until you get that promotion		<i>(you)</i>	<i>work hard!</i>		



	4	Add	... place information to a Main Clause
		... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence	

Sometimes, you might want to tell your reader where the Main Clause happened, and there are quite a few different ways of doing this. You will notice that you can reverse the Main Clause and Supporting Clause. You will notice here that all of these Supporting Clauses use **Nouns**.

CL		Extra Information Supporting Clause	c o m m a	Main Idea Main Clause			f u l l s t o p
				Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
Question	Answer	Any group of words that cannot stand alone.					
				Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
<i>where?</i>	<i>no movement</i>	At school last week	,	<i>my class</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>exams</i>	.
		Inside the cave		<i>the noise of bats</i>	<i>grew louder</i>		
		Within Greater Tokyo		<i>millions of people</i>	<i>live</i>		
		On the cover of the magazine		<i>her photo</i>	<i>looked out</i>		
		In the middle of the oval		<i>the players</i>	<i>waited</i>	<i>for the siren</i>	
	<i>movement</i>	All the way from Paris		<i>they</i>	<i>came</i>		
		On the way to New York		<i>we</i>	<i>met</i>	<i>the stranger</i>	




	4	Add	<i>... reason information to a Main Clause</i>
		... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence	

Sometimes, you might want to tell your reader why the Main Clause happened, and there are quite a few different ways of doing this. You will notice that you can reverse the Main Clause and Supporting Clause. You will notice that some of the Supporting Clauses are made up of **ON A WHITE BUS** words + Main Clause, and some just use **Nouns**.

		CL	Extra Information Supporting Clause	c o m m a	Main Idea Main Clause			f u l l s t o p
					Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
			Any group of words that cannot stand alone.		 Compulsory	 Compulsory	 Optional	
why?	cause		Because it rained	,	<i>the picnic</i>	<i>was called off</i>		•
			Because of his hard work		<i>he</i>	<i>passed</i>	<i>all his exams</i>	
			As a result of the storm		<i>the fair</i>	<i>was abandoned</i>		
			As a consequence of the storm		<i>everyone</i>	<i>watched</i>	<i>movies instead</i>	
			Since it was such a beautiful day		<i>the family</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>swimming</i>	
	effect		To improve her job prospects		<i>she</i>	<i>worked very hard</i>		
			In order to succeed		<i>the class</i>	<i>turned up</i>	<i>to every tute</i>	
			Therefore		<i>they</i>	<i>passed</i>		



	4	Add	... method information to a Main Clause
		... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence	

Sometimes, you might want to tell your reader how the Main Clause happened, and there are a few different ways of doing this. You will notice that you can reverse the Main Clause and Supporting Clause.

CL		Extra Information Supporting Clause	c o m m a	Main Idea Main Clause			f u l l s t o p
				Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
Question	Answer	Any group of words that cannot stand alone.	,				●
				Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
How?	method	By <i>working hard</i>	,	<i>she</i>	<i>made</i>	<i>a lot of money</i>	●
		With <i>a little more effort</i>		<i>her profits</i>	<i>soared</i>		
		By <i>means of hard work</i>		<i>she</i>	<i>succeeded</i>	<i>in everything</i>	

	4	Add	<i>... person information to a Main Clause</i>
		... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence	



Sometimes, you might want to tell your reader why the Main Clause happened, and there are quite a few different ways of doing this. You will notice that you can reverse the Main Clause and Supporting Clause.

CL		Extra Information Supporting Clause	c o m m a	Main Idea Main Clause			f u l l s t o p
				Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
Question	Answer	Any group of words that cannot stand alone.	,				
				Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
who?	person or people	Alone	,	<i>the boy</i>	<i>waited</i>	<i>for his mother</i>	●
		By <i>herself</i>		<i>she</i>	<i>swam</i>	<i>across the river</i>	
		Together with <i>my students</i>		<i>I</i>	<i>push-started</i>	<i>her car</i>	
		Amongst <i>my friends</i>		<i>I</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>the only teacher</i>	
		With <i>all her family</i>		<i>she</i>	<i>raised</i>	<i>the necessary funds</i>	

	4	Add	... a linking word to a Main Clause
		... with a Supporting Clause / Complex Sentence	

Sometimes, you might want to link the end of one paragraph to the first Main Clause of the next, and we do this with Linking Words, which tell us how the direction of the new paragraph compares with the previous one. Therefore, these linking words almost always come **before** the Main Clause, not after. If you do add Linking Words after the Main Clause, we usually use commas, one of the only times when this happens.

There are quite a few different linking words, and you can see here how some expand into Linking *Phrases*.

		Extra Information Linking Word/s	Main Idea Main Clause			
CL	Any group of words that cannot stand alone.	c o m m a	Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	f u l l s t o p
						
			Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
sequence	Firstly, Secondly, Thirdly	,	<i>this essay</i>	<i>will consider</i>	<i>good pedagogy</i>	●
contrast	However		<i>we</i>	<i>must also consider</i>	<i>teaching skill</i>	
	On the other hand					
	Nevertheless					
	Even though <i>this is true</i>					
	Despite <i>this</i>					
In spite of <i>this</i>						
continuation	Furthermore		<i>teachers</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>central in learning.</i>	
	In addition to <i>this</i>					
comparison	Similarly		<i>teaching</i>	<i>makes</i>	<i>a difference</i>	
	Likewise					
conclusion	Finally	<i>good pedagogy</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>vital in teaching</i>		
	To conclude / summarise					
	In conclusion / summary					

Sentences

You will no doubt have noticed in this little book that we have not talked very much at all about **Sentences**. In fact, everything has been about Clauses and Words, although you will have seen references to Sentences at odd points.

The reason for this is simple. We have to use Clauses to make Sentences. In order to define Sentences, we need to start with Clauses. And it is really important to note here that a Clause is **not** necessarily a Sentence. They are very different beasts altogether.

In English, we have three different types of Sentence. Some grammar books will tell you that there are four, but Gramatica believes in simplicity. Gramatica also believes that most English speakers do not need to know all the subtleties of grammar. They just need to know how to make good, strong, effective sentences. If you would like to learn more about grammar, there are many excellent books about.

Getting back to Sentences, let's look at these three Sentence types, and what combinations of Clauses we use to make them.

A _____ Sentence	... is made of	... and joined with	Example	Check on page ...
Simple	one Main Clause		I went to the beach.	15
Compound	two Main Clauses	fanboys	I went to the beach and my friends came too.	45
		comma + fanboys	My friends and I went to the beach for a swim and a barbecue after a long week at work, but it rained.	50
		semi-colon	My friends and I went to the beach for a swim and a barbecue after a long week at work; it was a great time.	79
	three Main Clauses	commas	I went to the beach, Jacob went to work, and Alex stayed home.	55
Complex	1+ Main Clauses and 1+ Supporting Clauses.	comma	After a long week at work, I went to the beach.	57



5

Protect *the completed Sentence*

Introduction

Now you have chosen your Main Clauses, protected it with a capital and fullstop, and chosen a Supporting Clause to add extra information to it in some way, you need to go through it and check your punctuation. We have already looked at fullstops and commas, so let's now look at apostrophes, semi-colons and colons.

‘	5	Protect	<i>the completed Sentence</i>
		Apostrophes	

These little floating squiggles that look like levitating commas have three jobs and answer three questions, as follows.

Who is the owner?

Apostrophes answer this question. If a noun has an owner, we almost always show it with an apostrophe. However, there are two main ways of doing this, as we can see above, and one odd little quirk.

The first way is the way you probably learned in primary school.

Owner	Word ending	Add	Example
Singular	<i>not s</i>	apostrophe <i>s</i>	<i>cat's house's student's teacher's city's</i>
Singular	<i>s</i>	apostrophe <i>s</i>	<i>James's Frances's Charles's Doris's</i>
		apostrophe	<i>James' Frances' Charles' Doris'</i>
Plural	<i>s</i>	apostrophe <i>s</i>	<i>cats' houses' students' teachers' cities'</i>

You will see here that we have two choices with owners who end with the letter *s*. You can either do it the traditional way with **apostrophe s** or you can just have the **apostrophe** alone. The choice is yours. The rule, though, is to be consistent. Make sure as well here that you are clear here on owners who end with the *letter s*, not with the *sound s*. Even though *Clarice* ends with the **sound s**, we don't write it as *Clarice'*.

Here's the quirk I mentioned earlier. English tried really hard to avoid this little oddity, but couldn't. We have two words that look almost identical and sound exactly the same, but which mean different things. They are *its* and *it's*. Which one is which?

It would make sense for English to add the apostrophe to *it* as an owner. However, it doesn't. When *it* is an owner, it **doesn't own** an apostrophe. Odd, but correct. This table should help.

its	owner	<i>My car is really safe. Its eight airbags surround the driver and passengers.</i>
it's	abbreviation for <i>it is</i> .	<i>My car is really safe. It's also very reliable.</i>

What letters are missing?

English has a neat way to show that letters are missing. It inserts an apostrophe. *Would not* becomes *wouldn't*, *will not* becomes *won't* and there are many others. If there are no missing letters, don't insert an apostrophe.

For those who remember the great American poet Robert Frost, his small but beautiful poem "The Pasture" has a line with a curious form of apostrophes showing missing letters. It looks like this: " I sha'n't be gone long." Here, the word

sha'n't shows that letters are missing in two places. The first is the // after the *a*, and the second is the *o* after the *n*.

How many?

Over a period of years, people have used apostrophes to mark plurals, and English would like you to know that it is horrified. This misuse of apostrophes is just **WRONG**. It is, in fact, a *catapostrophe*. It appears in three forms. The first is with nouns that end with vowels, like greengrocer signs that advertise *potatoe's*. The second can be found in acronyms like DVD's, and these are sometimes found in tech store advertisements. The third is where nouns are numbers, like the decade the 1970's.

When I see examples like these, I have two reactions. Firstly, I work hard to resist the temptation to whip out my liquid paper and correct it on the spot. Secondly, I have to wonder if the apostrophe is showing me that the noun *owns* something, and then I have to look for that thing (and never find it.)

So let's avoid the confusion! If you write a plural, just add a lower case *s* or *es*. **NEVER** add an apostrophe. Here are some common errors and their correct usages.







Noun	incorrect form	correct form
DVD	DVD's	DVDs
1970	1970's	1970s
menu	menu's	menus
potato	potato's	potatoes

;	5	Protect <i>the completed Sentence</i>
		Semi-colons

My ESL students call these “dot commas”, which is a rather obvious and visual name! So what do they do? Semi-colons have three jobs.

Compare and contrast two Main Clauses.

We learned earlier that you can join two Main Clauses with either **fanboys** alone or **comma + fanboys**. However, if you want to add an extra level of meaning, you can use a semi-colon instead. This gives a visual instruction to the reader, and says, “I want you to compare or contrast the two Main Clauses on either side of me.” Here’s an example.

Main Idea 1 / Main Clause 1			•	Main Idea 2 / Main Clause 2			•
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House		Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 				CL 			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional		Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
Dogs	have	masters	;	cats	are	masters	.

Here we have two Main Clauses, as we can see, and you want the reader to notice the similarities and differences between the mastery levels of dogs and cats. So if you want your reader to compare and/or contrast your two Main Clauses, use a semi-colon.

Link two Main Clauses without using fanboys

There are times when linking two Main Clauses with **fanboys** in a Compound Sentence just doesn't do the job as well as you might like. Perhaps the Main Clauses are too long or too complex, and the **fanboys** word just gets lost in the middle. Fortunately, English provides a solution. In these situations, just separate the two Main Clauses with a semi-colon, which tells the reader to consider the two Main Clauses as two parts of the same idea.

Separate Main Clauses in a list

(This section is a repeat of the earlier page **Add / . . . a third Main Clause . . . in a list**)

You can treat Main Clauses as list items as well as regular nouns. Check this sentence.

John went to Venice, Rome and Tuscany.

For this, we use the mathematical formula below, where the word *and* always goes just before the last list item.

List item 1, list item 2 and list item last.

However, you may not have learned that you can also treat Main Clauses as list items as well. Check this sentence.

John went to Venice, Murray went to New York and Rick went to London.

For this, we would use the mathematical formula,

Main Clause 1, Main Clause 2 and Main Clause 3.

Main Clause 1	,	Main Clause 2	and	Main Clause 3
John went to Venice		Murray went to New York		Rick went to London.

Note here that we can add **three** Main Clauses in a list, but **not** two. If we were to join just two Main Clauses, we would use **fanboys** by itself or **comma + fanboys**. We saw these two structures earlier.

That’s all good so far but let’s now add some extra information to the second Main Clause about Murray’s adventure in New York. To make things visually easier, let’s also change the colours of the Three Houses here to the colours of the two Clauses, where **Main Clauses are blue** and **Supporting Clauses are purple**.

Main Clause 1	<i>John went to Venice.</i>
Main Clause 2	<i>Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York.</i>
Main Clause 3	<i>Rick went to London.</i>

Now let’s join them together in a single sentence, and let’s use commas to separate the Main Clauses as list items.

John went to Venice, Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York, and Rick went to London.

In this new sentence, things become a little more confusing, as commas are doing two different jobs, and it’s not clear which job is which. Firstly, commas are separating **Main Clauses**, as we learned earlier on this page, but they are also separating the **Supporting Clause** embedded within the **Main Clause**. I’ve made this sentence relatively short, but if we were to make it longer and add multiple commas, some readers might misinterpret some of the commas and get confused.

Fortunately, English has an answer. In sentences like these, we tell the comma to do only *one* job, not two, and we introduce the semi-colon to help out with the other job. Check out the sentence below for how this works.

John went to Venice; Murray, who had never travelled before and was very excited, went to New York and Rick went to London.

Here, we use the semi-colon to separate the first two Main Clauses and the comma to separate the embedded Supporting Clause from the Main Clause.




:	5	Protect	<i>the completed Sentence</i>
		Colons	

Unfortunately, this word also refers to a part of the bowel, but that is most certainly not what we are going to discuss here. This two friendly - and balancing! - little fullstops have a unique job. They announce a list at the **end** of a Main Clause. Here's how it works.

Firstly, let's look at a list as **part** of the Main Clause. Here, we have the Holiday House comprised of three list items **my family, travelling and chocolate**. There is no semi-colon anywhere.

Main Idea / Main Clause			•
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
I	love	my family, travelling, and chocolate	

Now let's change things a little and give this list a name, and we'll write this name in **the Holiday House**. Let's call this list **these things**.

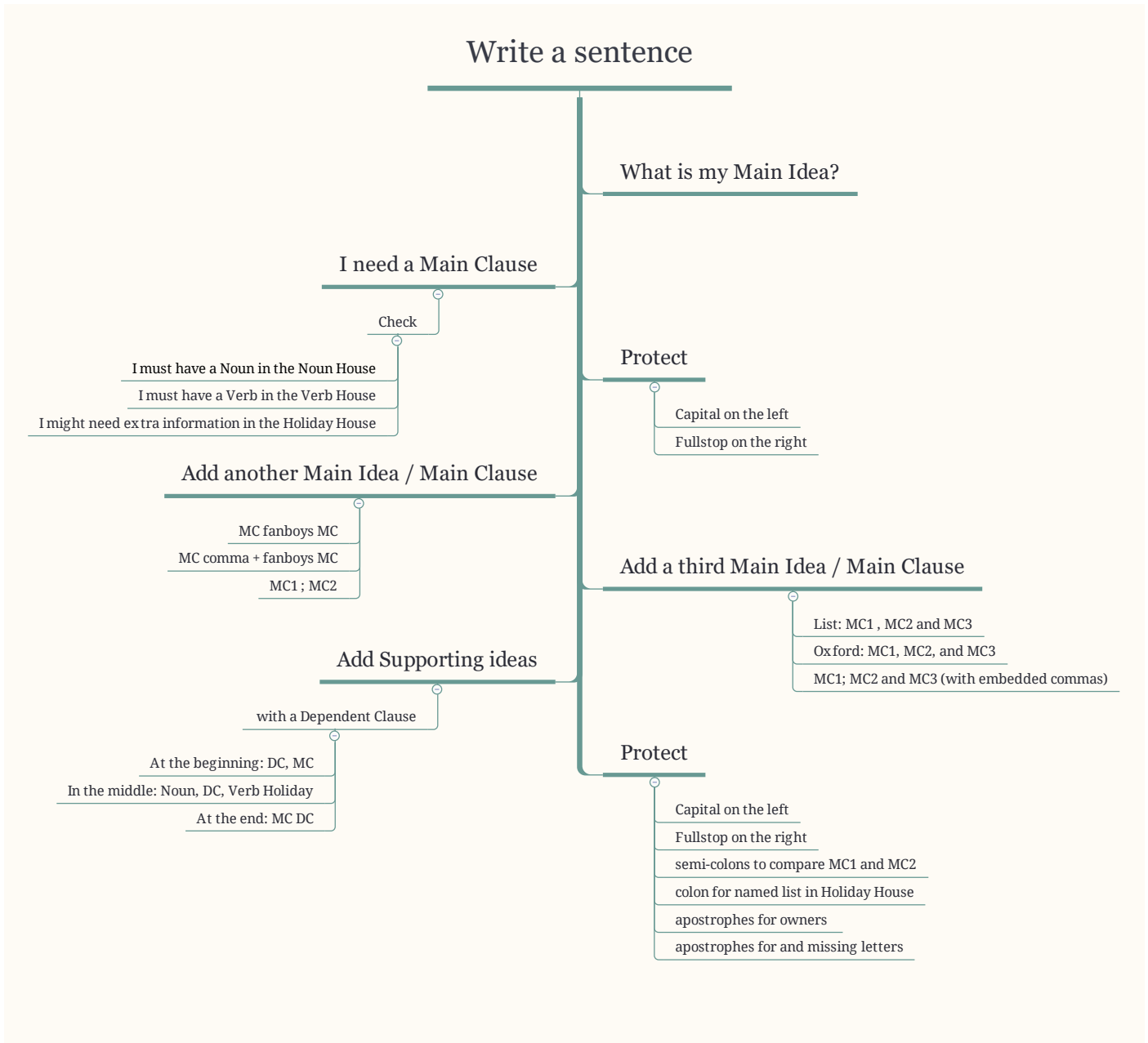
Main Idea / Main Clause			•
Noun House	Verb House	Holiday House	
CL 			
Compulsory	Compulsory	Optional	
I	love	<u>these things</u>: my family, travelling, and chocolate	

You can see here that the colon both *names* and *announces* a list. When you want to name your list, use a colon. If you don't need to name your list, leave the colon out.

Main Clause : list

6	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Summary . . . of the completed Sentence</h2>
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Up to this point, we have gone into detail about the way the English sentence works. Here, though, let's summarise with a flowchart of the various processes.



	7	Fix	<i>Common mistakes</i>
		Spelling	

Over the years, I have seen writers make these mistakes a lot, so this section shows you how to avoid them. Some are spelling and some are usage errors. I will certainly add to these pages as new words and usages appear, or you can suggest your own!

Word	Meaning	Example
principal	the leader of a school, ballet company, art studio and other groups of people	The school <i>principal</i> met me on my first day there.
principle	An idea or concept	Higher order thinking is a key <i>principle</i> of Bloom's Taxonomy.

they're	short for <i>they are</i>	<i>They're</i> going to finish that assignment tonight.
their	something belonging to them	They really love <i>their</i> new house.
there	points to a place	Building 4 is over <i>there</i> , next to the cafe.

where	referring to a place	Perth is the city <i>where</i> I grew up.
we're	short for we are	<i>We're</i> meeting tomorrow at 1pm.
were	past form of <i>are</i>	My friends <i>were</i> all happy with the party.

in turn	one thing at a time	She dealt with each point <i>in turn</i> .
intern	a person who works, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification.	He spent his summer holidays serving as an <i>intern</i> at a local charity organisation.

read	the base form of the verb (the vowel sound is <i>ee</i>)	Could you <i>read</i> that chapter, please?
read	the past form of the verb (the vowel sound is <i>e</i>)	I <i>read</i> that book yesterday.

relative	shows how something might change in different contexts.	A student's ability is <i>relative</i> to different classes.
relevant	closely connected or related to something else.	The book I am reading is <i>relevant</i> to my studies.

practise	This is the verb form.	I should practise the piano!
practice	This is the noun form.	Good practice makes for good piano playing!

affect	This is the verb form.	The new job will affect her health.
effect	This is the noun form.	Good writing has a positive effect on the reader.

	6	Fix	<i>Common mistakes</i>
		Usage	

These are errors I have spotted over many years of reading students' work. This is certainly a list that will be added to over time, and please send in your own, if you have any.

Word	Error	Problem and solution
predominantly	I have seen this spelled many times as predominately .	Solution: predominantly

them / their	The student wrote in their book.	<p>Problem: <i>The student</i> is singular. <i>Their</i> is plural. The two don't match.</p> <p>In the 'old days', everyone just used the male pronoun <i>he, him and his</i> for everything. Then people thought such usage might be sexist, so they used <i>he/she</i> and <i>him/her</i>. When that became too awkward, they used <i>they</i> even though it was incorrect.</p> <p>Solution 1: Use <i>his</i> or <i>her</i>. If you are female, choose <i>her</i>. If you are male, choose <i>his</i>.</p> <p>Solution 2: If you don't want to use <i>his</i> or <i>her</i>, alternate between the two. Use them interchangeably.</p> <p>Solution 3: Instead of changing plural <i>their</i> to single <i>his</i> or <i>her</i>, change single <i>student</i> to plural <i>students</i>.</p> <p><i>The students wrote in their books.</i></p>
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matching plurals	All the students put away their book.	<p>Problem: It appears in this sentence that multiple people all share the same book, and all those people helped to put this single book away.</p> <p>Solution: Make sure the number of your nouns match. If you have multiple people in the Noun House and multiple books in the Holiday House, make sure they match. Your sentence would then read:</p> <p><i>All the students put away their books.</i></p>
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alot	I learned alot of things.	Solution: This is two words: <i>a</i> and <i>lot</i> . <i>I learned a lot of things.</i>
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Gramatica for teachers

I was a primary teacher once so I was one of the people who taught students the very things I am now speaking against. It's rather ironic, I think.

However, if you like what you have seen in this book and would like to show your own students a better way of writing, there is a wealth of Gramatica resources available to you. They are built on sound educational neuroscience, Bloom's Taxonomy, quality research and extensive classroom practice. The entire Gramatica teaching and learning universe is also linked closely to the various Australian curriculum documents, and is therefore eminently usable in any year level and any classroom.

It uses collaborative learning, explicit teaching and Socratic questioning, as well as low-tech resources that can be easily reproduced at need and adapted to any lesson, from grammar to history, science to English, creative writing to geography.

Better still, it works.



This is not the end

My aims in writing this book were twofold. Firstly, I wanted to make it easier for you to construct good, strong, correct sentences, and to give you the structures to do so. I wanted to share with you in 80 or so pages what has taken me many years to work out. I hope I have done that. I most sincerely hope that you can take these structures and either make your writing stronger or teach others to do so. Practise them with intent and creativity. Experiment a little. If you use the structures as this book shows, you shouldn't make mistakes.

Secondly, I wanted to open up the English language a little to show you that it is *not* an unfathomable mystery or a dark jungle full of traps and dangers for the unwary. For me, it is a fascinating treasure cave that endlessly opens up new things that amaze me. Perhaps you don't share that fascination to the same extent, but I hope I have given you a brief glimpse of your beautiful language and led you to appreciate it more and use it better perhaps than you once did.

Please remember that this book is a growing thing. I will add to it with new ideas and sections regularly, and you can also recommend areas that you think should be addressed.

Go well and write beautifully.

Greg



