

Grammar and Mechanics

The rules in this Appendix are not intended to be exhaustive but to help parents and teachers with the punctuation and other concepts covered in *Fix-It!* They explain more fully the brief rules written beside the stories when further explanation might be helpful. Additional grammar concepts are covered in the Appendix under Excellence in Writing Style Techniques.

Definitions Being able to identify correctly subjects, verbs, and clauses will help with punctuation.

Phrase: a group of related words without both a subject and a verb.

Dependent Clause (a.k.a. subordinate or weak clause): a group of related words with both a subject and a verb that cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Independent or Main Clause (a.k.a. strong clause): a group of related words with both a subject and a verb that can also stand alone as a sentence.

Sentence: a group of words with at least one independent clause. It could also have one or more dependent clauses and any number of phrases.

Indentation

Discuss whether you need to start new paragraphs in every Fix-It. In nonfiction, body paragraphs are organized by topic ideas. In fiction, especially with dialogue, the rules are more ambiguous, with different authorities citing different rules. Most, however, accept these basic guidelines. If the paragraphs are very short, you might not need a new paragraph for Rule 2 but should start one for a new speaker (Rule 1).

Rule 1. Begin a new paragraph each time a new person speaks.

Aunt Polly seized her mischievous nephew by his collar. "I might 'a' guessed your foolery, Tom!"
In a shrill tone Tom yelled, "My! Look behind you, Aunt Polly!" Aunt Polly reeled around, and Tom fled.

Rule 2. Begin a new paragraph to indicate a change of topic, a change of place, or a lapse of time.

If a character's speech continues into the next Fix-It, the passage will end with "*quotation continues.*" Tell students they should not close the first passage with quotation marks and the next day should continue writing where they left off, using close quotation marks only at the end of the character's speech.

Capitalization

Rule 1. Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence, even when it does not begin the full sentence.

In her best courtly speech, she inquired, "Pray tell, who has tendered such a thoughtful offer?"

Rule 2. Use lowercase to continue interrupted quotations.

"Princess," he began, "you have a visitor at the door."

