

ENGL000: Pre-College English Study Guides

Note: This study guide is intended to help reinforce key concepts in each unit in preparation for the final exam. Each unit study guide aligns with course outcomes and provides a summary of the core competencies and a list of vocabulary terms. This study guide is not meant to replace the readings and videos that make up the course.

The vocabulary lists include (1) some terms that might help you answer some of the review items and (2) some terms you should be familiar with to be successful in completing the final exam for the course.

Unit 3: Making Inferences

3a: Make logical inferences to gain deeper understanding of written texts

3a.1. Making inferences is an active reading strategy in which you draw logical conclusions based on what you have read. An inference is not something that is stated directly in the text. When you make an inference, you extrapolate from the information you have been given.

A. Making an inference is not the same as guessing. Describe the difference between an inference and a guess.

B. Active readers use clues in the text to make sound inferences. However, even sound inferences will not always turn out to be correct. Why do you think active readers make inferences, even though their inferences may not be correct?

If you would like to review inferences further, revisit Saylor Academy's [“Making Inferences”](#) and [“Making Inferences—Advanced.”](#)

3b: Use commas, semicolons, colons, and dashes effectively in writing

3b.1. Punctuation helps guide the reader through a piece of writing, indicating relationships between ideas within a sentence. One of the most common and important punctuation marks is the comma (,). You may have heard that you should use a comma any place you would pause when reading a text aloud. This is not entirely accurate. Instead, there are seven rules that will help you determine when to use a comma.

A. Use a comma to connect two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.

- List the seven coordinating conjunctions.
- Then, write a grammatically correct sentence with two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.

B. Use a comma between items in a series.

- Write a grammatically correct sentence that lists items in a series.

- C. Use a comma after an introductory word or clause.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that begins with a dependent clause.
- D. Use commas around the name of the person being spoken to when using direct address.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses direct address.
- E. Use commas around interrupters.
- List three examples of interrupters.
 - Then, write a grammatically correct sentence with an interrupter.
- F. Use commas around supplementary material that amplifies a point or defines a term.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses commas to set off defining material.
- G. Use a comma to separate a quotation from the rest of a sentence.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that includes a quotation.

3b.2. Like commas, semicolons (;) are used to separate material within a sentence. Semicolons create more significant separation than do commas. There are two main rules governing when to use a semicolon.

- A. Use semicolons to separate items in a series when one or more of those items already contains commas.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence with a list that contains at least one item with commas.
- B. Use semicolons to connect two (and only two) closely related independent clauses without a conjunction.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that joints two independent clauses.

3b.3. Think of the colon (:) as an announcement. Colons can be used to introduce, direct attention, summarize, and explain. While there are situations in which you must use a comma or a semicolon, you may largely use your discretion about when to use a colon, as long as you follow some basic guidelines.

- A. You may choose to use a colon to introduce a list, an example, or a quotation.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses a colon to introduce a list.
- B. You may choose to use a colon to connect two independent clauses when the second sentence summarizes or explains the first sentence.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses a colon to join two independent clauses.
- C. There are some cases in which writers must use colons. Colons are used in certain writing conventions, most notably to express time and to separate titles from subtitles. For example, “At 10:00 pm last night I finished reading Barack Obama’s *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*.”

3b.4. Like colons, dashes (—) should be used at the discretion of the writer. Note that dashes differ from hyphens in purpose and in typographical appearance.

- A. You may choose to use dashes to set off material for emphasis.

- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses dashes to set off material for emphasis.
- B. You may choose to use a dash to draw attention to the introduction or conclusion of a sentence.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses a dash to indicate a sentence introduction.
- C. You may choose to use dashes to set off bonus phrases that are not necessary to create a grammatically complete sentence.
- Write a grammatically correct sentence that uses dashes to indicate a bonus phrase.
- D. You may choose to use dashes to indicate interruption in written dialogue.
- Write several lines of grammatically correct dialogue that uses dashes to indicate that one person has interrupted another person.

If you were able to answer each of the study questions above easily, you should be prepared to answer questions about commas, semicolons, colons, and dashes on the final exam. If any particular study question was difficult for you, you should revisit the grammar practice materials from this unit: To review the rules governing comma use and to practice using commas effectively in your writing, revisit Saylor Academy's "[Advanced Comma Rules.](#)" Complete the practice exercises and check your work against the [answer key](#). To review the rules governing the use of semicolons, colons, and dashes, read "[Semicolons, Colons, and Dashes](#)" from The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.

3c: Recognize subject-verb agreement in the composition of sentences

3c.1. A complete sentence must have a subject and a verb. In any clause, a verb must agree with its subject in person and in number.

A. The grammatical concept of *person* indicates who or what the subject is. There are three categories of person, each with one or more definite pronouns:

- First person: I, we
- Second person: you
- Third person: he, she, it, they

B. The grammatical concept of *number* indicates how many people or objects are included in the subject. Subjects are either singular (one subject) or plural (more than one subject).

3c.2. Sometimes the subject of a sentence is a proper noun (eg., *London* or *John*) or a definite pronoun (eg., *I* or *she* or *it*). In these cases, determining subject-verb agreement is relatively simple once you understand the basic principles. In other cases, subject-verb agreement can be tricky, for example if the number of the subject is not as obvious. It will be helpful to understand some grammatical terms and memorize the conventions for some of these situations.

A. What is a compound subject? Write a sentence with appropriate subject-verb agreement using a compound subject.

- B. What is an indefinite pronoun? List the five indefinite pronouns that always use plural verbs. Write a sentence with appropriate subject-verb agreement using one of these indefinite pronouns.
- C. What is a collective noun? Write a sentence with appropriate subject-verb agreement using a collective noun.
- D. What is a mass noun? Write a sentence with appropriate subject-verb agreement using a mass noun.
- E. What is a pair word? Write a sentence with appropriate subject-verb agreement using a pair word.

To review subject-verb agreement in preparation for the final exam, see Boundless Writing: [“Agreement and Parallelism: Subject-Verb Agreement.”](#)

3d: Proofread to ensure spelling and usage appropriate to different writing contexts

3d.1. Writing is a process with several distinct stages. Before they begin writing a draft, effective writers engage in prewriting and outlining activities. You learned about these stages of the writing process in Units 1 and 2. Similarly, effective writers continue to improve their essays even after they have completed a first draft. The fourth stage of the writing process, revision (sometimes called *editing*) was covered in Unit 5. The final stage of the writing process is proofreading. What is the difference between revising/editing and proofreading?

3d.2. When you proofread, you review your writing carefully to ensure that your grammar, punctuation, spelling, and word choices are communicating your ideas effectively. Rather than thinking of grammar and punctuation as a set of arbitrary rules you must follow, it is helpful to think of them as a set of tools that assist you in conveying your point to your readers. If you do not follow the agreed-upon conventions for using commas, for example, readers may be confused about how your ideas fit together. If you continually misspell a word, your reader may misinterpret what you are trying to say. Even if they do understand your meaning, such errors can be distracting. List and describe at least five strategies for proofreading your writing effectively.

To review the differences between revision (or *editing*) and proofreading, as well as proofreading strategies, re-read The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill’s [“Editing and Proofreading.”](#) Be sure to complete the practice exercises to hone your proofreading skills.

3e: Write well-organized analytical paragraphs in response to writing prompts

3e.1. In each unit of this course, you practiced writing well-organized paragraphs. You applied new knowledge and skills to improve the development, organization, and grammar of your paragraphs. Write 1-2 well-developed paragraphs (8-10 sentences each) in which you explain what you think are the three most important elements of an effective paragraph.

3f: Demonstrate principles of active reading

3f.1. After completing this course and reviewing the Unit 1 and Unit 2 study guides, you should be able to understand and implement active reading strategies.

- A. Make a list of active reading strategies you are familiar with from this course.
- B. Describe the benefits of reading actively.

3f.2. When you make inferences as you read, you are engaging in active reading. Explain the benefits of making inferences as an active reading strategy.

To review the principles of active reading, revisit the following readings and video:

- Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges: [“Active Reading”](#)
- Literacy4DS: [“Active Reading”](#)
- California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office: [“Online Reading Strategies”](#)
- Essential Study Skills Wikispace: [“Cornell Notetaking System”](#)

To practice your active reading skills, you can retake Saylor Academy’s [“The Five Orange Pips” Quiz](#), based on [the short story](#) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. You can check your work against the [answer key here](#).

Unit 3 Vocabulary List

This vocabulary list includes terms that might help you answer some of the review items above and some terms you should be familiar with to be successful in completing the final exam for the course.

Active reading
Collective noun
Colon
Comma
Compound subject
Coordinating conjunction
Dash
Definite pronoun
Dependent clause
Direct address
Indefinite pronoun
Independent clause
Inference
Interrupter
Mass noun
Number
Pair word

Person
Plural
Proofreading
Revising/editing
Semicolon
Singular
Subject
Verb
Writing process