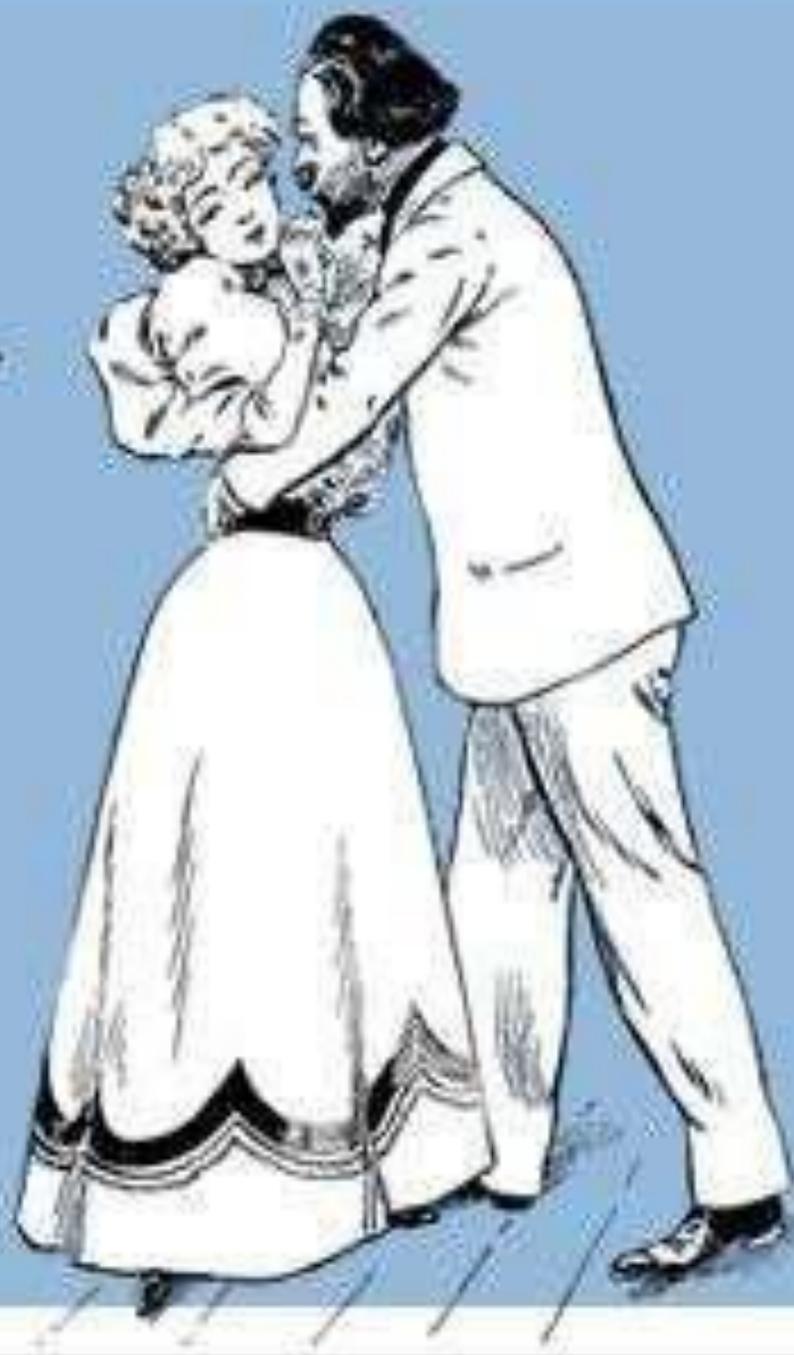


You were so  
attractive until you  
texted me with your  
hideous grammar.



your  cards  
someecards.com

# Reading

- Elements of Style: Elementary Rules of Usage
- SJSU Writing Center Handouts

# What you already know

- Grammar
  - Definition: The formal patterns in which words and punctuation are arranged in order to convey meaning
  - Patterns are learned very early in life
  - Used spontaneously without thinking
- Even though few of us can cite the rules, our *understanding* of grammar is extremely sophisticated.
- This is good news... it means that you are capable of writing grammatically sound phrases already.

# Why It Matters

- Written errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation...
  - Convey to the reader the kind of message the writer never wants to send: that the writer is either careless or has not mastered the language
  - Distract the reader from the issue being discussed
  - Damage the effectiveness and credibility of the writer

# Why It Matters

- Grammar, spelling and punctuation, etc., are just the BASICS of writing, the bare minimum requirements of good communication.
- You cannot build a coherent sentence, paragraph, argument or paper without BASIC skills.
- You will not pass this class without these BASIC skills.
- You will not succeed in any career that involves writing without these BASIC skills.

# Style

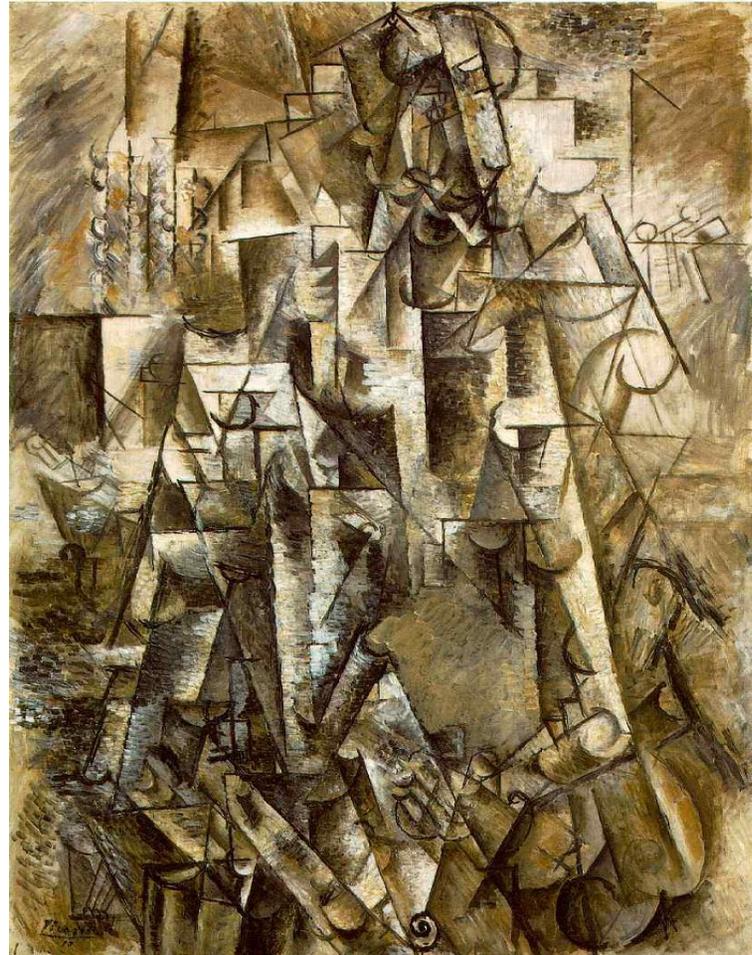
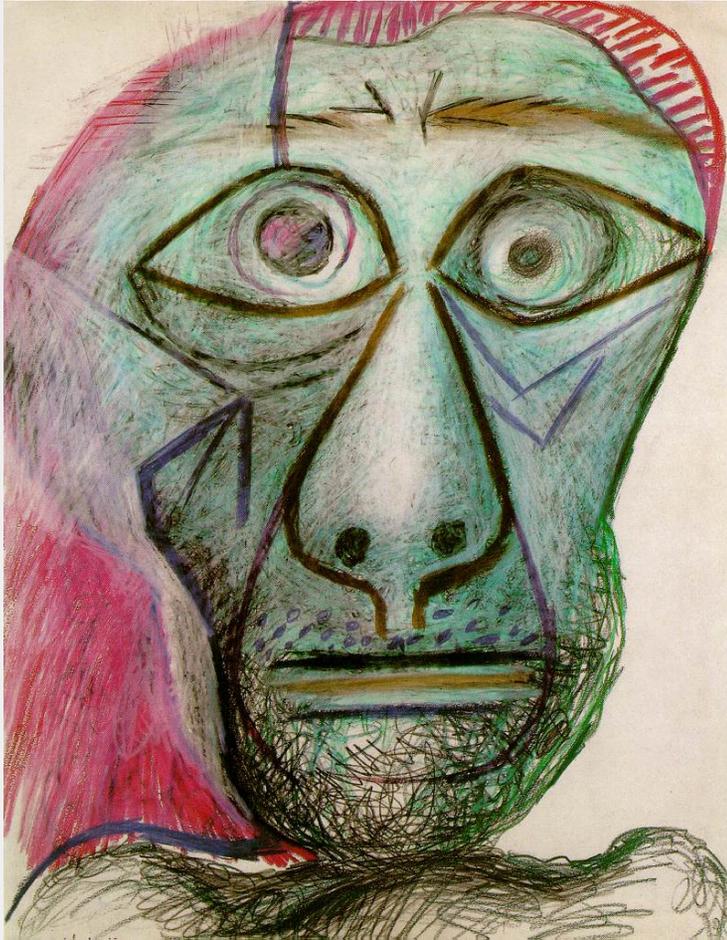
- Once you have mastered the rules of grammar, **THEN AND ONLY THEN** can you break those rules. That's called *style*.
- If you aim for style before you have mastered basic writing skills, you will produce a bunch of garbage.

# Picasso

- Before he developed his style...



# Picasso



# Picasso

- He mastered the basics



# Why It Matters

- Basic grammar and punctuation errors cannot be forgiven with a statement like: Well, you know what I *meant*.
- It is **your responsibility (not your reader's)** to write exactly what you mean, clearly and correctly, so that no one has to guess or try to figure out what you mean.

# Our Focus

- If you have trouble with basic writing skills, get busy learning!
  - Writing Center: 126 Clark Hall
- We will spend some time on basic skills but mostly we will focus on more advanced writing skills, such as
  - Word choice, vocabulary, conciseness, editing, argument, and analysis

# Common Problems Found in Writing

- Leaps in logic
- Grammar or punctuation errors that change or obscure meaning
- Missing information
- Factually incorrect info
- Language unsuitable for audience
- Inappropriate word choice (mistakes in vocabulary)
- Too wordy
- Too simplistic
- Vague nouns or verbs
- Awkward phrasing
- Sentence accidentally implies an unintended meaning

# How to Fix Errors

- Give yourself adequate time to revise
- **Proofread!**
  - Have someone else read your paper aloud to you. This will allow you to *hear* your own mistakes.
  - Read your paper literally
    - Read the meaning of what you *actually wrote* rather than substituting the meaning of what you *meant*.
- Be honest with yourself, and patient
- Seek feedback and help in your problem areas
- Read and write A LOT
- Re-read your corrected papers and integrate feedback into your next paper

# Basic Punctuation

- Correct sentence punctuation is only important if you want your reader to understand what you're trying to say....
- And if you *don't* care if your reader understands you, then why are you bothering to write at all?

# Basic Punctuation: Apostrophes

- **Apostrophe:** shows possession, indicates a contraction
  - John's car is ugly. Don't tell him I said that.
- Apostrophes are commonly **misused** in plural words that end in "s".
  - Wrong: I ordered 3 pizza's. (pizzas)
  - Wrong: Did you remember to take photo's? (photos)
  - Wrong: Let's go to the movie's. (movies)
  - Wrong: Is this your's? (yours)
  - Wrong: Who's hat is this? (whose)

# Basic Punctuation: Apostrophe

- **Showing possession**

- When the owner is singular, the apostrophe precedes the added s (the school's mascot)
- When the owner is plural and does *not* end in s, the same rule applies (the women's club)
- When the owner is plural and *does* end in s, the apostrophe follows the s (the youth workers' conference)

**Just because a word has an s at the end does not mean it needs an apostrophe. Do not add apostrophes to plural nouns that do not show possession.**

# Basic Punctuation: Comma

- **Comma:** separates independent from dependent clauses, separates items in a list, indicates a *grammatical* pause
  - When I was in Paris, I saw a fantastic cabaret show.
  - Please get ice cream, chocolate sauce, and walnuts at the store.
- Commas are probably the most commonly misused punctuation mark, and their misuse can cause total confusion... and, sometimes, death!

Let's eat grandma!



Let's eat, grandma!

**PUNCTUATION  
SAVES LIVES!**

# Problems: The Comma Splice

- **Comma Splice**

- Two complete sentences (independent clauses) that are separated only by a comma
  - It is nearly seven o'clock, we will not make it to the movie in time.
  - I've never been to the library, I think it's on the other side of campus.
  - I forgot to register for classes, what should I do?

Rewrite each of the above sentences two different ways, without the comma splice.

# Basic Punctuation: Periods, Semi-Colons, Colons

- **Period:** placed at the end of a complete sentence
- **Semi-colon:** separates closely-related *independent* clauses
  - I did not come here alone; my daughter is with me.
- **Colon:** introduces the logical consequence, or effect, of a fact stated before
  - There was only one possible explanation: The train was late.

# Basic Punctuation: Quotes

- **Quotation marks**

1. Enclose the exact words of someone else

- Distinguish your words from those you are quoting

2. Enclose titles of stories, poems, and articles if they appear in the body of your paper

- So far my favorite story is "A Little Cloud."

3. Enclose words used in an unusual or unexpected way

- My cousin likes a "spot o' tea" as much as I like a "slug a' whisky."

# Basic Punctuation: Quotes

- **Direct & Indirect Quotes**

- Direct quotation: President Kennedy said, "And so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."
- Indirect quotation/paraphrase: President Kennedy said that we should ask what we can do for our country rather than what our country can do for us.
- Misquotation: President Kennedy said that "we should ask not what our country can do for us but what we can do for our country."

# Basic Punctuation: Quotes

- Follow the rules for when to use quotes.
- Use quotes only when the writer has worded something so well that to paraphrase it would weaken it.
- Use quotes to strengthen your points.
- Do NOT use quotes randomly, as in:
  - The movie ticket price is “8 dollars.”
  - For dinner tonight we ordered “spaghetti.”
  - Some students are interested in studying “forensic science.”
  - My dog is a “German Shepherd.”

*At the end of a quotation, periods and commas always go inside quotation marks. All other marks go inside only if they are part of the quoted material.*

# Punctuation

- All of the previously discussed punctuation marks have additional uses, and rules governing their use, but these are the most common and important rules you will need to know for most writing assignments.

# What makes a complete sentence?

- A sentence has a subject and a predicate.
  - Subject: the noun or noun phrase; the one doing the action
  - Predicate: modifies the subject, contains a verb, states the action
  - Identify the subject and predicate in each of these examples:
    - She listened to the radio.
    - John went for a walk.
    - Diana's mother, Terri, gave me a present.

# Subjects and Objects

- The SUBJECT of a sentence is the one doing the action.
- The OBJECT of the sentence is the one to whom the action is done.
  - He gave me twenty dollars for gas.
  - The car veered off the road and hit a tree.
  - She and I are going to the mountains.

# So, what's a clause?

- Independent clause: can stand alone as a complete simple sentence
- Dependent clause: must be connected to or part of another clause; cannot stand alone as a sentence; often modifies the independent clause.
  - The boat, **which I could not see from the cliff**, was tossed violently by the waves.

# Clauses

- "I went to the store with my friends" (independent)
- "because I went to the store" (dependent)
- "after I went to the store" (dependent)
- "me to go to the store" (dependent, as in "He wanted me to go to the store.")
- "the store that I went to" (dependent), as in "That's the store that I went to."

# Me, Myself, I

- Wrong: Myself and Jerry went to the market.
- Wrong: Jerry and myself went to the market.
- Wrong: Me and Jerry went to the market.
- Wrong: Jerry and me when to the market.
- Wrong: This has been a good class for my classmates and myself.
- Wrong: This has been a good class for my classmates and I.

Wrong, wrong, wrong.

# Me, Myself, I

- Reflexive pronouns must be used reflexively
- Use *myself* only when you have used *I* earlier in the same sentence.
  - **I, myself**, have never taken the bus.
  - **I** consider **myself** fortunate.
- This is true of all reflexive pronouns.
  - **She** thought of **herself** as a generous person.
  - **He, himself**, brought the civil suit.



# Me, Myself, I

- He told Tom and (I or me?) to get ready.
- He told I to get ready? NO
- He told me to get ready? YES
- Therefore, He told Tom and me to get ready.
  
- If John and (I or me?) get married, we'll have two kids.
- If me get married? NO
- If I get married? YES
- Therefore, If John and I get married, we'll have two kids.

# Me, Myself, I

Fill in the blanks with me, myself or I.

1. You and \_\_\_\_\_ should go to the opera sometime.
2. He gave a copy of the book to Cindy and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My partner and \_\_\_\_\_ chased the suspect for three blocks.
4. I prepared this cake \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The suspect yelled insults at Sgt. O'Leary and \_\_\_\_\_.

# Capitalization

- **Capitalization**
  - First letter of every sentence
  - Proper nouns
    - England, Iraq, Shakespeare
  - Proper adjectives
    - English sociologists, the Iraqi educator, a Shakespearean tragedy

# Capitalization

- **Capitalization**

- Names of monuments and buildings
  - The Washington Monument, Empire State Building
- Historical events and eras
  - Civil War, the Dark Ages, Monday, December, Columbus Day
- Parts of the country
  - North, Southwest, Eastern Seaboard, the West coast
  - Only when used to designate a geographic region, **NOT** when used to indicate direction
    - I'm heading **n**orth for the weekend.
    - Turn **w**est onto Fremont St.
    - He moved to the **S**outh.

# Capitalization

- **Capitalization**
  - Race, religion or nationality
    - Islam, Jewish, Slavic, Mexican, American, African American, the Bible, the Koran, the Torah
  - Names of languages
    - Chinese, Latin, Sanskrit, English
  - Titles of corporations, businesses, universities, organizations, institutions
    - Dow Chemical, General Motors, San Jose State University, Kiwanis Club, the American Association of Retired Persons, Wall Street

# Capitalization

- **Capitalization**

- Titles of individuals *only* when they precede a proper name
  - Pope John Paul III, Doctor McKay, Queen Elizabeth, Senator Smith
- Not when just referring to doctors in general, popes in general, etc.
  - I need to call a doctor. The pope is an elected official. We should contact our state senators.
- **Do not** capitalize random words just because *you* think they are important. **Do not** use capital letters out of habit. Capital letters communicate meaning.

# Capitalization

- Capitalize as needed:
- I studied forensic science in Scotland.
- He is a professor in the justice studies department.
- My uncle is a doctor of veterinary medicine.
- You need to talk to doctor Miller.
- I found the gun in the yard, south of the driveway.
- I would like to visit the northwest someday.

# Problems: The Run-on

- **Run-on sentences**

- Two or more independent clauses that are joined together with incorrect punctuation, or without any punctuation.
  - The council members were exhausted they had debated for two hours.

Rewrite the sentence above two different ways, without the run-on.

# Problems: The Sentence Fragment

- **Sentence Fragments**
  - Two connected clauses (at least one of which is dependent) that are separated by a period or semi-colon
    - She is an interesting speaker. A woman who had traveled all over the world and lived in half a dozen countries.
    - A long time ago in San Francisco; there was a huge earthquake that decimated the entire city.
    - The car, which I could not see from my window.

Correct the above examples.

# Active Voice

- Active voice means that the subject of the sentence does the action.
- The best way to insure that you are using active voice is to put the subject at the beginning of the sentence, and follow it with a verb.
- That is not the only way, but it is the surest.
- **ACTIVE VOICE IS REQUIRED IN 100W PAPERS.**

# Using the Appropriate Voice

- **Passive voice**

- The cup fell
- The prison was seen
- Mary was given a book
- The problem was discussed

- **Active voice**

- I dropped the cup
- Sue saw the prison
- John gave Mary a book
- They discussed the problem

Identify the subject in each phrase.

What do you notice about these two voices?

# Parts of Speech

	<b>Description</b>
Noun	Names a person, place or thing
Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun
Verb	Expresses action or state of being
Adverb	Describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb
Adjective	Describes a noun or pronoun
Preposition	Shows how a noun or pronoun is related to another word in the sentence
Conjunction	Connects words or parts of sentences
Article	Comes before and usually limits a noun

# Problems: Consistency

- **Consistency: verb tense**
  - Pick a verb tense (past, present or future) and stick with the same tense *throughout your paper*
  - Do not switch back and forth between past, present and future tense in your paper
  - In academic writing, past tense is preferred

Identify and correct the verbs in this sentence:

- The author gathered data and builds a case for his thesis.
- It is not uncommon for a student to have this problem.

# Consistency: Verb Tense

- If all of the action occurred in the past, use only past tense verbs!
- If it is occurring right now, or will always be occurring, use present tense verbs.
- Using the Literary Present Tense
  - In *Stiff*, Mary Roach **argues** that blah blah blah...
    - The literary present tense is used because you are currently reading it or thinking about it, as if the action is occurring now.
    - The action will always be occurring because the book is being read and will be read by others in the future.

# Pronouns

- Pronouns are used in place of a noun or noun phrase.
- They are used reflexively or referentially (to refer to a particular noun that has already been mentioned or is known).
  - Alice gave David the book, then she told him to leave and take it with him.
    - Nouns: Alice, David, book
    - Pronouns: she (refers clearly to Alice), him (refers clearly to David), it (refers clearly to the book)

# Pronouns

- They
- We
- You
- Me
- I
- Our
- She/he
- It
- These
- Those
- That
- This
- Them
- Myself/yourself/herself/  
Himself/themselves
- One
- *Etc!*

**Important:** when you use a pronoun, it must always be clear to what, or to whom, the pronoun refers or replaces.

# Problems: Pronouns

- Jones told Samuels that he wanted to see his daughter. He refused. Then he fired a shot at him.
- The officer chased the suspect until he got a flat tire.
- Identify all of the pronouns in the above sentences.
- What is the problem with these sentences?
- How would you fix them?

# Personal Pronouns

Never use *personal* pronouns in academic writing.

- We
- You / your / yours
- Me / I
- Us
- Our / ours
- Myself / yourself

**These are all first and second person pronouns. In academic writing, only third person perspective is permitted.**

List four 3rd person pronouns.

# Personal Pronouns

Never use *personal* pronouns in academic writing.

- Instead, subtract yourself from your writing.
- **I** think it's time **we** take a stand.
- It's time to take a stand.
- What makes the second sentence better?

# Noun/Pronoun Consistency

- **Pronouns *must agree in number* with the nouns they replace.**
- **Use plural pronouns with plural nouns; use singular pronouns with singular nouns.**
  - Wrong: A person should have their notebook with them at all times.
  - Wrong: A student should have their notebook with them at all times.
  - Wrong: People should have one's notebook with him at all times.

Rewrite these correctly.

# Some Dreadful Errors

- Supposably, Libary, Irregardless
  - He hasn't called yet because, supposably, he had to take an exam.
  - Where is the libary?
  - Irregardless of the scores you earn on tests, you have to take the final.
  - Supposably, libary, and irregardless ARE NOT WORDS.
  - Don't say them, and don't write them.
- Their/there/they're
  - Their going to the movies over they're with there friends.
  - *Their* is a plural possessive pronoun; *they're* is they are; *there* is a place.
  - Right: They're going to the movies over there with their friends.

# Some Painful Errors

- Your/you're
  - Your not going to believe this, but there's a bird in you're hair.
  - *Your* is a singular possessive pronoun; *you're* is you are.
  - Right: You're not going to believe this, but there's a bird in your hair.
- Its/it's
  - Its not as if it's head is on backwards!
  - *Its* is a singular possessive pronoun; *it's* is it is.
  - Right: It's not as if its head is on backwards!
- Should of, could of (NO SUCH THING)
  - Wrong: I should of studied more.
  - Right: I **should have** studied more.

# Some Painful, Dreadful Errors

- The reason is because
  - Wrong: The reason I didn't graduate is because I didn't go to class.
  - Right: **The reason** I didn't graduate **is that** I didn't go to class.
  - Because means “for the reason that”.
  - A reason can't be *because* (the reason is for the reason that? No!); a reason just *is!*
  - Say what the reason is, not *why* the reason is!

# Some Painful, Dreadful Errors

- Less than/fewer than/number/amount
  - Wrong: Express checkout: less than 15 items.
  - Right: Express checkout: **fewer than 15 items**.
  - The rule: if it's something you can count, use "fewer"; if it's an amount or a general mass, use "less than".
  
- Wrong: The amount of students trying to add classes makes it difficult to get in.
- Right: **The number of students** trying to add classes makes it difficult to get in.
- The rule: if it's something you can count, use "number"; if it's an amount or a general mass, use "amount".

**LITERECY CAT IS AMAIZED**

**AT UR PERFICK GRAHMAR**

# Resources

- The Elements of Style
- Paradigm Online Writing Assistant <http://www.powa.org/>
- The SJSU Writing Center
- <http://www.elearnenglishlanguage.com/difficulties/ime.html>