How The OWL Checks For Grammar

AFTER reviewing a paper for overall structure, we look for the most common grammar or punctuation errors.

- We do not mark every error, but will identify types of error.
- We'll tell you how they can be fixed by asking the following questions or pointing you to an in-depth resource.
- See [http://libguides.sfasu.edu/aarc/basicgrammar](http://libguides.sfasu.edu/aarc/basicgrammar) for more info.

1. **Long, confusing, or wordy sentences** –
   - This sentence is confusing. How can you rewrite it to clarify your meaning?
   - Not sure what you’re saying here. Who is doing what action?
   - You have multiple ideas in this sentence. Which is priority and should be in its own sentence?

2. **Run-on sentences** – *This is my winning lottery ticket, I bought it at Kroger's.*
   - You have multiple actions/verbs in this single sentence. Can you rewrite so each action stands alone?
   - You’ve joined 2 sentences with just a comma. What word can you use instead?
   - This is a run-on. How can you rewrite it into 2 sentences?

3. **Sentence fragments** – *Running swiftly through daunting hordes of defensive linemen.*
   - You have an action in this sentence, but who is doing this action?
   - You refer to a thing – X – but what is it doing?
   - This sentence is incomplete. What sentence does this bit belong with?
   - ‘Ing’ is never a verb. Who is doing what action in this sentence?

4. **Verb tense errors** – *He have asked me to dinner, then leaves me the check*
   - You switch time from past to present here. When did this take place?
   - You have a singular subject, but a plural verb. How many are doing this action?

5. **Pronoun errors** – *Chain Saw Massacre video game, they the best. It totally destroyed it.*
You use ‘it’ repeatedly here. Who or what is it?
Not clear what’s happening here.
You refer to one person as ‘they’ which is plural. Can you rewrite?
You just named the thing you’re discussing. Can you rewrite without using ‘they’?

6. **Commas** – *When Juliet saw Romeo she said What light, through yonder window breaks?*

- Commas separate extra from the core of the sentence. What belongs together here?
- Commas separate intros from main idea. Where does the main idea begin?

7. **Apostrophes** – *AARC tutor’s are the coolest.*

- Apostrophes indicate possession, not plural. How many people are involved here?
- Need an apostrophe to indicate possession. Who does this belong to?