COURSE SYLLABUS

Grammar and Editing Essentials Course

Strengthen grammar, usage, and editorial confidence through mastery of punctuation, sentence structure, capitalization, verb forms, and pronoun agreement.

Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/grammar-and-editing-essentials



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Course Outline

Module 1: Why Grammar Matters

- Explore the importance of clear and correct writing in achieving effective, efficient communication and establishing or maintaining a professional, polished image.
- Explore the risks associated with miscommunication due to unclear or poorly written documents.

Module 2: Agreement Matters

- Define singular and plural verbs and subjects.
- Define the rule of subject-verb agreement in English grammar.
- Explain how to ensure subject-verb agreement.

Module 3: Energetic Writing

- Define tools for making writing energetic, concise, and transparent: active voice and hidden verbs.
- Define active and passive voice.
- Identify sentences written in both active and passive voice.
- Describe hidden verbs and how they make sentences sluggish.
- Identify and correct hidden verbs.

Module 4: Using Pronouns

- Explain the grammatical role of pronouns.
- Identify common types of pronouns, including personal, demonstrative, relative, and indefinite pronouns.
- Analyze the concept of the pronoun-antecedent relationship.
- Avoid vague pronoun references.

Module 5: Modifiers

- Define modifiers and examine their role in sentences.
- Identify misplaced modifiers and recognize them in sentences.
- Identify dangling modifiers and recognize them in sentences.
- Examine and correct documents with incorrect use of modifiers.
- Define and practice the rule of parallel structure.

Module 6: Creating Conversational Flow

- Explore techniques for creating conversational flow by combining sentences with conjunctions.
- List correlative conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.
- Eliminate shifts in person and tense.

Module 7: All About the Comma (and a Few Other Punctuation Marks)

- Identify the specific roles and functions of key punctuation marks.
- Study common comma rules.
- Review rules for correct apostrophe, quotation mark, semicolon, and colon usage.
- Use capital letters correctly.
- Use the GPO Style Manual to identify unique capital letter and punctuation usage for government writers.

Module 8: Plain Writing: it's the Law

- Define the Plain Writing Act of 2010.
- Highlight the PLAIN website and learn how to navigate and use this resource.
- Review the Federal Plain Language Guidelines.

Module 9: Editing for Impact

- Explain the value of a two-step editing process.
- Review Seven Traits of Writing – useful tool for editing.
- Identify other editing resources.

Module 10: Revising

- List tasks to accomplish while revising—connect them to Seven Traits of Writing.
- Revise for focus, organization, and voice.

Module 11: Refining

- List tasks to accomplish while refining—connect them to Seven Traits of Writing.
- Refine for words, sentences, correctness, and design.

Module 12: Putting it All Together

- Describe the voice and role of an editor.
- Differentiate between arbitrary and necessary edits.
- Practice editing.