

# Colorado State Teachers College BULLETIN

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SERIES XVII

October, 1917

Number 7

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## COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH

Studies in Typical Errors in the Speech of Pupils  
in the Public School, with some Suggestions for Correction

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Published Monthly by State Teachers College, Greeley, Colorado.  
Entered as Second Class Matter at the Postoffice at Greeley, Colorado,  
under the Act of August 24, 1912.

**N**O HUMAN employment is more free and calculable than the winning of language. Undoubtedly there are natural aptitudes for it, as there are for farming, seamanship, or being a good husband. But nowhere is straight work more effective. Persistence, care, discriminating observation, ingenuity, refusal to lose heart,—traits which in every other occupation tend toward excellence,—tend toward it here with special security. Whoever goes to his grave with bad English in his mouth has no one to blame but himself for the disagreeable taste; for if faulty speech can be inherited, it can be exterminated too.

—GEORGE H. PALMER.

## COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH

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Let it be stated in the beginning that this is not a defense of pedantic or bookish speech. It is rather a plea for natural, direct, and simple utterance in forms free from the disfigurement of vulgarism, bad grammar, or other crudity. The pupils in our schools use bad English. No one who listens purposefully and intently to the speech of children in the public school, or even of students in high school and college, can fail to be impressed with the greatness of this handicap.

With profound faith in the efficacy of teaching, this plea for more prompt and persistent and insistent correction of bad speech-forms is addressed to the teacher in the public school. We believe that with more watchfulness, with prompt and kindly correction long persevered in, the child's ruder awkwardnesses and helter-skelter manner of speaking will largely disappear. We further believe that instead of becoming self-conscious and faltering with uncertainty, the child will, thru the discipline, grow in power and assurance.

It is plainly evident to those who have long been at work in the subject, that a list of conspicuous errors in the hands of the teacher is helpful and corrective. Such lists may be found in most hand-books of composition; but they have little value for the teacher of children. They are composed pretty largely of literary errors, with a generous handful of ludicrous blunders from college freshman themes thrown in by way of seasoning. Recently, however, some attempts have been made to record the speech of children exactly as uttered, and from this data to make tabulations of the errors. Few have the patience, the quick ear, the time and opportunity to do this work well. Most of us can hear only the fault that we are expecting to hear; the error that is not already on our list passes unnoticed. Thus it often happens that the teacher who has spoken correct English from childhood, who has had no hard struggle to acquire it for herself, has little or no skill in correcting faulty speech in the children. She would probably be greatly astonished if one were to call her attention to some of the near-English that daily passes current in her class-room. There is, of course, much more probability that the teacher will fail to recognize in the speech of the children those errors which she herself habitually makes.

The following is a compilation of many lists made by teachers, critic teachers, and by capable students working under the direction of the department of English. The errors are those that have been noticed in the speech of children in the practice school and of students in the high school and college. The most valuable lists were made in the practice school. Two extremes have been avoided: the pidgin English of foreigners and illiterates, and literary errors, that is, irregularities of con-

struction and short cuts which look bad in writing but which are common in the spontaneous, enthusiastic speech of those who are well trained in English. Such specimens as **try and**, **had got**, and the split infinitive are not listed. A little explanation may be not out of place.

We are emphasizing correctness, and that is well; but we must not in our eagerness overlook a higher quality, expressiveness. The disposition to set correctness above all else has resulted in a ludicrously stilted and wooden manner of speech known as "school-ma'am English." In this, for the sake of grammatical agreement, or because of an antiquated notion that certain stock expressions are especially "refined and elegant," all the fresh, imaginative, and original use of words is sacrificed. In prim school-ma'am phraseology one does not go to bed, "he retires to slumber"; instead of eating dinner, "he partakes of a bountiful repast" (or "frugal," as the case may be); he never invites you, he always "extends you an invitation." It is this sort of rigid primness that insists on "Try to do better," when good authors generally have said "Try and do better;" it has tried to induce children to say "Somebody's else hat," when all the rest of the world was saying "Somebody else's hat." Of the split infinitive it may be said that it has an awkward sound; further than that there is no objection. In a few instances the split position is the best one for emphasis. Then, in such an expression as "To more than outweigh this disadvantage," one can hardly avoid the split construction. But this is not the game we should be hunting. There are plenty of verbal monstrosities, in comparison with which these are mere elegancies.

Finally, let it be said by way of explanation, this list is not complete. It is not meant to be. It is merely suggestive of what the teacher may do in her own school. Our list may not fit Cripple Creek; nor will the list compiled in a school in New York City fit us. However, thruout the middle West there are many faults that we have in common.

The emphasis has with intention been placed on oral speech; for with habits of correct speech well established, correct writing will follow; while the reverse of this, as is well known, is not the case. Some bad errors that occur only in writing have been included. An effort was made to select only typical errors, whether oral or written.

## I. ERRORS IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### 1. The loose AND, or the run-on construction.

This is one of the commonest faults of the class-room. The pupil does not let his voice fall until he is ready to sit down, but joins all his sentences together with **and** or **an' nen**, with **now and then but**, **so**, or **an' so**, as the sense seems to require. The conglomerate sentence is especially noticeable in story-telling. It is to be corrected by requiring the pupil to make a full stop, with falling inflection, and to begin the next sentence without a transition word. Nor is the teacher always the least offender.

**Examples:** The first was written by a pupil of the fourth grade, the second by a pupil of the seventh.

a. We are going to have geography in the morning as it wont be so hot. And we are going to have reading in the afternoon and instead of art we are going to have sloyd. and in the afternoon, the time we used to have art we have arithmetic.

b. While he was sleeping a carriage came by, and as it neared the spot the carriage broke and the old man and wife sat down among the trees and heard David snoring.

An examination of the punctuation in a. seems to indicate that the child realizes the difficulty and is struggling with it. It should be explained that very few of our pupils write like this; but it must be acknowledged that a great many of them in all grades talk in this manner. In fact, few college students are wholly free from the habit.

Unless two thoughts are very clearly related to each other by one of the laws of association, they should not be expressed in the form of a compound or complex sentence. As a knowledge of these laws is often very useful in testing the unity of suspicious-looking conglomerates, the teacher should be familiar with them. They are very simple; a few sentences will serve to make the subject clear.

a. Law of similarity: The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

b. Law of contrast: Her writing is fairly accurate; but her awkward speech would disqualify her for teaching.

c. Of contiguity in time: When he had finished his breakfast, he started to school.

d. Of contiguity in place: She lives in Dayton, Ohio, where that terrible flood occurred last year.

e. Of cause and effect: We were delayed several days, for the heavy rains had made the roads impassible.

## 2. Incoherence.

The wrong meaning is conveyed because some element of the sentence is misplaced; or the continuity of thought is broken, because what should logically be expressed in one sentence has been put into two.

a. He helped to milk the cows, after going for them, which he thought was a great deal of fun.

b. I was greatly absorbed in watching the games. When I started home, I found that I had torn a large hole in my blue silk gown.

Sentence a. was written by a pupil in the seventh grade. When she had been questioned a little, she rewrote it thus: After going for the cows, he helped with the milking, which he thought was a great deal of fun. Sample b. was written by a first-year college student. She intended to say this: I was so greatly absorbed in watching the games,

that I did not discover until I started home that I had torn a large hole in my blue silk gown. To break up a complex thought into fragments, and express in two sentences what ought to be said in one is quite as incoherent as to misplace a phrase or clause.

### 3. The misplacement of elements.

This often causes ambiguity, tho sometimes it merely weakens the meaning. A good example of this is the adverb **only**, which seems especially prone to drift about in the sentence. If I say **I only saw Mary**, meaning **I saw only Mary**, I am not likely to be misunderstood; but if I write it, the reader may receive the impression that I mean to say that I **only saw**, that is, did not **speak** with her. The intonation in oral speech saves me from ambiguity which in writing is unavoidable. In like manner the first member of the correlatives **either—or**, and **neither—nor** is often put too far forward in the sentence.

Ex. He will either try basket-ball or track.

Right: He will try either basket-ball or track.

### 4. Illogical combination and lack of logical conformity.

These errors resemble incoherence and are often so called. It will be seen, however, that instead of a lack of coherence there is a coherence of elements that ought not to cohere.

Ex. I did not like the new leader any better than John. Two meanings are possible. The verb **did** placed after the word **John** gives one meaning; placed before, with the subject **I** repeated, gives the other. The compound sentence presenting an illogical combination of thoughts is often ludicrous.

Ex. Lida Lea went South and Gorden, Maxine, and Frank went up to the fifth grade.

### 5. Fragmentary answers.

While it seems a little unreasonable to insist that children give all responses in complete sentences, we certainly should not go to the opposite extreme, and permit all answers to be monosyllabic, or at best mere fragments of the sentence. Too often the pupil utters a word or two, and leaves the teacher and class to guess at the rest of the sentence; or he pieces on to what teacher or another pupil has said, adding a mere tag-rag. When such practice is permitted, it is not strange that children have weak sentence-sense when they come to write. Sometimes the root of the evil lies in the teacher's poor method in questioning; sometimes it is the habit of guessing at the pupil's meaning.

## II. PRONOUNS

1. Indefinite **you**. Ex., "You don't want to plant these seeds too deep." Right: These seeds should not be planted too deep.

2. Indefinite **they**. Ex., They won't let you play marbles in the

driveway. (Probably referring to Mr. Freeland.) Right: Playing marbles in the driveway is forbidden. Or the active voice: Mr. Freeland doesn't allow you to play marbles in the driveway.

3. Vague it. Ex., On the next page it says the same thing. Right: On the next page the author says the same thing. Or use the passive: The same thing is said on the next page.

4. Ambiguous reference. Ex., His uncle died when he was ten years old. Right: When Harry was ten years old, his uncle died.

5. Antecedent error. Ex., When a pupil makes a mistake like that, they want to correct it at once. Right: When a pupil makes a mistake like that he should correct it at once.

6. Pleonasm. Ex., And then John he said it was all a joke. Right: Then John said it was all a joke.

7. Case. a. Nominative: It is **me**, (I). It is **her**, (she). Was it you or **him** (he) who rang the bell? I would go, if I were **him** (he). John is taller than **me** (I). I supposed it was **them** (they). Who wrote this story? **Me** (I). **Me** and John (John and I) want to sell tickets. **Them's** (they are) mine. b. Accusative form: Let you and I (me) go. He gave the ball to Henry and I (me). The teacher told Mary and I (me) to collect the books. Several of **we** (us) girls started to run. **Who** (whom) did you give it to? **Who** (whom) did you send? She sat down between Mary and I (between Mary and me).

If a sentence like **To whom did you give it?** sounds bookish, permit the use of the preposition at the end of the sentence.

8. Errors in the use of the self-pronoun. a. He hurt **hiss**elf. An illiterate use of the reflexive. b. One day my brother and **myself** decided to go fishing. The intensive is here wrongly used in place of the simple personal, **I**. c. When the can tipped, the water came pouring down on John and **myself**. Wrong use of the reflexive for the personal pronoun, **me**.

9. Use of the apostrophe with personal pronouns. a. **It's** often written for its. b. **Her's** sometimes written for hers. c. **Your's**, **their's**, and **our's** sometimes appear. Rule: The apostrophe is not used to form the possessive of personal pronouns.

10. The apostrophe is used to form the possessive of indefinite pronouns. **One's** feelings. **Another's** fault.

11. Wrong possessive forms, following the pattern of mine: **yourn**, **hern**, **hisn**, **theirn**, **ourn**.

12. Omission of necessary pronouns, as, "In answer to your question—would say—am sorry I was not at home;—hope to see you next week." Such out-of-breath manner of expression seems appropriate to private diary only.

13. Pronoun not in agreement with antecedent. a. If anybody calls, ask **them** (him) to wait. b. Every pupil but one raised **their hands** (his hand). Rule: When gender is not a matter of importance,

the masculine pronoun should be used without regard to the gender of the antecedent. Awkward: Let everyone close **his or her** book. Except when the class is composed wholly of girls, it is better to say Let everyone close **his** book.

### III. VERBS

1. **Transitive verb for the intransitive.** The transitive verbs, **lay**, **set**, and **raise**, should not be used for the intransitive, **lie**, **sit**, and **rise**. a. Mother let me **lay** (lie) in bed this morning. b. His bicycle **laid** (lay) in the tall weeds all night. c. The Christmas snow is still **laying** (lying) on the ground. d. John likes to **lay** (lie) on the couch. e. He has **laid** (lain) there almost an hour.

2. **Troublesome verbs.** Watch especially for expressions like the following: He was **setting** by the stove. The can **sets** on the top shelf. The book **laid** on the table. Let it **lay**. I **laid** down to take a nap. She put the bread to **raise**. The bread **raised** beautifully. He **raised** up to speak. He **eat** his dinner (or even worse, **et** it). They have not **came** yet. He **run** for the door. He **had ought** to know better.\* When I got to school, I see some boys waiting for me. Billy **seen** them, too. He **done** his work well. He **had went** out. The teacher will not **leave** him go. His mother **left** him go with her. He **give** me five cents for it. He didn't **haf** to. I **says**, etc. He **knowed** it. Mary **would** of gone.

3. **The verb should not disagree in number with the subject.** a. It **don't** (doesn't) make any difference. b. He **don't** (doesn't) like to sit still. c. You **was** (were) tardy this morning. (The pronoun **you** is a plural form and always takes a plural verb.) d. Pen and paper **were** furnished free. But when the two nouns in the singular mean one thing, or are taken as one, the verb should be singular. Blue and white **is** a good combination. e. Error caused by an intervening word. His collection of butter-flies **show** (shows) that he has taken great pains. f. Confusion caused by the conjunction. Neither he nor James **were** (was) ready to start.

4. **Wrong tense in the principal verb.** a. The doctor said that fever always **produced** (produces) thirst. (General truths are put in the present tense). b. I **read** that book, for I **have read** that book. (The one just mentioned). c. I have **done** read it. Negro dialect. d. John **read** (had read) the book before the class took it up.

5. **Wrong tense in the infinitive.** a. She **expected** to have reached (to reach) home before night came on. b. I **intended** to have gone (to go).

6. **The subjunctive.** The subjunctive forms of the verb **be** should be insisted upon. a. To express a wish. I wish I **was** (were) at home.

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\*It should be observed that since **ought** is not a past participle it cannot be used in forming a compound tense.



b. Contrary to fact. If he was (were) honest, he would give it back.  
c. Doubt. I waited to see if she were coming. d. Supposition. Would he go, if he were in my place?

7. **Shall and will.** Much drill is needed. The student is referred to exercises in Woolley, in Lomer and Ashmun, and in various grammars and rhetorics. a. Simple futurity. I **shall** be ten years old in June. I think I **will** (shall) like grammar. We **will** (shall) be very glad to see you. b. In asking questions.

(1) In the first person always use **shall**.

**Shall** I write this on the board?

**Shall** we gather up the crayon?

(2) In all other instances use the form expected in the answer.

Shall you be busy this evening? Ans. I **shall** be very busy.

Shall John help me to erase the board? Ans. Yes, John may help. (For sake of politeness, **may** is substituted for **shall** in the answer).

Futurity in the second and third persons presents no difficulty. Children almost invariably say **you will**, **he will**, and **they will** do this or that.

c. Determination on the part of the speaker.

(1) First person, use **will**.

Consent or willingness: I **will** go at once.

Promise: We **will** study hard.

(2) Second and third persons, use **shall**.

Determination on part of speaker: You **shall** not come in.

Order or command: They **shall** not march until the signal is given. Threat: He **shall** be sorry for his conduct.

8. **Should and would.** In general **should** and **would** follow the rules of **shall** and **will**. For example, "**Shall** we lose money in this business?" If put into the indirect or conditional form becomes "**Should** we lose money, if we put it into this business?" a. I **would** (should) be sorry to miss the train. b. I **would** (should) like to finish this story. c. He thought I **would** (should be hurt). (Putting the tense back, He thinks I **shall** be hurt). d. **Would** (should) you have known him? e. I knew I **would** (should) be late.

The rules for use of **shall** and **will** in subordinate clauses are omitted. They should not be attempted until pupils are certain of the usage in simple sentences.

9. **False condition.** Often used in the recitation when the pupil does not like to commit himself, it later becomes a habit. a. The subject **would be** (is) the word **house**. b. The interest on \$100 **would be** (is) eight dollars.

10. **Shifting of tense in narrative.** Do not tell a story with part of the verbs in the present tense, part of them in the past.

11. **A necessary verb should not be omitted.** Incorrect: I have never told a lie and never shall. Right: I have never told a lie and never shall tell one.

12. **Vulgarisms in the verb.** a. aint, haint, taint. b. Could of, would of, for could have, etc. c. Can (may) I leave the room? She said I could (might) go. d. Expect for suppose or presume. I expect (suppose) he made a mistake. Expect always looks toward the future. e. Miss Foote said **for me to write it**. Right: Miss Foote said **that I should write it**. f. I **suspicioned** him, for I **suspected** him. g. I **didn't get to go**. I was not allowed to go, or I was not able to go, or I couldn't go. h. He **didn't go** (mean or intend) to do it.

#### IV. ERRORS IN THE USE OF ADJECTIVES

1. **Adverb used for adjective.** a. He went to a **nearby** (neighbor-) town. b. I feel very **badly** (bad) about it.

2. **Superlative used for comparative, or vice versa.** a. The mother seemed the **youngest** (younger) of the two. b. He is **younger than any** (the youngest) member of his class.

3. **By comparing a thing with itself.** a. I like the Sea Wolf better than **any** (any other) novel I ever read. b. He is stronger than **any** (any other) boy in school.

4. **This 'ere, that'ere, this'ere** book or this here book.

5. **Choice of adjectives.** In the written work, especially of the upper grades, attention should be directed toward correctness and propriety in choice of words; very trite and hackneyed expressions should be pointed out.

a. **Nice.** She is a **nice** girl, meaning pleasant, good natured or modest. The pupil should be urged to choose the exact word. He may say a **nice** (meaning **exact**, or **delicate**) piece of work.

b. **Fancy.** A fancy hat, or fancy shoes. Used to describe what is fancifully decorated or ornamented.

c. **Cute.** A colloquial expression said to be derived from **acute**. "A cute little watch." Require the pupil to give a good descriptive adjective instead.

d. **Fierce.** A slang expression for odious, hateful, disgusting, ugly, offensive, or what is very difficult or unpleasant. Require the pupil to choose the exact word.

e. Such expressions as **dandy**, **nifty**, and **swell** take the place of a score or more of good adjectives. Our pupils are saying, without the slightest discrimination: A perfectly **dandy** time, a **dandy** game, a **dandy** book, a **dandy** new dress, and she baked a **dandy** cake. One hears of even **dandy** teachers.

f. **No good**, for lazy, worthless, thriftless or insignificant.

g. **Mad**, for angry or vexed, or merely annoyed.

h. **Slick** (mispronunciation for **sleek**), for tricky, dishonest or clever. Slick is sometimes used in place of slippery. "The walks are very **slick** this morning."

i. **These** for **this**, **those** for **that**. I never saw **these** kind before (this kind).

The teacher should extend this list. Every one knows that the pupil who cultivates slang is narrowing his vocabulary; but it is not so generally felt that such a pupil is narrowing the range of his ideas in a corresponding degree.

## V. ERRORS IN THE USE OF ADVERBS

1. **Adjectives for adverbs.** a. **Good**, for well, skillfully, or excellently. The child says "Mary reads **good**," "My garden is growing **good**." b. **Sure**, for certainly, positively, or indeed. "I sure had a good time." It is often used where no intensive is needed, in which case it weakens and cheapens speech. c. **Real**, used for extremely, or exceedingly. One of the commonest errors. **Real good**, **real easy**, etc. **Real** is never an adverb. d. **Funny**, used for queer, odd, or in anyway remarkable. "He walks **funny**." He walks queerly, or oddly. e. **Most**, for almost. **Most** (almost) all of us missed that word. He was **most** (almost) killed. f. **All the**. "Is that **all the faster** (as fast as) you can run?" "That was **all the higher** he could jump." g. **Kind of**, used for somehow, or used to reduce the strength of an expression that is felt to be not quite accurate. "He **kind of** (somehow) worried along." "He **kind of** dodged." (He dodged a little). Usually pronounce **kind o'**. h. **Some place** and **any place**, and **every place**, used for somewhere, anywhere, and everywhere. "I couldn't find it **any place**," (anywhere).

2. **Double negative.** The error may usually be remedied by omission of a negative adverb. a. I **haven't got nothing** to play with. Right: I have nothing to play with. b. He **never** spoke to **nobody**. I **don't know nothing** about it. Right: I don't know anything about it.

3. **So used as an intensive**, either in place of **very** or **extremely**, or used with a comparison vaguely in mind. **So** as an intensive should be followed by a **that** clause. a. "I was **so** (extremely) glad to see him." b. "John walks **so fast**"; either, John walks **very fast**; or, John walks **so fast** that I cannot keep up with him.

4. **Side by each.** They sat side by each (side by side).

## VI. CONNECTIVES

1. **Conjunctions.** a. **Like** for **as if**. Ex., He talks like he was hoarse. Right: He talks **as if** he were hoarse. But one may say, He talks **like** his father. **Like** is never a conjunction. b. **Like** for **as**. Ex., Draw the line **like** I do. Right: Draw the line **as** I do. She watches me **like** (as) a cat does a mouse. c. **So** used irrelevantly, merely to tack on clauses. Like the loose **and**, it is especially noticeable in oral narrative. Ex., So they brought their rakes and raked the beds so the ground would be nice and fine; 'n so when the seeds came they were all ready. Right: They brought their rakes and raked the beds until the ground was well pulverized. When the seeds came, all was ready. **The so habit**:—This use of **so**, and the habitual use of **so** as an intensive constitute what has

been called the **so-habit**. As an intensive, the word **such** is misused in the same way. d. Loose **but**, like the loose **and**. e. The **because** chain. This error resembles c. and d. Clauses that are not causal are often joined with a succession of **because's**. f. **But what** for **but that**. "I have no doubt **but what** (but that) John can tell you about it." g. As for **that**. "I don't know as (that) I care." "I can't see as (that) it hurts me."

2. **Prepositions**. a. **In for into**. "He went **in** (into) the house to get a drink." b. **Inside of for in or within**. "I can walk it **inside of** (in) an hour." c. **Off of for off**. "Keep **off of** (off) the lawn." He got **off of** (off) the car. d. **Without for except or unless**. "I can't do it **without** (unless) you help me." "I won't go **without** (unless) Helen goes along." e. **In back of for back of or hehind**. There was a hog-lot **in back of** the barn.

### WORDS MISPRONOUNCED.

The wrong pronunciation is indicated here in the hope that the student-teacher may more readily recognize the error when she hears it. The wrong pronunciation is indicated in the first column, the right follows it in the second.

#### 1. Wrong vowel sound:

git	get		hīste	hoist
jist	} just		lēisure	} lē(i)sure
jest			lasure	
fer	far (how fer)		bade	bāde
fur	for (what fur?)		bloo	blue
agin	} again (agen)		noo	new
agane			piana	piano
hyer	here		colūme	colūmn
cleanly	clē(a)nly		grātis	grātis
crick	crēēk		yella	} yellow
slick	slēēk		yeller	
dē(a)f	dē(a)f		fellah	} fellow
purty	} pretty		feller	
prētty			winda	} window
bēn	been (bin)		winder	
yore	your		program	program

pore	poor	ken	} can
rether	} rather	kin	
ruther		apparātus	apparātus
cupalo	cupola	boquet	should be bōō ka
gether	gather	kittle	kettle
herth	hearth	reddish	rādish
tēēny	} tīny	O-hi-u	} O-hi-ō
tīny		ū-hi-ū	
		Mis sou rah	Mis sou rī
		Iowāy	I-o-wa

2. Words in which a syllable is omitted:

famly	family	crool	cruel
hist'ry	history	reeley	really
g'og'a fy	} geography	pome	poem
g'ografy		po'try	poetry
lab'ratory	} laboratory	av'noo	avenue
lab'atory			
libr'y	} library		
lib'ary			

3. Words in which a syllable is added:

busted	} burst	mischievious	mischievous
bursted		umberella	umbrella
drownded	drowned	athelete	} athlete
areoplane	aeroplane	athalete	
elum	elm	attack-ted	attacked

4. Words in which an extra sound is introduced, or one consonant substituted for another, not constituting an additional syllable:

acrost	across	pitcher	picture
chimley	chimney	ast	asked
wisht	wish	tast	task

woosh	wish	risted	risked (risted his life)
warsh	wash	wunct	once
pardner	partner	onct	once
soften	(silent t)	often	(silent t)
to-ward	tow-ard		
fore-head	for-ed		

leaves, leave, or lives for lief. (Just as leaves—lief—do it as not).

scart        scared

5. Words in which a consonant is omitted or misplaced:

reconize	recognize	wen	when
fif	fifth	childern	children
eight	eighth	hundered	hundred
close	clothes	goverment	government
Febuary	February	govner	governor
artic	arctic	doin	doing
were	where	havin	having
wether	whether	deps	depths
wy	why	quantity	quantity

A few minutes' drill in enunciation now and then will help greatly to overcome the pupil's slovenly habit of pronunciation. Such drill to be of value must be spirited and energetic. Short lists of words representing difficult combinations of sounds may be placed on the board for this drill, and the concert method used to advantage for small groups.

6. Words in which the accent is misplaced:

re'-cess	re-cess'	legisla'-ture	leg'-islature
ad'-dress	ad-dress'	fi'-nance	fi-nance'
in'-quiry	in-qui'ry	de'-tail	de-tail'
il'-lustrate	illus'-trate		

7. Words having the same form, but accented differently to indicate a different part of speech:

per'-fume noun	re'-tail noun
perfume' verb	re-tail' verb

## A WORKING MINIMUM OF PUNCTUATION

### Periods and Question Marks

1. Use a question mark at the end of a direct question.
2. Use a period after an abbreviation and at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence.

### Commas

1. Use commas to set out vocatives and appositives. Example: I declare, **Henry**, (vocative) you do not seem to remember that this mark, **the comma**, (appositive) has any special uses.

2. Use commas to set out words and phrases inserted in a sentence in a parenthetical way, such as **however**, **I suppose**, **of course**, etc. Example: You know, **I suppose**, that the statement is untrue. It makes very little difference, **however**.

3. Use a comma to separate short, simple co-ordinate clauses connected by **and**, **but**, or **for**, and the other simple conjunctions.

4. Use a comma to set off a dependent clause preceding its independent clause. Example: **While we were eating**, a small boy, the son of one of the natives, came running toward our camp. Try this without commas.

5. Use a comma between any sentence elements that might be improperly read together if the comma were omitted. Example: On the walk leading to the cellar, steps were heard.

6. Use commas to separate all the members of a series of words, phrases, or clauses, as in this sentence.

7. If two adjectives are almost parallel in meaning, they should be separated by a comma. Right: A lazy, dreamy afternoon. Right: A big gray coyote.

8. Set out a non-restrictive clause with a comma, but not a restrictive clause.

9. In writing conversation set out the author's guide-words. Example: "This thing is an outrage," he asserted warmly. "I resent the statement."

10. Use a comma to set off an absolute phrase. Example: The clouds having cleared away, we decided to go on with our plans. Beware of the **dangling participle**, however, which looks much like the **absolute phrase**. While finishing a piece of tatting, the escaped circus elephant passed our house.

### Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon to separate clauses of a compound sentence that are not joined by any conjunction or that are joined by one of the conjunctive adverbs **so**, **therefore**, **moreover**, **also**, **then**, **besides**, and similar words.

2. Use a semicolon to separate the clauses of a compound sentence if the clauses are long and have commas within themselves, or in any case where a comma would not be a mark sufficiently strong to make the meaning clear.

### Quotation Marks

1. Use double quotation marks around all parts of a sentence that are directly quoted.

2. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

### Four Don'ts

1. Don't use any punctuation mark unless you know a specific reason for it.

2. Don't use a colon instead of a period or semicolon.

3. Don't use dashes for periods or vaguely for all kinds of marks when in doubt.

4. Don't use either single or double quotation marks with indirect quotations. Example: All professional writers say that quotation marks should not be used in such clauses as this one.