

J202 Fall 2009

Culver

Assignment: Online Grammar Exams

Week 1

Our Goal: Effective communication requires clarity and consistency, so your audience can spend energy consuming your message, rather than wading through sloppy writing and mechanics. Throughout the semester, correct grammar and style will serve you well in ensuring this clarity and consistency.

Your Task: Complete exercises to learn applicable grammar and style rules and take two exams testing your mastery.

Specifics:

- familiarize yourself with the usage and style rules in your Working With Words text and the AP Stylebook
- working through the exercises in the Working With Words workbook is an effective way to do this, as is using the sample quizzes posted to our course Web site (the workbook key is posted to our course Web site, so you can gauge your performance)
- all quizzes, exams and assignments in this class are open book, but given tight time constraints, you must be familiar enough with the books to use them efficiently
- once you're ready, go to J202 in Learn@UW, click the "quizzes" button and take the "Grammar and Style Exam 1"
- you get only one shot at the exam (time begins as soon as you go to the first question) and the grade is part of your final course grade
- preparing well through this also will help you score well on the weekly J202 quizzes, which include points for grammar and style
- in Week 11 of the semester, you'll complete a final grammar exam, worth twice as much as this initial test

Approach:

Grammar and style are much like vegetables – good for you but not always all that appetizing. For me, clean writing is in the arena of a tasty, crisp green bean while all the terminology is in line with a wilted brussels sprout. Ever notice that brussels sprouts have an off-putting odor? Well, for me "participle," "dangling modifier" and "coordinating conjunction" have the same stink.

For this exercise, I'd recommend letting go of all that terminology. Concentrate on what to *do* rather than what it's *called*. Some labels can be useful. I find essential and non-essential clauses quite handy. But overall, focus on why the latter is set off with commas, rather than memorizing its name. (Incidentally, you set it off with commas because it's not essential to the sentence.)

I find it regrettable that J202 has to begin with a serving of vegetables. I'd rather give you the crème brulee of an amazing feature piece up front. But the truth is, we eat vegetables because they're one of the foundations of good health. And correct grammar and style are foundational to effective writing.

So try not to overcook this exercise. Add a little salt when you can. Enjoy the taste and know that the main course and dessert will appear on the table soon.

Deadline: Complete Learn@UW online exam by end of Week 2 (5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11)

Grade: Exam 1 counts as one-third of your Segment G grade, which is 10 percent of your final course grade.