

Grammar Basics

Subject-Verb Agreement

- A singular subject takes a singular verb (e.g., *She is, Jesus lives, torch burns*)
- A plural subject takes a plural verb (e.g., *The disciples follows / follow Jesus.*)
- Exception: it is standard now to use the pronoun “they” as the gender-neutral singular pronoun (e.g., *If an individual responds in faith to the gospel, they are saved [AS OPPOSED TO “he is saved”].*)

Independent and Dependent Clauses

- An independent clause is a simple sentence that can stand on its own (e.g., *Jesus wept.*)
- A dependent clause cannot stand on its own. It often begins with a subordinating conjunction like *when, because, although, if...* (e.g., *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...*)

Dependent Clause

*Because God so loved the world,
If you repent of your sins,*

Independent Clause

*he gave his one and only Son...
God is gracious to forgive.*

Pronoun Agreement

- A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun (e.g., *I, me, he, she, you, it, they, them, herself, each, few, many, some, who, whose, whoever*).
- A subject pronoun takes the place of the subject of a sentence (e.g., *He is the Son of God.*)
- An object pronoun takes the place of the direct object (e.g., *God watches over them*), indirect object (e.g., *give him the Bible*), or object of a preposition (e.g., *the woman believed in him*).

Who vs. Whom

- Who = subject
- Whom = an object, indirect object, or object of preposition.
- Hint: use the “he/him rule”: he = who; him = whom

He / Him

*He bows before the throne.
The book is about him.*

Who / Whom

*Who bows before the throne?
About whom is the book?*

Who, That, Which

- Referring to people, groups and things
 - Refer to people: *who* (e.g., *Who believes in Jesus?*); sometimes *that* (e.g., *The man that hung on the cross...*)
 - Refer to groups or things: *that* (e.g., *She serves on the committee that approved our budget.*) and *which* (e.g., *He crossed the sea, which is stormy today!*)
- Introducing a clause
 - *That* introduces an essential clause, which adds important information to a sentence. E.g., *I believe that Jesus loves me.*
 - *Which* introduces a nonessential clause, which adds supplementary (or nonessential) information to a sentence. Because it is nonessential, it is introduced by a comma. E.g., *The pastor told us about the church’s upcoming events, which are listed in the recent bulletin.*

Article Use (a, an, the)

Articles identify the specificity of a noun. Compare:

Definite Article	After <u>the</u> storm, <u>the</u> lamb follows its shepherd home.
Indefinite Article	After <u>a</u> storm, <u>a</u> lamb follows its shepherd home.

- The **definite article** “the” identifies a specific noun. It limits the meaning of a noun so that it refers to a particular object, idea, or occasion that the speaker or writer has in mind. E.g., *If someone says, “Please give me the Bible,” they are not looking for just any copy of the Bible; they have a specific object in mind. Perhaps they left their Bible on a desk and are asking for the addressee to hand it over to them.*
- The **indefinite article** “a” or “an” identifies a noun as unspecific; that is, it broadens the meaning of the noun to a general idea or category. The sentence thus makes a general statement. E.g., *If someone says, “Please give me a Bible,” they do not have a particular object in mind. What they mean is: “Please give me a Bible. Any copy will do.”*
- A note on the indefinite article: use “an” before vowel sounds and “a” before consonant sounds. Keep in mind that some vowels can sound/act like consonants (e.g., *a yearning heart, a usual day*), and some consonants can sound/act like vowels (e.g., *an honest man, an honor*).

Omission of the Article

On occasion, the English language will *omit* the article. In general...

- Omit the article when the noun refers to an abstract idea.
E.g., *Every week, my small group enjoys fellowship over dinner.*
The artist practices solitude every morning. I hear the discipline helps spark creativity.*

* In this example, the definite article precedes the abstract word “discipline” because it is referring to a specific discipline—the discipline of solitude that the artist practices every morning.
- Omit the article when referring to nationalities and spoken languages.
E.g., *Jewish people are descended from Abraham.*
She speaks Hebrew.
- Omit the article when referring to sports.
E.g., *My Greek study group also gathers to play soccer.*
- Omit the article when referring to academic subjects.
E.g., *She loves Systematic Theology. Her favorite class this semester is ST5101.*
- Omit the article when a noun is preceded by a possessive pronoun.
E.g., *Her daughter leads worship at our church.*
- Omit the indefinite article with uncountable nouns.
E.g., *Jesus asked the woman at the well for some water [OR a drink of water, NOT a water].*
The king gathered great wealth during his life, but he kept none of it after he died.