

How to use conventional spelling, punctuation and mechanics

Before you begin

What you need:

Related text: **“Cranes Fly South” by Edward McCourt**

Exit with Success and *The Bare Essentials Plus* (optional)

An English dictionary

A French/English dictionary (if applicable)

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **15 minutes**

Reminder

In this exercise you will be identifying and correcting various types of errors related to the use of conventional spelling, punctuation and mechanics. This is the part of your writing where you need to understand and remember the standard rules of writing and when and where to apply them. For example, in spelling, there are many rules to help you spell correctly. Unfortunately, it is also very easy to confuse certain French and English spellings because they are so similar: futur/future, for example.

If you use any direct quotations from the text you are writing about, make sure to copy accurately, especially in your essay’s introduction when you state the author’s name and title of the text! You should also review the rules of capitalization. Simple applications, such as clearly capitalizing the beginning of a sentence, can make a difference in your grade. In terms of punctuation, you must remember where to place a comma, apostrophe, semi-colon or colon. Additionally, make sure you know how to punctuate properly when quoting from the text. This is another area where you could easily be penalized for faulty mechanics. You can review spelling, punctuation and mechanics in the appropriate chapters of *The Bare Essentials Plus* and *Exit with Success*.

Instructions

Rewrite the following two paragraphs, correcting the errors in spelling, punctuation and mechanics. You are allowed to bring a dictionary to the English Exit Exam, so use it now for these exercises. The first four errors in paragraph 1 have been corrected for you as examples. You will find 10 more errors in paragraph 1 and 10 errors in paragraph 2.

Exercise

MacCourt's (*McCourt's*) story "Cranes Fly South" is set on the prairies sometime before the **50's** (*1950s*). The **essay** (*story*) **suggests'** (*suggests*) that the grandfathers' life is fulfilled just before his death when he once again witnesses the flight of the whooping crane. This particular bird is nearly extinct, and during the course of the story, it is associated with the sky the divine, and ultimately the grandfather. In the eyes of Lee and the grandfather, and maybe even the father; the sight of the crane's flight is an epiphany that reveals a mystery, a beauty; and perhaps a promise of immortality which is emphasized by the grandfather's repeated cry, "Good God in heaven." By the end of the story, the reader is convinced that Lee might be guilty of his grandpa's death, but he is also responsible for redeeming the old man's last few ours. When the boy says that the grandfather has gone south, "the words sprang clear and triumphant from his throat." (10 errors)

Lee's grandfather is a complex character so it is difficult for Lee to know how to deal with the conflicting messages and his one feelings. At the beginning of the essay, Lee remembers that his mother admonished him that Grandpa: "mustn't ever get excited because he is a very old man." The grandfather is, in fact a very strange combination of strength and weakness vitality and death, and submission and aggression. One minute he pleads with Lee to take him to the slough, then when that ploy is unsuccessful, he screams "You git along boy or I'll welt the hide off you." What should Lee do. When they start out in the buggy, the old man changes his mind again and says hes' "very tired." However at this point Lee is determined to bring his grandpa to the slough because he intuitivly understands how important this citing of the crane will be. (10 errors)

Answer key

Compare your corrections to those identified in the paragraphs below.

McCourt's story "Cranes Fly South" is set on the prairies sometime before the **1950s**. The **story** **suggests** that the **grandfather's life** is **fulfilled** just before his death when he once again witnesses the flight of the whooping crane. This particular bird is nearly extinct, and during the **course** of the story it is associated with the sky, the divine, and ultimately the grandfather. In the eyes of Lee and the grandfather, and maybe even the father, the sight of the crane's flight is an epiphany that reveals a mystery, a beauty, and perhaps a promise of **immortality** which is emphasized by the grandfather's repeated cry, "**Great** God in heaven." By the end of the story, the reader is convinced that Lee might be **guilty** of his grandpa's death, but he is also **responsible** for redeeming the old man's last few **hours**. When the boy says that the grandfather has gone south, "the words sprang clear and triumphant from his throat."

Lee's grandfather is a complex character so it is difficult for Lee to know how to deal with the conflicting messages and his **own** feelings. At the **beginning** of the story, Lee remembers that his mother admonished him that Grandpa "mustn't ever get excited because he is a very old man." The grandfather is, in fact, a very strange combination of strength and weakness, vitality and death, and submission and aggression. One minute he pleads with Lee to take him to the slough, then when that ploy is unsuccessful, he screams "You git along boy or I'll welt the hide off you." What should Lee do? When they start out in the buggy, the old man changes his mind again and says **he's** "**awful** tired." However, at this point, Lee is determined to bring his grandpa to the slough because he **intuitively** understands how important this **sighting** of the crane will be.