

How to use conventional spelling, punctuation and mechanics

Before you begin

What you need:

Related text: **“Dance with a Giraffe” by Christine Jurzykowski**

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

An English dictionary

A French/English dictionary (optional)

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **30 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

The following paragraph has 24 errors in spelling, punctuation and mechanics. This particular exercise focuses mainly but not exclusively on spelling errors that result from failure to distinguish between French and English spelling. Rewrite the paragraph, correcting the errors. The first three errors have been corrected for you as examples of the type of errors examined in the exercise.

Exercise

Christine (Jurzykowski) has written (written) a thoughtful (thoughtful) essay that demands that the reader blur or even erase the normal boundaries between animals and human beings. She does this by telling us about her own history. When she was a child, she experienced a comfortable intimate relationship with nature, but then her mother took her to her future homes in Paris and New York where she lost: “the interwoven relationships with the natural world” she had known as a child. At 28, she rediscovered that magical and mysterious marriage of the human and animal world and returned to nature. This led Jurzykowski to Fossil Rim which she points out was once dinosaur country. This is the appropriate setting for her story, for it is as though she has returned to primeval times when humans had not yet evolved from the apes. In this strange sanctuary for animals from Africa, Asia, South America and the United States; Jurzykowski explores the possibility of merging her identity and consciousness with that of Old Nick; a dying decrepit giraffe that becomes more of a beloved, aging parent than a three thousand pound reticulated giraffe.

Answer key

Compare your corrections to those made in bold in the paragraph below.

Jurzykowski has **written** a **thoughtful essay** that **demands** that the reader blur or even erase the normal boundaries between animals and human **beings**. She does this by telling us about her own **history**. When she was a child, she experienced a **comfortable, intimate** relationship with nature, but then her mother took her to her **future** homes in Paris and New York **where** she **lost** “the interwoven relationships with the natural world” she had known as a child. At 28, she rediscovered that magical and mysterious **marriage** of the human and animal world and **returned** to nature. This **led** Jurzykowski to Fossil Rim, which she points out was once **dinosaur** country. This is the appropriate setting for her story, for it is as **though** she has returned to **primeval** times when humans had not yet **evolved** from the apes. In this strange **sanctuary** for animals from **Africa**, Asia, South America and the United States, Jurzykowski explores the possibility of merging her identity and **consciousness** with that of Old Nick, a dying, **decrepit** giraffe that becomes more of a beloved, aging parent than a **three-thousand-pound** reticulated giraffe.