

**Directions:** Read the sample paragraph below, written by a Chinese student here at the U of R. With a partner, discuss the following:

- 1) What grammatical errors bother you the most?
- 2) What do you think you would try to work on with the student?

**Sample Paragraph**

**(Mainland Chinese Language Background)**

In this materialism society , people with top gear usually are labled as the successful. Based on “the sacred rac,” Thapar implied that cars are symbols of individual stations. I totally agree on his statement since we are habited to judge people by monetary factors in this “money talks” generation. Imagine when a Ferrari drifts by, a man in fresh white suits with a pair of black shades smiles at you. Gentlemen may jealous him, ladies may have a crush on that guy. Dare we doubt his wealth or status? People used to judging by their appearance or possession. That’s not hard to explain it, why Puffy Daddy drives a sexy blue Buggati in his music video? Why Rick Ross name his entertainment company as “Maybach Music?” Why Soulja Boy hangs a unwieldy shining Lamborghini blingbling low on his neck? I can cite hundreds of examples of people showing off their top gears to declare who I am and how rich I am. For me, I sometimes sigh gently “what a beautiful car” when a Bentley flits over.

### **Higher Order Concerns:**

#### **Clarification of Paragraph Topic Needed**

- 1) Opening Sentences: What is the meaning of “top gear” and “individual stations”?
- 2) Coherence is lacking, especially in the opening sentences. Each sentence seems to be its own isolated idea.

#### **Structure**

- 1) A quote was required by the instructor in the opening sentences (to support the viewpoint of the original author).
- 2) Proper structures needed to introduce the writer’s own viewpoint (agreement with the original author in this case).

#### **Support**

The following sentence makes it seem like the writer is contradicting himself: “For me, I sometimes sigh gently ‘what a beautiful car’ when a Bentley flits over.” (Now, the writer sounds like he is agreeing with materialistic attitudes rather than agreeing with the original author or refuting them.)

(Note: Since these issues often involve radical restructuring of ideas and sentences, grammar is often deferred to a later draft. However, tutors can pick out a particularly unclear sentence to decipher with the student or give appropriate patterns for troublesome verb structures.)

### **Key to Correction Symbols**

#### **WRT 104**

#### **Global Errors**

- vt = verb tense
- vf = verb form
- mod = modal verb
- cond = conditional verb structure
- pass = passive voice (missing or not needed)
- cl = clause structure is incorrect
- ss = sentence structure is incorrect
- wo = word order is wrong
- conn = inappropriate transitional element; missing transitional element (adverbs, coordinators, subordinators, etc.)
- coh = coherence is missing; two sentences do not fit together logically
- K = idea, phrase, or sentence contain numerous local and/or global errors that render the message completely or partially unclear

### **Local Errors**

sv = subject-verb agreement  
art = articles (a, an, the)  
s/pl = a noun should be singular or plural  
wc = incorrect word choice  
wf = wrong word formation (incorrect part of speech)  
prep = error with prepositions (missing or incorrect)

### **Other Errors**

cap / or underlining the letter 3 times = capitalization needed  
cs = comma splice  
dm = dangling modifier  
lc = a capital letter should be lowercase  
p = punctuation error  
pro ref/pro agree = pronoun reference or pronoun agreement  
ro = run-on sentence  
sp = spelling error  
inf = informal language

(Note: “global” errors tend to cause the most interference with meaning, whereas “local” errors can be very annoying, but the intended message is often intact or readily perceived.)

### **Sample Paragraph: Lower Order Concerns Highlighted**

**Global Errors:**

- 1) Verb Form (vf)**
- 2) Sentence Structure (ss)**
- 3) Clause Structure (cl)**

In this materialism society , people with top gear usually are labled as the successful. Based on “the sacred rac,” Thapar implied that cars are symbols of individual stations. I totally agree on his statement since we **are habited** to judge people by monetary factors in this “money talks” generation. Imagine when a Ferrari drifts by, a man in fresh white suits with a pair of black shades smiles at you. Gentlemen **may jealous** him, ladies may have a crush on that guy. Dare we doubt his wealth or status? People **used to judging** by their appearance or possession. **That’s not hard to explain it, why Puffy Daddy drives a sexy blue Buggati in his music video?** Why Rick Ross name his entertainment company

as “Maybach Music?” Why Soulja Boy hangs a unwieldy shining Lamborghini blingbling low on his neck? I can cite hundreds of examples of people showing off their top gears to declare who I am and how rich I am. For me, I sometimes sigh gently “what a beautiful car” when a Bentley flits over.

### Error 1

**Pattern: verb + (article) + noun + preposition**

**We have a chance of snow tonight.**

**The new study offers hope of resisting viruses.**

- (Additional strategies:**
- 1) Ask the student if “habit” can be used as a verb.**
  - 2) Check if there is difficulty with distinguishing the usages of “inhabit” versus “habit” with some sample sentences.**
  - 3) Elicit the exact structure before taking the student back to the original sentence: Do you have any habits? For example, I have the habit of rising early.**
  - 4) Ask the student a question with an alternate structure “in the habit of,” to see if this might be causing confusion (e.g. Are you in the habit of studying all night?).**
  - 5) Finally, can you find the error in the original sentence? How could you fix it?)**

### Error 2

**Pattern: to be + adjective + preposition**

**People envy the owner of a Ferrari.**

**People jealous the owner of a Ferrari. X**

**People are envious of the owner of a Ferrari.**

**He is afraid of wrecking his Ferrari.**

### Error 3

**Problem: meanings/structures of “used to”**

**People used to judge by appearance.**

**Pattern: used to + base form of the verb**

**Meaning: past habitual action that is no longer happening**

People are used to judging by appearance.

**Patterns:** to be + used to + gerund  
(We are used to driving in the snow.)

**Meaning:** to be + used to + noun phrase  
(We are used to cold weather.)  
to be accustomed to, to be adapted to, to have a habit of sth.

#### Error 4

**Problem:** Included Questions & Noun clauses

##### Types of Noun Clauses

We saw what Soulja Boy hung around his neck. (obj.)

Where Puffy Daddy was driving remains unimportant. (subj.)

We heard about why Rick Ross gave his company that name. (obj. of prep)

**Pattern:** Introductory sentence + noun clause (as an object)

##### Example introductory sentences

Many researchers do not know...

Most people cannot remember...

They are unable to explain...

**real question:** Why do people judge others by wealth?

**question as a noun clause:** why people judge others by wealth

**included question:** It is difficult to explain why people judge others by wealth.

(Notes: In an included question, question word order and question punctuation disappear.)

**(Additional Strategies – especially if you are short on time or can't find a clear pattern of error:**

Select a sentence/line with several errors, and write the number "2" at the end of the line. Ask the student if he/she can find two errors in that sentence. Discuss what the student finds (they often pick items that are correct, which is a good opportunity to give encouragement). In the given example, the sentence with "fresh white suits" is a good line for this strategy.

**Pick a couple of word choice items and ask the student to explain them. Have the student use a dictionary (if applicable) to find the proper structure or a dictionary/thesaurus to find a better word. A good item from the example is to ask the student what he meant by “flits over.” The student could then use the dictionary to see if he could find the appropriate preposition.)**

### **Sample Paragraph: Final Draft**

Hughes claimed that cars represent one’s social status and affluence, which leads to prevalence of shallow materialism in the society. According to Thapar, “[s]ome members of the tribe, to display their wealth and social prestige, own herds of racs.” I couldn’t agree more on his statement since a large portion of people generally judge people by monetary factors in this “money talks” generation. In this materialistic society, people with top rides usually are labeled as the successful. Undoubtedly monetary factors define the word “successful” for most people. Imagine when a Ferrari drifts by, a man in fresh white suits with a pair of black shades smiles at you. Dare we doubt his wealth or status? People used to judging by their appearance or possession. Such kind of phenomenon is especially conspicuous in the entertainment field, for instance, why did Puffy Daddy drive a sexy blue Bugatti in his music video? Why did Rick Ross name his entertainment company as “Maybach Music?” Why did Soulja Boy hang an unwieldy shining Lamborghini blingbling low on his neck? Obviously all people know the reason. I sometimes sigh gently “what a gorges car” and wish I were the person in that a vehicle when a Bentley flits by. However, 30 seconds after admiring the beautiful artwork, I can’t help reflecting that how pathetic it is when people judge individuals merely according to their exquisite vehicles or possession. People are not supposed to live in a society where wealth could exceed most of everything. I am not willing to live like an empty shell, which reveres money and wealth at the first place, ignoring the meaning of life, the spiritual wealth, the beauty of the nature.

## **Article Section**

**Directions:** Circle any errors with articles in this paragraph. Then, working in a small group, take a few minutes to see if you can put the article errors into different categories.

## **Sample Paragraph**

### **(South Korean Language Background)**

EPA's conclusion on Bt corn proved that there is no need to forbid the use of Bt corn as many of Americans insisted, and American had wrong stance on the issue. This brings the question how and why they took wrong stance. This can be tracked back to very beginning of the issue, the publication of Losey's experiment. Losey, in *Nature*, said, "Bt corn pollen could have profound implications for the conservation of monarch butterflies." (Pringles 125). Losey suggested possibility here, but the media reported his suggestion as if it was a fact. Many of articles linked deaths of monarch butterflies directly to Bt corn; the headline of article from *Devner Post*, for instance, says "Altered Corn Kills Butterflies" (125). A possibility changed into a fact, and it spread out through America as daily newspapers are more readily available to American than the *Nature*, scientific journals for professionals. Losey's conclusion exaggerated by daily newspapers had wrong influence on the public, and the people came up with wrong opinion on the issue and wanted to stop the use Bt corn. Many of scientists argued against Losey for artificial environment of his experiment, and Losey changed his conclusion made in *Nature* and said, "it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions about the risk to monarch population in the field" in Monsanto's *PR Newswire*" (129). However, the general opinion of the public was firmly formed to ban the use of Bt corn, and scientists' conclusion and Losey's change of words ineffectively reached people. As shown, people were not properly informed with accurate information about Losey's experiment, so they had false thoughts on the Bt corns issue.

### Sample Paragraph: Lower Order Concerns Highlighted

(1)EPA's conclusion on Bt corn proved that there is no need to forbid the use of Bt corn as many of Americans insisted, and (2)American had (3)wrong stance on the issue. This brings the question how and why they took (4)wrong stance. This can be tracked back to (5)very beginning of the issue, the publication of Losey's experiment. Losey, in *Nature*, said, "Bt corn pollen could have profound implications for the conservation of monarch butterflies." (Pringles 125). Losey suggested (6)possibility here, but the media reported his suggestion as if it was a fact. Many of articles linked deaths of monarch butterflies directly to Bt corn; the headline of (7)article from (8)*Devner Post*, for instance, says "Altered Corn Kills Butterflies" (125). A possibility changed into a fact, and it spread out through America as daily newspapers are more readily available to (9)American than (10)the *Nature*, (11)scientific journals for professionals. Losey's conclusion exaggerated by daily newspapers had (12)wrong influence on the public, and the people came up with (13)wrong opinion on the issue and wanted to stop the use Bt corn. Many of scientists argued against Losey for (14)artificial environment of his experiment, and Losey changed his conclusion made in *Nature* and said, "it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions about the risk to monarch population in the field" in Monsanto's *PR Newswire*" (129). However, the general opinion of the public was firmly formed to ban the use of Bt corn, and scientists' conclusion and Losey's change of words ineffectively reached people. As shown, people were not properly informed with accurate information about Losey's experiment, so they had false thoughts on the Bt corns issue. In sum, Losey's experiment is part of (15)the strange series of events that occurred in 1999. (Note: This last sentence is not part of the original writer's work; it was added to illustrate a point that often comes up in student writing.)

Note: The 2 parts below are an effort to illustrate how articles work in context. When reading student writing, think about all of the information together rather than one part (such as the chart) in isolation. As in the example, a single paragraph will use articles with several different meanings and purposes. The students have to begin to see that articles are an important part of the meaning of each sentence, and the rules may change with each sentence. They have to begin to ask themselves a variety of questions: Am I making a general statement? Is this indefinite? Am I writing about something universal? Am I defining a concept? Does the reader know about this? etc.)

### **Background Information on Articles**

#### **Part 1: Reader/Writer Knowledge**

<b>Article Usage</b>	<b>Writer (familiar)</b>	<b>Writer (not familiar)</b>
<b>Reader (familiar)</b>	The writer believes that Americans took <u>the wrong stance</u> on the issue.	The reader may have <u>a different opinion</u> .
<b>Reader (not familiar)</b>	The researcher found <u>an article</u> in <i>Nature</i> .	Are we eating <u>an ear of Bt corn</u> ?

#### **The Upper Left Quadrant: When to use “the”**

a) second mention (can be direct or indirect)

I saw a monarch. The butterfly landed on a flower.

b) writer and reader have shared knowledge / universal knowledge

The article from the HW assignment states.../ The sun is shining today.

(sun, moon, stars, universe, air, environment)

Note: “Direct” means that the same word is repeated. (e.g. Americans had an opinion about the Monarch larvae study. They had the wrong opinion.)

“Indirect” means that the same idea is repeated, but not necessarily with the same word(s). (e.g. Monsanto wrote up a contract for each scientist. The agreements lasted for...)

c) information before or after the noun makes it specific/unique

The monarch that is resting on the flower is...

(adjectives, clauses, prepositional phrases)

The same monarch landed on my head.

(same, only, right, wrong, main, first, last, superlatives)

d) formal definition structure for generic usage or statements of generalization

The monarch caterpillar feeds on milkweed.

e) idiomatic usage

Monarchs are found in the United States.

### **Idiosyncracies with Proper Nouns:**

#### “the” required

first n. in of phrases  
groups of lakes  
mountain ranges  
plural countries/countries w/parts  
Rivers  
Canals  
Oceans  
Deserts  
Peninsulas  
Museums  
Hotels  
Ships  
gov't bodies  
publications

#### no “the” required

peoples' names  
lakes  
mtn. peaks  
countries, cities, states, counties/prov.  
planets  
months/days  
schools  
continents  
airports  
parks  
holidays  
religions

They found a butterfly feeder **at the store**.

Other idiosyncratic phrases:

#### Phrases that require “the”

in the morning	go to the movies
in the afternoon	go to the beach
go to the bank	go to the sea
go to the store	go to the park
go to the metro	

#### Phrases without “the”

go uptown	at college
go downtown	at school
go to school	at night
go to church	at work
go to bed	at home
go to work	
travel by bus	
travel by train	

(“go” can be replaced with a preposition)

## **Part 2: Specific vs. Generic Statements/Generalizations**

### **Article Structures for Specific Nouns**

1. I saw a black panther in the forest.
2. The black panther wanted to devour me.
3. We all saw the black panther.

4. The panther that was perched in the tree wanted to devour me.
5. The panthers in that forest are increasing these days.
6. The behavior of this panther in the forest was hard to predict.

### **Article Structures for Generic Statements/Generalizations**

1. A panther is also called a mountain lion.
2. The panther is also called a mountain lion.
3. Panthers are also called mountain lions.
4. Behavior of panthers is an interesting field of study.
5. Many people want to save the panthers./The Canadians have many panthers.

(Note: Perhaps because “the” and “a” can both be used for specific and generic/general purposes, when writing about a noun in general (but not defining a category), plural nouns are often preferred in academic writing. The use of plural nouns for general statements can often eliminate some of the struggles with articles.)

### **Explanations of Each Numbered Item (from the Sample essay)**

1. information (the adjective *EPA's*) that makes “conclusion” unique: The EPA’s conclusion...(possibly 2<sup>nd</sup> mention)
2. general commentary: Americans
3. information (the adjective *wrong*) that makes “stance” unique: the wrong stance / possibly 2<sup>nd</sup> mention
4. same as above
5. shared context (everyone knows that an “issue” has a definite beginning); could also be classified as unique because of the adjective “very”: the very beginning
6. Indefinite even though it is 2<sup>nd</sup> mention; although the student is writing about a certain “possibility,” it remains indefinite because “implications” (in the previous sentence) is general and “possibility” is not interpreted (the reader doesn’t know what the possibility is)...this is a good place to show evidence (quote) followed by interpretation (more interpretation would make “possibility” definite): “the possibility of widespread monarch losses...”
7. same as above; 2<sup>nd</sup> mention, but left indefinite b/c “many articles” suggests that one newspaper could have run more than one article (tricky b/c we have description *from the Denver Post* here): The headline of an article from *The Denver Post* (ask the student, do you think *the Denver Post* only had one article about this issue? or were they more likely

to have more than one? “The headline of the article from...” would mean that the newspaper had only one article)

8) idiosyncratic (newspapers/proper noun...usually take the definite article)

9) general commentary: Americans

10) idiosyncratic (journal titles are already definite; don't need an article): *Nature*

11) generic definition structure (also a reduced clause): a scientific journal

12) information that makes “influence” unique: the wrong influence (also 2<sup>nd</sup> mention)

13) information that makes “opinion” unique: the wrong opinion (also 2<sup>nd</sup> mention)

14) information that makes “environment” unique: the artificial environment

15) choices: the strange series of events (2<sup>nd</sup> mention...repetition/reminding the reader);  
or a strange series of events (making these events part of a generic category of “strange”;  
stepping away and more like making a personal commentary on the events)

### **Categories of Articles in the Sample Paragraph**

Unique by extra information (adjectives of some kind): 1, 3, 4, (5), 12, 13, 14

Shared Context: 5

General Statements: 2, 9

Generic categories: 11, 15

Idiosyncratic Usage: 8, 10

Indefinite Usage: 6, 7

(Overlap Category) Second Mention: 4, 12, 13, 15, (probably also 1 and 3 since they are  
likely to be linked to the previous paragraph)