Common Writing Mistakes & How to Fix Them

1. **Vague Pronoun Reference:** A pronoun can replace a noun, and its antecedent should be the person, place, or thing to which the pronoun refers. A vague pronoun reference (including words such as it, that, this, and which) can leave the reader confused about what or to whom the pronoun refers.

   **Example 1:**
   *Incorrect:* When Jonathan finally found his dog, he was so happy. (The dog or Jonathan?)
   *Correct:* Jonathan was so happy when he finally found his dog.

   **Example 2:**
   *Incorrect:* Don felt a lot of anger and bitterness as a result of Marie’s decision. This is what ended everything. (What ended everything? Don’s anger and bitterness or Marie’s decision?)
   *Correct:* Don felt a lot of anger and bitterness as a result of Marie’s decision. Her choice ended everything.

2. **Sentence Fragments:** Are incomplete sentences that don’t have one independent clause. A fragment may lack a subject, a complete verb, or both. Sometimes fragments depend on the proceeding sentence to give it meaning.

   **Example 1:**
   *Incorrect:* He gave his mother an extravagant gift after the argument. In spite of everything.
   *Correct:* In spite of everything, he gave his mother an extravagant gift after the argument.

   **Example 2:**
   *Incorrect:* The boys snuck home late that night. Then waited for the consequences.
   *Correct:* The boys snuck home late that night, then waited for the consequences.
3. **Misplaced or Dangling Modifier:** Is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies or describes. Sentences with this error can sound awkward, ridiculous, or confusing. A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence.
   
   **Example 1:**
   
   *Incorrect:* While walking on the sidewalk, Mary found a sparkly girl’s bracelet.
   
   *Correct:* While walking on the sidewalk, Mary found a girl’s sparkly bracelet.
   
   **Example 2:**
   
   *Incorrect:* After finally setting off on the trail, the morning felt more exciting.
   
   *Correct:* After finally setting off on the trail, he felt the morning was more exciting.

4. **No Comma in a Compound Sentence:** A comma separates two or more independent clauses in a compound sentence separated by a conjunction. The comma goes after the first clause and before the coordinating conjunction that separates the clauses.
   
   **Example 1:**
   
   *Incorrect:* The man jumped into a black sedan and he drove away before being noticed.
   
   *Correct:* The man jumped into a black sedan, and he drove away before being noticed.
   
   **Example 2:**
   
   *Incorrect:* She was beautiful and she was happy and she was full of life.
   
   *Correct:* She was beautiful, and she was happy, and she was full of life.

- This list was compiled from this article: [https://authority.pub/common-grammar-mistakes/](https://authority.pub/common-grammar-mistakes/). Check this list for more help on common writing mistakes.