**10 Common Writing Mistakes** (made by ESL students)

**Correct** the common writing mistakes in the below sentences.

1. I enjoy my job, I like the people I work with.

2. This is a popular city. Because it has work opportunities.

3. Everyone have problems sometimes.

4. In Brazil has beautiful beaches.

5a. I am motivated, hard worker, and professional.

5b. My city has many restaurants, festivals, and you can enjoy the beaches.

6. The happiness is important in the life.

7. That organization should change it’s name.

8. i think that’s wrong cuz it doesn’t make sense.

9. I look forward to hear back from you.

10. According to me, the movie was good.

**Explanations**

1. I enjoy my job, I like the people I work with.

This is a **run-on sentence**. Both of the clauses “I enjoy my job” and “I like the people I work with” are independent clauses (IC) because they are complete thoughts. You cannot combine two independent clauses (IC + IC) with only a comma. Instead, you should put a period between them or use a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS – for, and, nor, buy, or, yet, so).

 I enjoy my job. I like the people I work with.

I enjoy my job, and I like the people I work with.

2. This is a popular city. Because it has work opportunities.

The second clause is a **fragment**. “Because it has work opportunities” is not a complete idea (it’s not an independent sentence). The word *because* is a **subordinating conjunction**. This means it begins a dependent (subordinate) clause that needs to connect with a main (independent) clause.

When the dependent clause is at the end of the sentence, you don’t need a comma before it starts.

**This is a popular city** *because it has work opportunities*. (no comma)

[ **main clause** ] [ *dependent clause* ]

When the dependent clause is at the beginning of the sentence, you need a comma at its end.

*Because it has work opportunities,* **this is a popular city**. (comma used)

[*dependent clause*] [**main clause** ]

3. Everyone have problems sometimes.

This is a **Subject-Verb-Agreement** (SVA) error. The subject *Everyone* doesn’t agree (match) the verb. *Everyone* is a singular subject (like *he/she/it*), so it agrees with the verb *has.* (Hint: *Every* is always followed by a singular noun; *everyone* means every one person in a group.)

 Everyone has problems sometimes.

Here are some other SVA errors:

**** People ~~lives~~ **live** longer nowadays.

****No one ~~know~~ **knows** the answer.

****Italy ~~have~~ **has** delicious food.

4. In Brazil has beautiful beaches.

This is a sentence **without a subject**. When you begin a sentence with a preposition (*In/At/From* etc), you are creating a prepositional phrase that is **not** the subject of the sentence. After a preposition phrase that begins a sentence, you should add a **comma**, and then a **subject**.

*In Brazil*, **beaches** are beautiful.

*At the end of the day*, **we** went home.

*From the first time I met her*, **I** knew I liked her.

The above sentence can be easily corrected by removing the preposition.

**Brazil** has beautiful beaches. (No preposition)

5a. I am motivated, hard worker, and professional.

This sentence is **not parallel**. You have “I am + adjective, noun, adjective.” This is not good balance. Instead, use *adjective + adjective + adjective*

I am motivated, hard-working, and professional.

5b. My city has many restaurants, festivals, and you can enjoy the beaches.

Again, this is **not parallel**. It is not a mistake, but it is bad writing style. The sentence has *My city has + noun, noun, a full clause*. Instead, try to stay balanced. Use *noun + noun + noun*:

 My city has many *restaurants*, *festivals*, and *beaches* to enjoy.

I was responsible for *assisting* customers, ~~management~~ *managing* staff, and *hiring* new workers. (verb + verb + verb all in same form)

6. The happiness is important in the life.

*Happiness* and *life* are **abstract nouns**. Abstract nouns are not countable. They are often ideas. Examples: *freedom, love, honesty, peace, surprise, disgust, wealth, poverty, truth*

The **definite article** *the* is not used with abstract nouns when writing **generally**.

****~~The~~ happiness is important in ~~the~~ life. (general)

****My father taught me the meaning of ~~the~~ love. (general)

****It felt like ~~the~~ magic. (general)

We can use the definite article ‘the’ before abstract nouns if they are used to describe something **specific**.

The peace between North and South Korea is at risk.

The love between a parent and his child is a beautiful thing.

He felt like the magic you feel when you fall in love.

7. That organization should change it’s name.

it’s = *it is* (a contraction). Here, you need a **possessive** adjective, so you should use its.

 That organization should change its name. (possessive)

It’s good that the company changed the design of its website. (subject + verb, possessive)

8. i think that’s wrong cuz it doesn’t make sense.

This is texting, not writing. When we write, we always capitalize “I” and write words in their full form.

I think that’s wrong because doesn’t make sense.

9. I look forward to hear back from you.

If a **preposition** (to/of/in/at/by) is followed by a verb, then the verb should be in ~ing form.

I look forward to *hearing* back from you.

I’m afraid of *speaking* in front of my father.

We are interested in *going* there.

10. According to me, the movie was good.

The phrase *according to* should be used with a third party (e.g. a magazine, book, website, or person other than yourself). We don’t use *‘According to me’*. Instead, use *In my opinion* or a similar phrase.

In my opinion, the movie was good.

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*- Common errors compiled by Matthew Barton of Englishcurrent.com*