**1. Pronouns must have a clear antecedent.**

The antecedent is the noun that the pronoun is replacing. On the SAT, the antecedent **must actually be referenced in the same sentence, or a very nearby sentence in the case of Improving Paragraphs.**

If it not 100% clear - and spelled out - what the pronoun is referring to, it's incorrect in the SAT's eyes.

Let's look at an example:

Melissa hurried into the theater and tried to find her seat, relieved that it had not already started.

Most people would have no trouble understanding this sentence. It's clear from the context that Melissa is relieved that whatever show she is seeing in the theater has not started yet. However, in the SAT's eyes, this sentence would be **incorrect**because we don't have an explicitly-stated antecedent for "it". According to the SAT, the only things that "it" could refer to are either "theater" or "seat" - and neither of those makes sense!

**2. Always use "and" instead of other connecting words**

The SAT Writing also tests you on your ability to state something in the **most straightforward and concise way.**By their standards, "and" is the most straightforward way to join things together. So, if you see a sentence trying to replace "and" with another connecting word - such as "plus" or "as well as" - it is incorrect.

Note that this does not apply to joining independent clauses together for compound sentences. Only FANBOYS conjunction can be used for that task.

Let's look at an example:

Amanda took one job in a restaurant plus one in a hotel.

This would be considered **incorrect**. Instead, try this:

Amanda took one job in a restaurant **and** one in a hotel.

**3. Only similar things can be compared**

The basic idea is that **the SAT only wants you to compare two similar things**. Obviously this has nothing to do with being grammatically correct English — it's just the SAT's preference. For example:

John's car was newer than Jerry.

Grammatically this makes perfect sense: Let's say that Jerry is 30 years old, but John's car is only 5 years old. However, in the SAT's eyes this is a mistake because a car and a person are too dissimilar to be compared. Let's look at another:

Kim Kardashian was jealous because her selfies were not as popular as Khloe.

Again, strictly from a grammar point of view, this **is** a correct sentence. One might hope that a human being is more popular than a selfie. However, the SAT does not want you to compare Kim's selfies to Khloe; instead, it wants you to compare Kim's selfies to Khloe's selfies. This is how the sentence would look corrected:

Kim Kardashian was jealous because her selfies were not as popular as Khloe's selfies.

Now we are comparing selfies to selfies, which are two similar things, and therefore this comparison has the SAT's blessing.

**4. Don't delete something unless it is redundant**

This doesn't come up too frequently, but occasionally an Identifying Errors question will give you something like this:

As part of his annual payment, he receives a bonus every year.

According to the SAT, this kind of **redundancy is incorrect**. This goes back to our rule of making everything concise as concise as possible — if you have already been told that something happens annually, you don't also need to be told that it happens every year!

**5. Be careful of using "because" with nouns**

The SAT Writing will occasionally use two constructions with the word "because", and both of them are considered incorrect.

The first is something that has become common slang recently: **because + noun**

For example, to paraphrase a recent Carl's Jr. commercial,

We made a disgusting hamburger with a hot dog on top of it **because America.**

This, unfortunately, will never be correct.

Similarly, occasionally the SAT will use the following incorrect construction: **noun + is because of**

Let's look at an example:

**The drought in California is because of** the lack of rain.

So, how do you make sure you always catch these problems?

Whenever you see the word "because", make sure that it is joining **two clauses**. A clause is something that has both a subject and a verb. Alternately, "because of" can be used as a preposition with a noun object, but in that case make sure that the rest of the sentence makes sense on its own if you get rid of the prepositional phrase!

To fix the above sentences, we would say:

**We made** a disgusting hamburger with a hot dog on top of it **because** **we have misunderstood** what America needs.

There **is**a **drought**in California **because we have had** a lack of rain.

OR

There **is**a **drought** in California **because of the lack** of rain.

**6. If more than one answer is grammatically correct, choose the most concise answer that has the fewest extra words.**

Many students mistakenly think that having more words makes a sentence sound more academic, but this is not the case. The SAT Writing will always be looking to see if you can spot the most direct and concise way of saying something. So when two or more answers are equally grammatically correct, go for the most concise answer.

These six rules are important to know, along with the more basic grammar rules that you've learned in school. This is because....