**Some things to watch out for:**

* Overuse of adverbs (patiently, warily, suspiciously…)

 Using too many adverbs is considered a no, no.

* Overuse of “flowery” dialogue attribution - the he said, she said of a quote.

 *“Jump this way,” he cajoled. “I want to see him,” she declared.*

 It’s considered amateurish. And be careful with using too many adverbs with dialogue attribution as well: *“There you go!” he said emphatically.*

* Lie vs Lay

 Present Past Participle

To recline: lie, lying lay has/have/had lain

To put or place: lay, laying laid has/have/had laid

To tell a fib: lie, lying lied has/have/had lied

* Effect vs Affect (these are called homonyms - words that sound alike but mean different things)

Effect - used as a noun, to show result

 *She had the effect she was looking for.*

 - it’s rarely used as a verb - and shows cause

 *He effected (caused) the change in personnel.*

Affect - used as a verb, to show influence

 *How does that affect you?*

* It is never “alright,” it is always “All right!”
* It is suggested that you avoid cliques - they are considered lazy writing.

 *Take it or leave it, He leave no stone unturned, That’s just the tip of the iceberg*

* “It’s” is always and forever a contraction of “it is.” “Its” is a possessive pronoun
* You are “anxious” (to have anxiety or worry) because of how bad the sky looks, but you are “eager” (excited) to read that new book.
* Essential vs Nonessentail words or clauses

 If you can take it out and the sentence still makes sense, then it is nonessential and should be surrounded by commas if it is in the middle of a sentence.

 *My husband, Bill, took the car to the wash.* (I only have one husband)

 *My friend Sally took the car to the wash.* (I have more than one friend - believe it or not - so it is essential to the sentence to know who I am referring to.)

 *He called me a liar, which isn’t very nice.* (Note here that you would not use the word “that” before isn’t. If you chose the word that, you would have to make it into two complete sentences or use a conjunction). *He called me a liar, and that isn’t very nice. He called me liar. That isn’t very nice.*

That vs Which with essential and nonessential clauses

 If you can’t take out the clause without losing the meaning of the sentence, use that. If you can take it out and the meaning holds, use which.

 *He walked on the white line* ***that*** *separated the girls from the boys.*

* Use “less” when referring to an uncountable number

 *There was less money in the bank than they thought. (Notice the use of “than” vs “then.” Than is used when comparing something.)*

Use “few” when referring to a number you can count

 *She took a few of the cans with her.*

* Because and Since

 Because always indicates cause and effect

 *I picked up the paper because she told me to.*

 Since is used for relationships or time

 *I will go with you since I have the time.*

 *I have been walking along this road since five o’clock.*

* Beware of the use of the “passive verb. Use it when you mean to use it (for adding variety to your sentence, to add emphasis…) Don’t use it on a regular basis. It is another no, no in writing.

 Passive: The letter was put on the desktop.

 Active: Sally put the letter on the desktop.

* With the word, it is “There was myriad fish in the sea” not “There was a myriad of fish in the sea.” I know, it doesn’t sound correct, but it is.

**Grammar and Punctuation References:**

**Online: -**grammargirl.com

 -owl.english.purdue.edu

 -grammar.ccc.commnet.edu

**Books: -** Woe Is I

 - The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation

 - Eats, Shoots and Leaves

 - Grammar Snobs Are Great Big Meanies