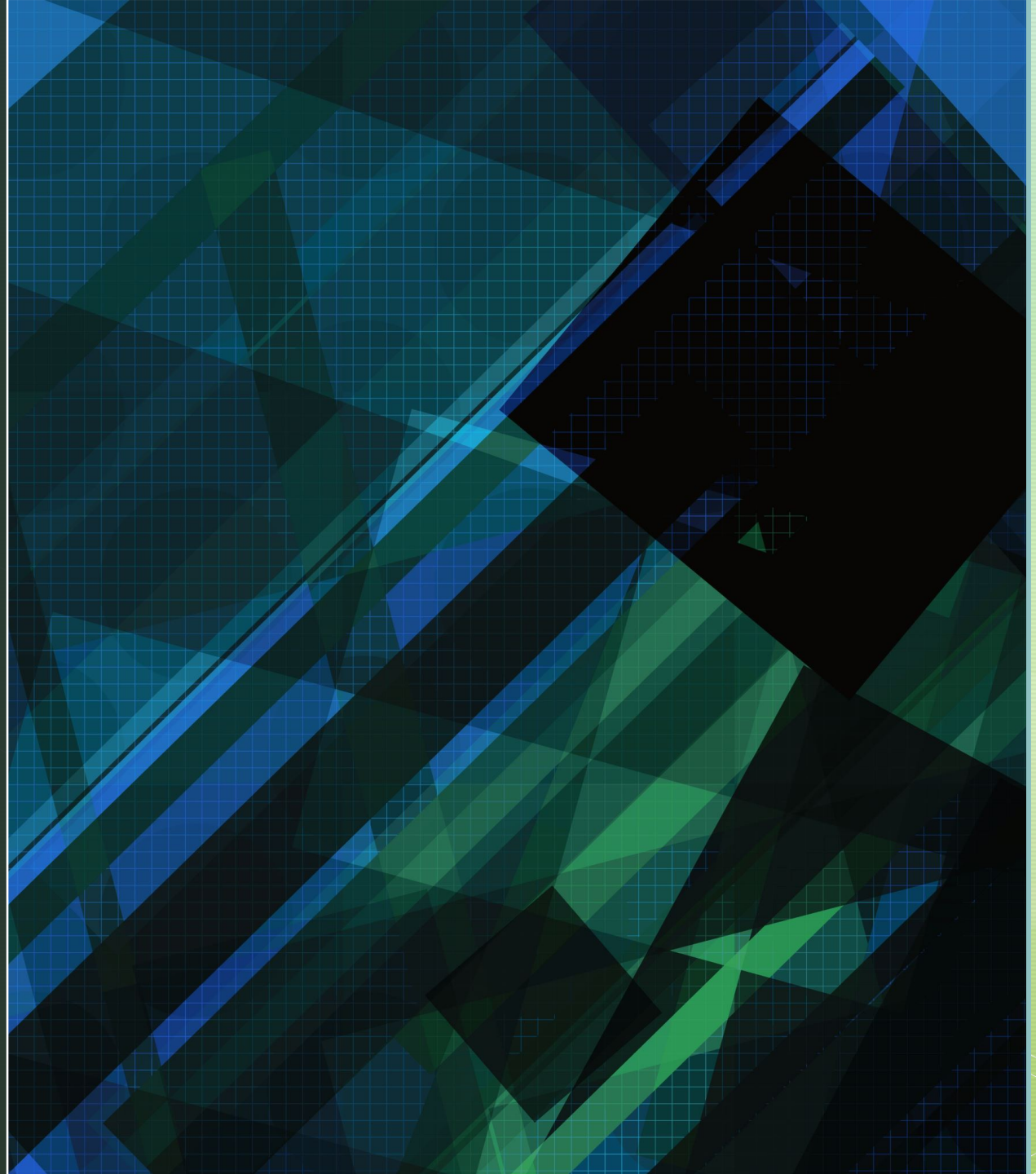


A Very Short Lesson in  
Grammar

# Writing is a System



# Writing is a system . . .

- What, exactly, is a system?
  - **System:** a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.  
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- To understand a system you need to identify the constituent *parts* and their *relationships*.





# Why study grammar?

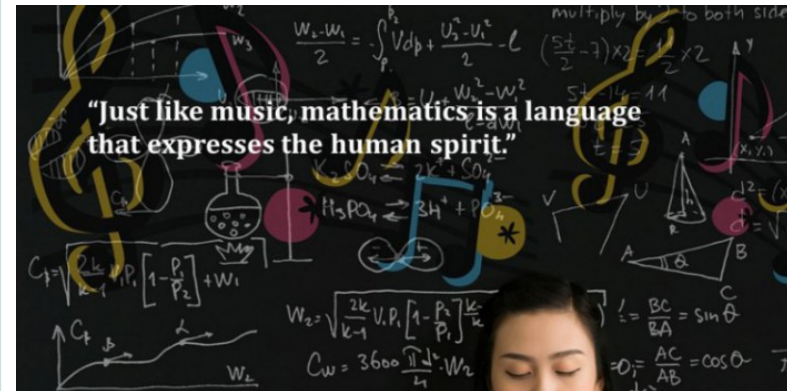


- Grammar is the secret code or “key” to coherent and graceful writing.
- It’s “secret” because many people write intuitively (by ear) without understanding most of the rules.
- Good grammar is also a key to success in school and the professional world.
- It allows you to *express yourself* clearly and eloquently—it allows you to be heard.

# Why review the basics?

- Like math, grammar builds on basic terms and “operations.”
- Understanding the terminology also makes grammar handbooks and websites easier to use, and that leads to a better grasp of grammar and better writing over time.
- As in math, we need to be fluent in the basics in order to perform more advanced “operations.”

		Sujeto (y atributo)	Complemento directo	Complemento indirecto	Complemento preposicional
1ª persona	Singular	yo	me		mí, conmigo
	Plural	nosotros (as)	nos		nosotros (-as)
2ª persona	Singular	tú	te		ti, contigo
	Plural	vosotros (as)	os		vosotros (-as)
3ª persona	Singular	él, ella, ello	lo, la	le, se	él, ella, ello
	Plural	ellos (-as)	los, las	les, se	ellos (-as)

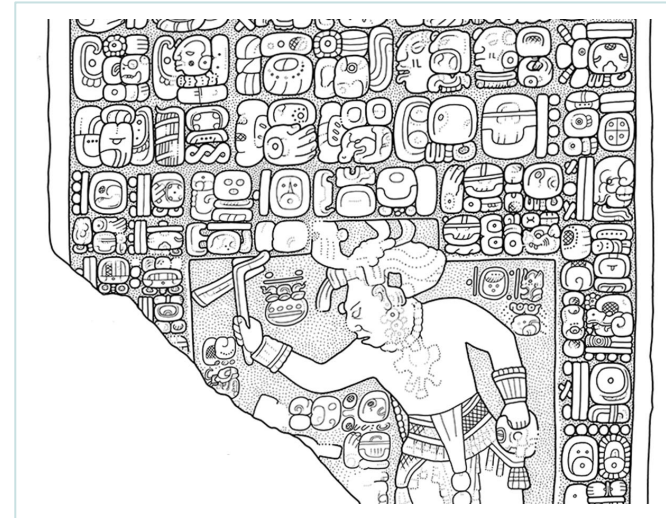




# Mayan Writing System

- This tablet was discovered in the southeastern Mexico around 2014.
- Ancient writing systems are deciphered using pattern analysis.
- They are also compared with other texts.
- Glyphs (picture language) illustrate the evolution of language as a system in which drawings represent ( = ) things and concepts.

Note: "The tablet was discovered . . ."  
<https://www.iflscience.com/editors-blog/ancient-maya-kingdom-discovered-in-backyard-of-a-mexican-cattle-rancher/>



# Every sentence has a subject and a verb

- The boy ran.
- That sock stinks.
- Many people applied to that school.
- The film is a documentary.

Note: Examples adapted from *College Writing Skills* by John Langan and Zoe Albright

# Every sentence has a subject and a verb

- The boy ran.
  - That sock stinks.
  - Many people applied to that school.
  - The film is a documentary.
- 
- Note: Examples adapted from *College Writing Skills* by John Langan and Zoe Albright

# Find the subject and the verb:

- A stream of water comes through a crack in the wall.
  - Snowflakes dance gently in the sunlight.
  - Red lights indicated an intersection in the rain.
  - Every student is entitled to a good education.
- 
- Tip: try to ignore descriptive words and phrases when identifying subjects and verbs.
  - Note: Examples adapted from *College Writing Skills* by John Langan and Zoe Albright



# Sentence Fragments

Note: Examples adapted from *College Writing Skills* by John Langan and Zoe Albright



Fragment: Whenever I shop for groceries.



Correct Sentence: Whenever I shop for groceries, I imagine that I am a famous chef.



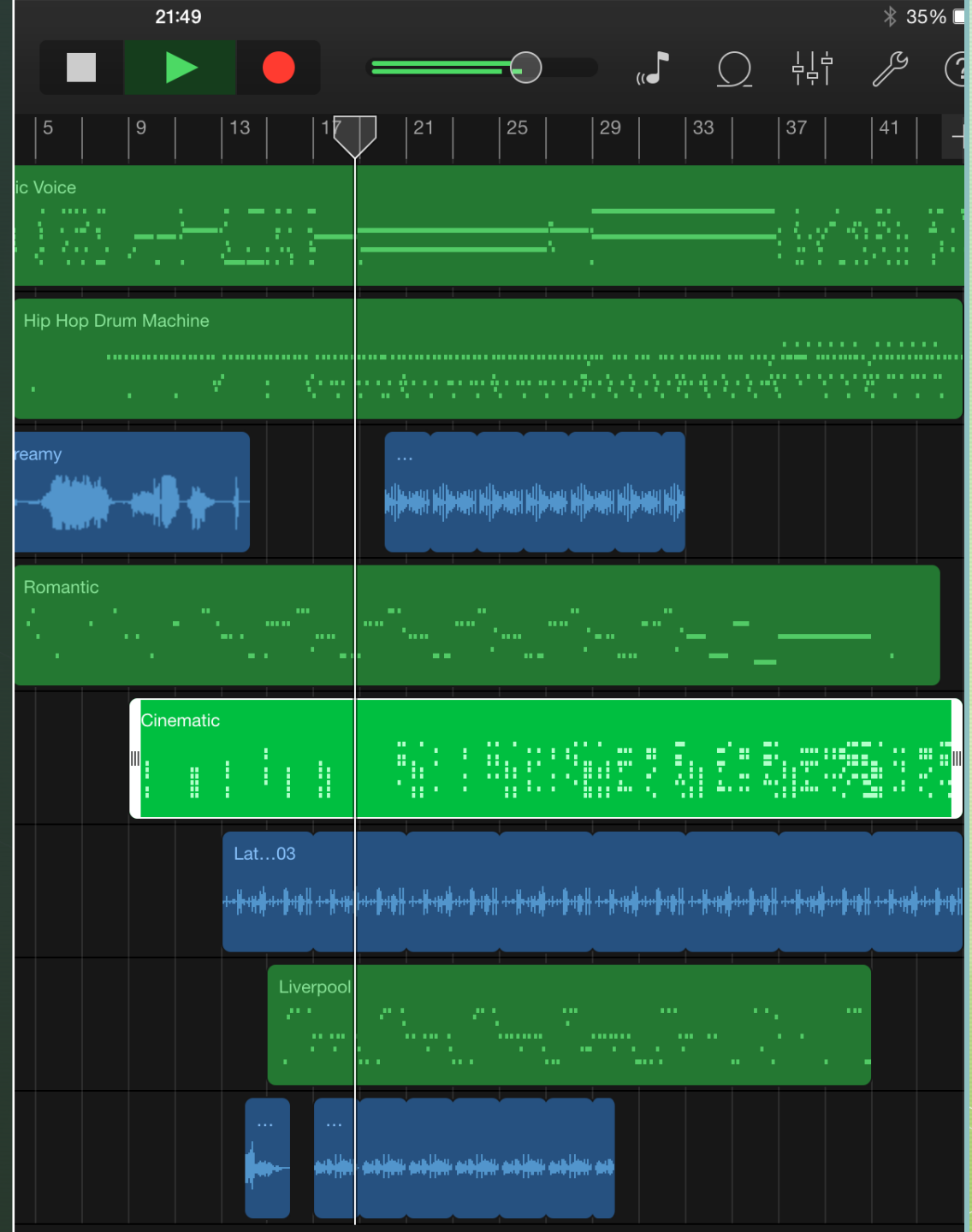
Fragment: Searching for the right filament for his light bulb. Thomas Edison failed many, many times.



Correct Sentence: Searching for the right filament for his light bulb, Thomas Edison failed many, many times.

# Comma splice

- A comma splice is a grammatical error in which a writer “splices” or “fuses together” two sentences (or independent clauses).
- In general, grammatically complete sentences should be punctuated (separated) with a period or semicolon.



## Fixing comma splices

- Comma splice: It's not how many times you fall, it's how many times you get up.
- Correct sentences:
  - It's not how many times you fall. It's how many times you get up.
  - or
  - It's not how many times you fall; it's how many times you get up.



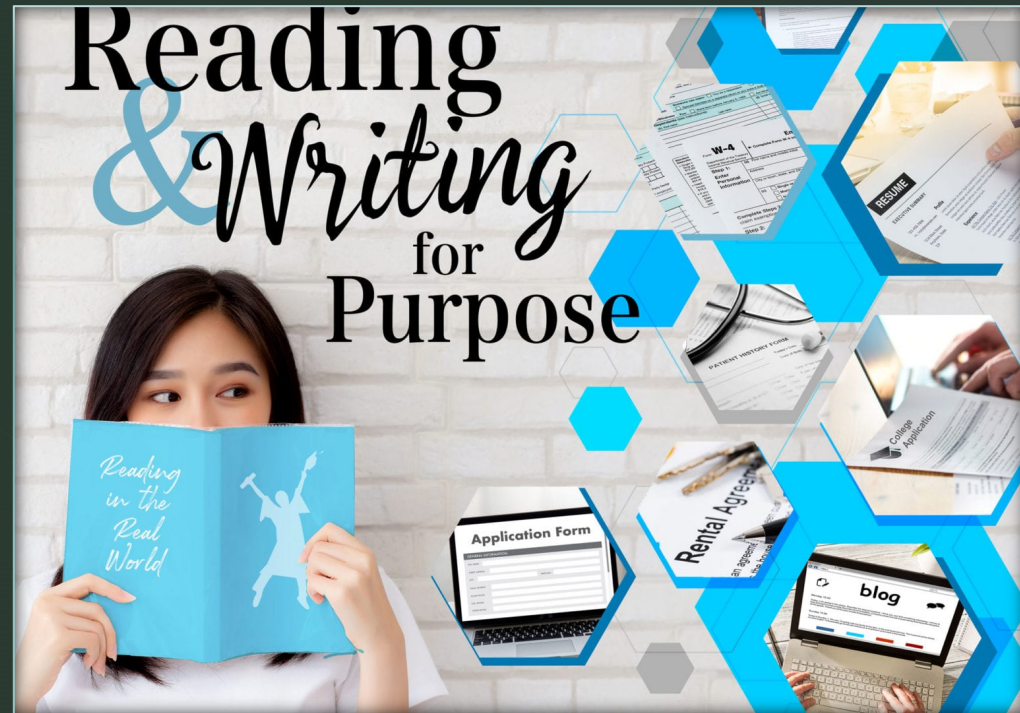
# Dirty little grammar secret . . .

- “It’s” is a short form (contraction of “it is”)
  - It’s important to pay attention to the details.
- “Its” means belonging to “it”:
  - The dog scratched behind its ears.



# Remember . . .

- Grammar is a system.
- It's complex but it can be mastered.
- Learning the “secret code” is a start, but *practice* makes perfect.
- Reading and writing on your own time are the best ways to practice.
- Reading and writing have many, many practical applications.



# Teotihuacan.

- A big city is a complex system.
- Is architecture a language?
- What kinds of maths and sciences would be required to build a great city?





# Image Credits

- Complex system: <https://www.business.uzh.ch/en/research/professorships/networkscience/teaching/Guest-Lectures/phdcsmgmt.html>
- Secret key: <https://www.defyandhustle.com/why-a-principle-centered-life-is-the-secret-key-to-increased-success-and-self-regard-in-2019/>
- Tablet: <https://www.futurity.org/maya-kingdom-sak-tzi-2302762-2/>
- Mayan glyphs: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/228276274837254758/>
- Comma splice: <https://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=fragments-runons-and-comma-splices>
- Scratching dog: <https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/scratching-fleas-cute-dog-cartoon-gm1187805771-335689800>
- Reading and Writing: <https://edynamiclearning.com/course/reading-and-writing-for-purpose/>
- Teotihuacan: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zug55/46844265285>