



RULES FOR COMPOSITION

The following twelve rules should constantly be brought under notice of the student.

1. Make short sentences.

Say all you have to say about one thing, or under one heading, before you go to another one.

2. Let each idea form one sentence.

3. Let each sentence have one principle subject only.

Be careful that a proper predicate is given with each subject.

4. Let every new sentence begin with a capital letter.

5. Where short pauses are required insert a comma.

6. When two sentences are thrown into one, separate them by a semicolon.

Example— "The sun and the wind once disputed as to which was the stronger. They agreed to try their strength," becomes—"The sun . . . stronger;" so "they agreed," etc. A semicolon is often followed by a conjunction.

7. Use an "exclamation mark (!)" after all interjections, or words and phrases used in an exclamatory manner.

8. Place an "interrogation mark (?)" at the end of every direct question.

Example —"What do you say?" but not after an indirect question, "He asked me what I said."

9. The words which people say, must be put between "quotation marks."

When the actual words of the speaker are not given, as when the third person is used instead of the first person, inverted commas are not used. Children are very often uncertain on this point.

Example— He said, "It is time to go home." Here the quotation marks are required; but they are omitted if the sentence takes this form —He said that it was time to go home.

10. Do not use the words "so," "then," "but," "and," very often.

This can be prevented by making short sentences, inserting a full stop, and beginning another sentence with a capital letter.

11. Be careful in the use of the relatives "who," "which," and "that."

'Who' does not refer to animals or inanimate things. Children often insert unnecessary relatives, for example: "A man (who) was walking down the street, when he saw..."

12. When the exercise is finished, look it over carefully, and correct where correction is absolutely necessary.