

# Nurse Author & Editor

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4 DAYS AGO   EDIT

## Achieving Great Grammar

### **Achieving Great Grammar**

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Many students and nurses have good ideas that could be shared with colleagues through publication. Unfortunately, they may not pursue publication. Potential authors offer a variety of reasons for not writing including a lack of time, having trouble refining a topic, being misinformed about the writing process, or fearing rejection (Oermann & Hays, 2016). For potential authors who overcome these barriers and prepare a manuscript, they may still face writing challenges that can interfere with the quality of their writing and ultimately, they may not be successful with the publication process. One problem that some writers face is poor mastery of grammar rules and improper writing and English usage (Miller, Russell, Cheng, & Skarbek, 2015). They may struggle with essential writing elements such as proper subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, use of passive voice, pronoun

agreement, or other important grammar rules. Additionally, novice writers may also lack self-efficacy, or belief in their ability to succeed regarding scholarly writing (Miller et al., 2015). Potential authors may need assistance in ensuring the quality of their scholarly work and need to gain confidence in their grammar and writing skills. There are some relatively simple ways to overcome these obstacles with the assistance of some writing resources. This article will identify some helpful grammar and writing resources including commonly used grammar applications (apps) and other supportive writing services. It will also compare a select number of popular grammar apps and offer additional suggestions when considering using grammar apps.

## **GRAMMAR APPS**

The advent of Web 2.0 has led to the proliferation of apps that can be used on cell phones, computers, or other technology devices. Apps that are useful to writers are available to assist with productivity, organization, referencing, communication, and other writing problems. The following section of this article will focus on grammar checking writing apps or programs.

Before selecting a grammar app, it is important to consider your writing needs and writing approach. Ask yourself what writing challenges you face and what your writing needs are for a grammar app as the programs can vary. You will also want to select a writing app that is compatible with the technology you use.

When choosing an app, it is important to consider the following:

- What are my writing needs, i.e., what am I using this app for?
- How often will I need to use this app?
- What platform do I plan to use the app on (mobile phone, tablet, computer, web browser)?

- Does the app have the platform I need for my operating system? Mac users need to pay special attention to this question since not all app platforms are Mac compatible.
- Is it important that the app has a feature that allows me to practice grammar and writing skills and/or helps me learn from my mistakes?
- Do I plan to use the app with the Internet?
- What is the cost?
- What features are available?
- Are there tutorials or guides available to help me learn how to correct grammar problems?
- How easy is it to use?
- How accurate and comprehensive is the grammar checking?
- Am I able to make decisions about the grammar suggestions offered or are the changes automatically made to the document?
- What type of support is offered?

There are a variety of grammar checking apps available for use. Commonly used writing apps include: Grammarly, WhiteSmoke, Ginger Software, Writer's Workbench, LanguageTool, GrammarCheck, After the Deadline, Online Correction, Paper Rater, SpellCheckPlus Pro, and the Hemingway App (Singla, 2017; Skrba, 2017).

Some of these apps are free while others do have an annual cost and are available for purchase. Some of the popular apps available for purchase include Grammarly, WhiteSmoke, Writer's Workbench, and Ginger Software. Grammarly and Ginger Software have basic, free versions which are limited in features. These apps were compared by cost, platforms, interface, capabilities, features, and

support. Table 1 summarizes the comparison of the four apps. Overall, the apps meet different user needs.

	Grammarly	WhiteSmoke	Writer's Workbench	Ginger Software
Free version	Yes	No	No	Yes
Annual Cost	\$139.95 Premium version	\$89.90 Basic with mobile \$129.90 Premium with mobile	\$120 initial \$36 additional annually if upgrade is selected Extra \$15 for a disc	\$179.76 Premium
Platforms	Web browsers Windows Microsoft Office	Web browsers Windows Microsoft Office Mobile Mac OS	Microsoft Word Microsoft Windows	Web browsers Windows Mobile
Translation capability	No	Yes	No	Yes
Plagiarism detection	Premium	Premium	No	Premium
Features	Grammar Spelling Punctuation Contextual	Grammar Spelling Punctuation Contextual	Six analyses: Content, Characteristics, Verbs, Clarity, Words, and Punctuation	Grammar Spelling Punctuation Contextual
Additional premium features	Document-specific checks Sentence structure Vocabulary enhancement	Dictionary Text enrichment Document and letter templates	N/A	Sentence rephrasing Text reading Analysis of errors
Support	Grammarly Handbook available	Grammar tutorials Rating report for text	Numerous tutorials Self-tutoring resource available	Personal trainer resource available
Other	No Mac OS Basic has 24-hour limit English only	Mac OS Must be connected to the Internet	No Mac OS English only No Internet needed	No Mac OS Basic has weekly limit
Website	Grammarly.com	Whitesmoke.com	Writersworkbench.com	Gingersoftware.com

Additionally, a sample paragraph was created that contained multiple common grammatical and writing errors to compare app features. To evaluate the programs, the free or basic versions of Grammarly and Ginger Software were compared. Overall, the basic versions were very quick and did well, especially with spelling and contextual spelling errors. However, the apps did miss some other grammatical errors. For example, missing punctuation, additional punctuation, and run-on sentences were not consistently identified in the analysis. Broadly speaking, free versions of grammar checking apps seem appropriate for basic or beginner needs, but lack some advanced features. They may be useful for writers who wish to use the app as a double check for editing and proofreading. Some writers may find that the free versions meet their grammar needs, while others

may wish to purchase the more advanced versions which will allow for use of more grammar review services.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to how you will use the app, consider the cost. Will the app be used enough to justify the expense? Free, website based (WSB) only apps are a good alternative for basic or beginner needs. In these apps, you type in your paragraph directly on the app website and get instant feedback. Grammar checking features in free, website based apps are similar to the free versions of popular apps; refer to Table 1: "Features." However, WSB only apps do not have any additional platform options, such as Grammarly's free platforms for Microsoft Office, Windows, and Chrome browser extension. Below is a list of free, WSB only apps that are currently available. All you need to do is paste your text into a box on the website and get immediate feedback.

- [LanguageTool](#)
- [GrammarCheck](#)
- [After the Deadline](#)
- [Online Correction](#)
- [Paper Rater](#); also has a premium version available for \$7.95/month
- [SpellCheckPlus Pro](#)
- [Hemingway App](#); also available in a desktop version.

## OTHER GRAMMAR HELP

In addition to grammar apps, writers may also want to consider other possible grammar and writing support that may be available. If you are a Microsoft Office user, Microsoft Word has some built-in capabilities to assist you with spelling and

grammar. You can select the review tab and then select spelling and grammar to identify potential errors in your document.

Also, if you are a student, the college or university you attend may have resources that can provide writing assistance through campus writing centers or labs. These services, offered either in person or online, may vary. Typically, they provide students with individual assistance as they craft ideas and finalize writing. Speaking with someone about a paper may help to refine ideas and identify problems. Writing center staff or tutors may also be able to provide feedback on sentence-level writing concerns, citations, or formatting. Often having support from these campus services can help to instill confidence for beginning writers and improve the quality of the work.

For authors that are not students, some companies offer human proofreading and editing for a fee. Editors can be hired to review your documents and offer writing suggestions for improvement. Another option is to find a writing peer. You can exchange papers and provide editing and proofreading suggestions for each other thereby enhancing the quality of your final product. Or, consider consulting with a high school or college English teacher who can assist with editing.

For international/English as a second language (ESL) writers who struggle to use proper English grammar, they may find it helpful to seek out other editing services. One such service is offered by [Editage](#). For a fee, this company offers English-language editing and publication support. They also offer plagiarism detection and advanced and premium editing services. If relying on a paid editing service it is important to talk with others who have used this service to determine their satisfaction and recommendations.

Remember these grammar services, whether delivered in person or with an app, whether offered for free or for a fee, provide writing suggestions for your

consideration. Ultimately, it is your decision to either accept or reject these suggestions. Hopefully using such writing options will help you improve your work and increase your chances of successful publication.

## CONCLUSION

When sharing ideas, it is vital that messages are clear and error-free. Apps and other writing support can help identify writing problems, as well as teach some basic grammar and writing skills to ensure a clearly written document. Proper grammar and writing may also enhance self-efficacy and writing confidence may develop. Remember that all apps and other writing supports are helpful but are not perfect. Nothing replaces careful review and proofreading to ensure a quality paper. However, we hope the suggestions made in this paper will help authors get the support they need to write correctly and clearly.

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