Tips for Fix-it Grammar

Ask questions in this order to guide the student through the passages in Fix-it:

1) Look for prepositions and identify prepositional phrases. Remember that prepositions tell "position" in time or space (e.g., between, among, beside, before, after, above, through). They are often short words (e.g., in, on, off, to). Remember this pattern: prep + noun. Be careful about tricky verbals or infinitives that are to + verb. You might think those phrases are prepositions, but they a have a verb. Look carefully!

2) Locate all the verbs. -ing verbs don't play fair, so they usually don't count as verbs.

3) Locate the subjects. Remember that a subject is who or what is doing the action, i.e., the verb. It will be closeby, but may not be right next to the verb. Sometimes subjects are implied, as in a command (Go. Look at that. In those two sentences, "you" is the implied subject. "You go." "You look at that.")

4) Now identify clauses. Every clause must have a subject and a verb. Main clauses MC can stand by themselves as a complete sentence. Dependent clauses DC need the support of an MC. DC often starts with "who, which, that." Adverb clauses AC tell how much, when, how, to what degree. They add information to the verb and often start with special clause words "when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because" (ie, www.asia.b) as well as a few other words. Prepositional phrases can be part of your clauses. Typically clauses will "bump up" next to each other or to another component such as a CC. Sometimes you will find clauses within clauses (e.g., DC within an MC).

5) Consider punctuation. Here are a few patterns to know:
    a) AC comma MC
    b) MC AC (no comma between)
    c) MC comma CC MC (CC is coordinating conjunction. Think FANBOYS - for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
    d) Is the passage divided into sentences at the right places, or do you need to add any periods?
    e) Check for capitalization. Are any words proper nouns? Are there common nouns that are capitalized in the passage that don't need to be? (e.g., Father when not used as a title, like this: My Father called me for supper. That father should be lowercase)

6) Is anyone speaking in the passage? Add quotations around their spoken words. Place a comma before the closing quotation marks before the "He said" words (e.g., the doctor replied, the girls giggled).

7) Think about sentence openers. Examine the words at the beginning of each sentence and decide which category fits:
   a) #1 subject opener - this sentence starts with an MC
   b) #2 prepositional opener - sentence begins with a prep + noun (e.g., **In the beginning**, God created the heavens and the earth.)
   c) #3 -ly opener - sentence begins with an -ly word (e.g., Happi**ly**, she skipped along the path.)
   d) #4 -ing opener - sentence begins with an -ing word (e.g., **Skimming** through the pages of the book as quickly as possible, he looked for the single fact that he hadn't remembered during the test.)
   e) #5 www.asia opener - sentence begins with words like when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because. There are a few more words in this extensive list. e.g., **While** listening intently to the speaker, the lady lost track of time.)
   f) #6 very short sentence VSS - sentence with 1-5 words (e.g., It cracked.) This is a special #1 opener because it begins with a subject, but it has very few words in the sentence.
   g) #T opener – sentence begins with a Transition word (e.g., furthermore, then, next, moreover)
   h) #Q opener – sentence is a question (e.g., "What is his name?") – this one is super easy! Just look at the punctuation.

8) Should there be any new paragraphs in this passage? Is there a new topic, speaker, time, or place? If so, then there should be a new paragraph.

Parents need to guide their student through each day's passage in Fix-it. The particular fixes are listed at the top of the page, so the student knows what to look for, but the parent may need to provide clues to help him find where those fixes belong. Keep working at it! When done consistently, Fix-it helps the student become a great editor of his own work.