

5.4 Words - Split Infinitives and Article Errors

This program flags two points of grammar: split infinitives that may need revisions and incorrect use of articles that should be corrected.

An infinitive, which is made up of the word "to" plus a verb, may be split by a word or words inserted between the "to" and the verb. Oftentimes, the sentence would be more effective if this word(s) were moved to another location in the sentence. Sometimes, the writer intentionally splits an infinitive for a desired effect. While split infinitives are not "wrong," they should, when possible, be avoided.

The article "an" should be used before words with a vowel sound, not necessarily a vowel letter (a, e, i, o, u). The following words begin with a vowel sound: apple, evening, infant, onion, upper, hour. The article "a" should be used before words with a consonant sound. The following words begin with a consonant sound: bat, door, hat, united.

More Information

Split Infinitives

Sentence with split infinitive

Most college football players want to seriously go on to professional football.

Revision that improves sentence clarity

Most college football players seriously want to go on to professional football.

Sentence with split infinitive

It continued to silently snow.

Revision could change the picturesque sense of the sentence.

Possibly:	Silently, it continued to snow.
No:	It continued silently to snow.
No:	It continued to snow silently.

Articles

Sentence with article error

My father's flight left a hour ago. ("hour" begins with a vowel **sound**)

Revision to correct article error

My father's flight left an hour ago.

Sentence with article error

Are you going to join an union? ("union" begins with a consonant **sound**)

Revision to correct article error

Are you going to join a union?

Possible grammatical errors:

split infinitive: "to simply watch "

split infinitive: "to clearly state "

article error: "an need"

article error: "a artist"

Change to "a need"

Change to "an artist"