**Conventions Cheat Sheet / Ramsey**

**A LOT vs. “ALOT”**
- a lot = correct
- “alot” = wrong

**THERE / THEY’RE / THEIR**
- there = over there, there is
- they’re = they are
- their = belong to them

**TO / TWO / TOO**
- to = to speak, to walk; to the store
- two = 2
- too = also; in excess (“too small”)

**YOUR / YOU’RE**
- your = belongs to you
- you’re = you are

**ITS / IT’S**
- its = belongs to it
- it’s = is is; it has

**WOMAN / WOMEN**
- woman = 1
- women = more than 1

**WHERE / WERE**
- where = a location
- were = past tense of “are”

**COULD HAVE vs. COULD “OF”**
- could HAVE = correct
- could “of” = wrong

**THEN / THAN**
- then = next
- than = comparison (“more than three”)

**WHO’S / WHOSE**
- who’s = who is; who has
- whose = belongs to whom?

**FEWER / LESS**
- fewer = things you can count (“fewer molecules of air”)
- less = things you can’t count (“less air”)

**CHOOSE / CHOSE**
- choose = present and future tense (“I will choose”)
- chose = past tense (“Yesterday, I chose”)

**ACCEPT / EXCEPT**
- accept = to receive
- except = but

**WHO / THAT**
- who = people (“friends who talk”)
- that = things (“paper that’s red”)

**LOSE / LOOSE**
- lose = not have anymore (“You will lose”)
- loose = opposite of tight

**ALREADY / ALL READY**
- already = before now
- all ready = everyone or everything is ready

**“I” vs. “ME”**
- “I” vs. “me”: ignore people next to the “I” and “me,” then listen: “Give that pen to my friend and ME.”
AFFECT / EFFECT
- affect = alter ("Climate change will affect all of us")
- effect = outcome ("What’s the effect of this change?")

EVERYDAY / EVERY DAY
- everyday = common, normal, ordinary
- every day = each day

DEFIANT / DEFINITE
- defiant = going against authority
- definite = for sure; specific

PRINCIPAL
- principal = person in charge of school

ALL RIGHT vs. “ALRIGHT”
- all right = correct
- “alright” = wrong

“DAD” vs. “dad”
- “Dad” vs. “dad”: capitalize when using instead of his NAME: “When will you be here, Dad?”

COMMAS
- after introductory phrases: “Well, I don’t know.”
- to separate three or more items in a series: “I can walk, talk, and chew gum.”
- before and after interrupting elements: “An advisor, who is usually a professor, can help you.”
- before “so,” “or,” “but,” and “and” when using these “SOBAs” to pull together two full sentences: “I walked to school, and I looked around.” (NO comma here: “I walked to school and looked around.”)
- between adjectives when they can switch places and the sentence still makes sense: “I saw tall, leafy trees.”

SEMICOLONS
- use semicolons (;) to pull together two complete sentences: “I ate a lot; I was hungry.”

COMMA AND PERIOD PLACEMENT
- commas and periods go inside end quotation marks unless you’re doing parenthetical documentation for a research paper

COLONS
- colons (:) go after complete sentences: “I bought three things: eggs, milk, and bread.”

QUESTION MARK PLACEMENT
- question marks go inside end quotation marks when the words inside quotation marks are a question: He asked, “Who’s at the door?”
- question marks go outside end quotation marks when the words inside quotation marks are NOT a question: Who said, “I’m quite late”?

APOSTROPHES
- use apostrophes for contractions (can’t, wouldn’t, don’t)
- use an apostrophe THEN an “s” for singular possession: “My cat has a tail. That’s my cat’s tail.”
- use an “s” THEN an apostrophe for plural possession: “My two cats have tails. Those are my cats’ tails.”