DIRECTIONS: Read the following article, which contains many terrible mistakes. Then follow the prompts in the box on p. 23.

1. Dude, let’s face it: You haven’t spent a lot of time thinking about where the word dude came from. Probably some ’80s movie your parents are into, right? Nope. You can also rule out the world of surfers, The Simpsons, and dude ranches (ranches that double as vacation spots). Of course, staying at a dude ranch seems like fun, especially if you like horses. Believe it or not, the word dude is more than a century old.

2. How do we know? Having spent the past 10 years trying to unearth the origin of dude, ask Barry Popik and Gerald Cohen. Poring over hundreds of 19th-century magazines and newspapers looking for references to dudes, their research was intense. They wrote up what they discovered in a 129-page paper on the history of dude, and are now the official dude experts of—well, pretty much the world.

3. Popik and Cohen believe dude is most likely a shortening of the word doodle, as in Yankee Doodle Dandy (of calling-a-feather-macaroni fame). A dandy is someone who’s excessively devoted to style
and fashion; for reasons nobody is sure of, in New York city during the late 1800s, these stylish young men were called doodles. *Dude*, a variation of *Doodle*, soon took over. (Incidentally, lady dudes of the 1800s were referred to not as *dudettes*, but as *dudines*.)

*Dude* is hardly the only common slang word with a wacky history. You’ve probably heard the word *blockbuster* used to describe a movie that’s a smashing success, but you might be surprised to learn that the original blockbuster was a literal smash—a type of huge bomb that the British dropped on German cities during World War II. Blockbuster bombs were so named because they were big enough to level an entire city block. After the War, the term caught on among advertisers, journalists, and the public as a way of describing hugely successful plays and movies.

Weirdly enough, *OMG* also has a military origin. It first showed up in 1917, in a letter to future British Prime Minister Winston Churchill written by a 75-year-old retired British admiral named John Arbuthnot “Jacky” Fisher, First Baron Fisher of Kilverstone. (With a name like that, no wonder he was into abbreviations.) Why on Earth would an elderly naval officer be the person behind it? In those days, ships communicated with each other primarily through Morse code, a system that replaces each letter of the alphabet with a series of lights or clicks—kind of like very low-tech text messaging. Spelling out words in Morse code is a painstaking process, so they got into the habit of using abbreviations. But after its first usage, *OMG* practically disappeared—until the 1990s, when it became popular with the growth of the Internet.

Who knows dude? Maybe some of the words you use today will take on a whole new meaning in 50 years!

FIND IT/FIX IT

**DIRECTIONS:** Can you find the following errors in the article and fix them? Write the answers on your own paper.

**Paragraph 1:** Dude, there is a sentence in this paragraph that doesn’t belong. It is extraneous, or irrelevant. Cross that dude out.

**Paragraph 2:** What this paragraph needs is an expert on modifiers. (Modifiers are words or phrases that add description.) Please rewrite two sentences to correct the dangling modifiers.

**Paragraphs 3 & 4:** What is up with all the capitalization mistakes? Fix six errors, please.

**Paragraph 5:** Two of the pronouns in this paragraph are ambiguous—that is, it’s hard to tell which nouns they refer to. Please fix them.

**Paragraph 6:** One comma has gone missing. Please add it.