

**Guidelines for Writing**  
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Although not an exhaustive list, these are some common errors found on student papers.

1. NEVER hand in a paper before running it through spell-check first.
2. Run a grammar check next. This should identify all of the sentence fragments, incomplete sentences, and lack of agreement between subject and verb. If the answers seem really odd, ignore them—they aren't always correct, and they certainly aren't a substitute for good editorial judgement.
3. Hunt for the following mistakes and expunge them from your paper. I suggest you do edit: *find: replace* first.
  - *your* is a possessive pronoun (this is *your* paper)—if you mean to say you're (you are), spell it out. *Your going to get an F if you write like this.*
  - Whose is a possessive pronoun (*Whose* paper is this?)—if you want to say who's (who is), spell it out.
  - *Their* is a possessive pronoun. There is an adverb. *They're* is a contraction for *they are*. *He is over their* (*wrong, F*); *There paper was poor.* (*wrong, F*); *They're paper wasn't any better.* (*wrong, F*)
  - Company's is possessive—companies is plural.
  - *Manufactures* is a verb. *Manufacturers* is a noun. *Manufacturer's* is the possessive. Learn the difference!
  - *Too* is excess, too much (*Professor Myers is too picky*). *To* precedes an infinitive (he has to go).
  - *Its* is a possessive (the only one without an apostrophe—*its* name is Striker). *It's* is a contraction of *it is*. Spell it out if you have trouble. *Its'* is not a structure in English and will get a zero for your grade if used.
  - Truly has no "e".
  - *Compliment* means to say something nice. *Complement* means goes well with. (Salt and pepper complement a good meal.)
  - *Then* is time related. *Than* is comparative. *He is smarter than I am* (*never "he is smarter then I am"*)
  - *Affect* is a verb. (Lack of participation will *affect* my grade.) *Effect* is a noun. (Cloudy weather has a negative *effect* on me.)
  - *Lose* is a verb (I need to *lose* some weight.) *Loose* is an adjective (My lizard is *loose* in the dorm again.)
  - *Choose* is present tense, *chose* is past tense.
  - *Yields*—remember "i before e except after c"
  - Learn to use apostrophes correctly—they indicate a possessive or contraction, NOT plurals.
  - NEVER start a sentence with *and*, *but*, *though*, or *the reason being*. These introduce clauses, not sentences.
4. Read your paper aloud to see how it sounds. Eliminate run-on sentences and put commas in places where you pause.