

## Memorandum

To: Technical Writing II  
From: Joseph Baruch  
Date: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
Subject: Project 1

---

I have completed the analysis of my prior writing as requested. I chose to analyze a paper I wrote for ENGL 102 at the University of Idaho titled *Stop the Growth of College Tuition Cost*. In this analysis, I break down the prose guidelines of being concise, precise and direct. Additionally, I analyze my essay for noticeable grammar errors.

**Being Concise:** To be concise means to be brief yet comprehensive.

**Unnecessary Repetition.** Unnecessary repetition is when words or phrases are repeating information for no reason. In my essay, with the attempt to be more dramatic, I often repeated the meaning of statements.

It is far too expensive, and the price is still increasing too. The effects of increased college cost cause many problems to a widespread group people.

In this example, I repeat themes of cost and the word “increase”. This section could be improved by saying, “Tuition is already far too expensive, and it continues to rise, creating problems for a wide range of people.”

**Redundant Words and Phrases.** Redundant words and phrases repeat the meaning of another word or phrase. I repeat this mistake many times throughout my essay. The following example I found makes this highly visible.

Everything in society, is run by money. Everything inside any business, non-profit, household, care facility, etc. is run by money, wither we like it or not.

The first sentence is briefer than the second, but they both mean the same things. This could be improved by saying, “Money drives every part of society — from businesses and non-profits to households and care facilities, whether we like it or not.”. This option does not repeat “is run by money”; removing the redundant phrase.

**Dead phrases.** Dead phrases are phrases that add little or no meaning. These phrases aren't as common as the previous conciseness errors, but they are present.

As stated above, the cost of tuition (which feed into these endowments) has been growing faster than the rate of inflation.

The phrase, "As stated above", adds no additional meaning to the paper or this sentence. This sentence should be changed to, "The cost of tuition (which feed into these endowments) has been growing faster than the rate of inflation."

**Unnecessary modifiers.** In technical writing, unnecessary modifiers indicate being vague when you need to be more specific. They often do not add any additional meaning either. I used these many times in my essay to potentially be more dramatic, but it comes off as uneducated.

"This is a pressing problem that needs to be solved and well understood before its impact becomes too great to heal."

"Pressing" and "too great" both exaggerate and makes the sentence feel like I'm trying to win the audience without providing any additional value. This sentence can be re-worded to, *"This problem must be solved and understood before its impact becomes irreversible."*

**Being Precise:** To be precise means to be exact and accurate. In technical writing, how precise you need to be is based on the audience.

**Appropriate Terminology for Audience.** To have a proper argument, technical writing focuses on an appropriate audience by using correct terminology. Audiences with a low-level of technical expertise need less precise terminology and vice versa. In my essay, I did a good job of this in some places, but poorly in others.

This solution has a lot of benefits to all people.

The phrase “a lot” is not precise enough for the audience. It does not provide any detail to how much the solution would benefit the people. The improved phrase would be, “This solution offers significant benefits for a wide range of people.”

**Consistent Terminology.** Writing precise technical language involves keeping terminology consistent. Although, this may seem like unnecessary repetition, it serves the purpose of expressing consistency to the reader.

This is a common problem associated with many arts degrees across the nation. For the most part, there is a need for many stem degrees across the nation that are not being met with as many of the stem degrees graduating from college.

Instead of using STEM and non-STEM degree, I used stem and art degree. These should be changed for consistency.

**Level of Specifics and Detail.** Matching the specifics and details to the audience is also important. Overall, my essay had many themes that were at the level it needed for introductory college classes. There were some slip ups worth note.

As said previously, this is extremely sad and disappointing.

This sentence is extremely emotional and not specific enough. The meaning of sad and disappointing are highly subjective, which does not belong in technical writing.

**Being Direct:** To be direct means to get to the point without embellishment and free from ambiguity.

**Active Verbs.** Active verbs are specific and reveal analytical thinking, unlike “lazy” verbs which do the opposite. Here is an example:

Education **is** possibly the most important aspect of the future.

Using “is” this way is very common in my essay and is lazy. This sentence should be rephrased to be, “Education may shape the most important aspects of the future.” This sentence is more direct and uses “shape” which is a more active verb.

**Active vs. Passive Voicing.** Active voice is when the subject comes before the verb to show it is performing the action, while passive voice places the subject after the verb to show it receiving the action. In my essay, I do an overall good job of this but there are exceptions. For example:

This problem is not leveling out; the cost of tuition is increasing year after year.

This isn't active and strong. It could be re-worded to have more of a strong effect on the reader. Additionally, it fails the "for zombies" test. If you place, "for zombies" at the end of the sentence above, the sentence makes sense. Therefore, it is passive.

**Topic Sentence.** Topic sentences provide context for a section of text. I do a great job of this with no errors. Each paragraph has a topic sentence.

**Stress Position.** The stress position is at the end of sentences. This is where readers tend to put emphasis and expect important information. This happens throughout my essay.

...anyone that wishes will be able to pursue post-secondary education and not have to pay for it with the stress and burden of excessive student-loan debt.

The main theme of this sentence is post-secondary education being too expensive so adding the comments on stress and burden distract from the main theme. This sentence should be rephrased to, “...anyone that wishes will be able to pursue post-secondary education and not have to pay for it.”

## Noticeable Error

After reviewing my essay, there was not a noticeable amount of errors for comma splices, introductory element punctuation, faulty parallel structure, and incorrect contractions, spelling, or typos. Although I did find an example of a run-on sentence which should be corrected:

Few but here is an example: Being aware of this problem will result in a time and age where anyone that wishes will be able to pursue post-secondary education and not have to pay for it with the stress and burden of excessive student-loan debt.

**Conclusion.** After analyzing my essay, I found the foundation to be strong but the essay contained many prose and grammar mistakes including unnecessary repetition, redundant phrases, vague modifiers, and occasional passive voice. I also noted inconsistencies in terminology and imprecise language. Moving forward, I will focus on using active verbs, consistent terminology, and precise word choice to make my writing more clear, direct, and professional.