

Guidelines/grading criteria for your written work

1. Unacceptable mistakes

According to the conventions of the English language, most of the mistakes you make are simply unacceptable and impede understanding. Moreover, they concern aspects of the English language with which you should already be thoroughly acquainted, and are easily correctable.

If you make mistakes of this type, then your grade will suffer severely. You will not receive better than a D or C. You might even receive an F – as mistakes such as these show a general carelessness – depending on their severity and consistency.

Examples

- Verb tense: the past, present, future, etc.
- Subject-verb agreement
- Punctuation: the correct use of periods, commas, colons, semi-colons, quotation marks, etc.
- Pronouns: the correct use of different types of pronouns
- Format: The format of book, article, show, movie, etc. titles – *italicizing* versus using “quotation marks.”
- Indent new paragraphs rather than adding a space between different paragraphs.
- Comma splices: don’t do it!!!
- When to capitalize what: the pronoun “I,” proper names, cities, regions, acronyms, places, languages, etc.
- Spell check is your friend. Use it!!!
- When to put spaces where: between words, after periods, commas, colons, etc.
- Double versus single quotations marks: You generally use “double quotation marks,” and ‘single quotation marks’ inside of double quotations marks – this concerns a difference in convention between UK and US English.
- One-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font
- Name and class information in the top corner of the paper

2. Acceptable mistakes

Mistakes of this type are either more difficult to correct, or concern material that is the focus of this course. You are expected to become better at not making mistakes of this type through practice. Grappling with issues such as the following will put you in the B to A range.

Examples

- The use of prepositions and prepositions with verbs
- Correct article usage
- Word placement: where to place subjects, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. in a sentence
- Parallelism: “I enjoy reading, writing, and cycling.”
- Paragraphs: their elements, how to organize them, etc.
- Correctly arranging elements of sentences: clauses, phrases, etc.
- When and where to use the active versus the passive voice
- The content of your written work