

Common Markings

Sp? or word circled = spelling error

Huh? = this sentence is so convoluted that I am afraid to hazard a guess what it means.

Common errors

1. What is the main point of the report? Is it a methods paper, a comparison between theory and experiment, experimental discovery, or theoretical development? The title should indicate the primary focus (what you are supposed to get out of it) of the report.
2. Can it or can it not be? It either is or isn't, there is no can.
3. Be specific. Don't use vague words such as small, large, some, few, etc. Just state the actual number or range.
4. Poor word choice/incorrect word or odd word choice. Does the word meaning really fit?
5. Appendices need to be mentioned in the body of the report. Plus, all appendices need an introductory paragraph describing what is in the appendix.
6. Enough with the prepositional phrases. If too many phrases follow each other it is confusing as to what noun each phrase is modifying. Also, is the modifier misplaced? Is it modifying the word it is supposed to?
7. Can the proposed errors be quantified? Do we know how much of an effect these would have on the results? A few %, 50%, 100%?
8. The word "allowed" implies permission was granted. Permission isn't granted by inanimate objects.
9. Call out figures and tables in the report body as Figure X at the start of a sentence and Fig. X within a sentence. Tables are always Table X. Discuss in the report body what the figure/table is showing. Figures and Tables should be numbered (1,2,3...) as they appear in the report. You do not need to say a figure or table is below or above. It has a number, use it. The text describing a figure/table is located before the figure/table appears in the report.
10. What is the main point of the figure/table?
11. And the point of this is? Every sentence, paragraph, and section should have a point.
12. You are implying that the subject in the sentence is doing something when it actually can't do anything because it is an inanimate object.
13. Casual speak. Not really professional phrasing. The word "you" should never occur in a report.
14. The use of hard words (never, always, etc.) should be avoided.
15. Are the results within error?
16. Inappropriate use of significant figures. Can you really measure a value to the precision implied by the number significant figures reported?
17. Redundant. Combine these sentences/sections
18. Don't abbreviate, spell out.
19. Proper citation of reference is needed.

20. Obvious to the point of being meaningless. Irrelevant comment.
21. Verb tense or verb/noun mix up.
22. Number every equation and put equation on its own line.
23. See previous figure/table for same comments.
24. Define variables/terms
25. Label figure
26. Meaningless detail. The information provided is expected.
27. This is written as instructions. It should be what you did.
28. Cite reference where equation was developed.
29. If equation is following sentence it is mentioned in, it doesn't need to be called out in that sentence.
30. Procedures are not presented as bullet points. Use paragraph form.
31. Describe equation presented with words.
32. Specify accuracy of measured variables, how the value is being measured, and what the measurement was (possible range?)
33. Summary/conclusion should not include Figures and detailed discussion.
34. Grammar/syntax error
35. Wordy
36. Unnecessary detail. Is it relevant to reproducing the results?
37. Are these details (or is this level of detail) necessary to reproduce the results?
38. Figure/table issues
 - a. No figure caption or insufficient figure caption. The figure caption should include the key points of the figure to be noticed. A figure caption is required for every figure and should be located below the figure and start with "Figure X. *caption here*".
 - b. No Table caption or insufficient table caption. A table caption is required for every table and should be located above the table and start with "Table X. *caption here*"
 - c. Legend should be inside the plot area and the graph expanded so that it is easier to read.
 - d. Data points are not connected with lines. Theory and computational results are given by lines.
 - e. Missing or non-descript axis label. Further detail is needed to completely define the axis.
 - f. Units needed on the figure axis or if present an alternate unit would be better (for example instead of having 0.0008 on the axis with meters as the unit use 0.8 with millimeters-mm as the unit.)
 - g. Title is unnecessary as it is redundant with the figure caption. If a title is included it should be unique. Usually titles are only necessary when you have multiple plots in a single figure.
 - h. If more than one data set, or more than one item (data, computation, theory) is being shown on a figure, a legend is required to identify separate data, theory, or computations.

- i. Adjust the axis range so that the graph shows the actual region of interest of the data. Don't waste valuable space.
- j. Variables or abbreviations are used in the figure but not defined. It is best not to use a variable/abbreviation but to spell out a parameter/term. For example don't use μ but write out viscosity. μ may have different meanings to different readers.
- k. Axis labels should not run through the middle of the plot. Put labels on the side and bottom of the plot.
- l. No border around the entire figure
- m. Font or data points are too small. They need to be bigger. Font should be 10pt and symbols should be large enough to see easily.
- n. If a curve fit is applied to data then the fit (curve equation and R^2 value) is included; you wouldn't be showing the curve fit if it wasn't important.
- o. Symbols should be distinct and visible at all times. Use open symbols if data falls on top on each other because a filled square will completely cover a filled triangle or diamond.