

Essay Corrections for literary analysis

In order to improve your writing, you must learn to fix the mistakes you are making so that you will not continue to commit the same errors. The numbers/letters I wrote on your essay correspond to the explanation of the errors below.

Directions:
Number all of the marked errors on your paper for both grammar and content issues. Then, on a sheet of binder paper, work through each of your errors by writing the rule you violated and show me what you would need to do to correct the error. You do NOT need to rewrite the entire essay. Instead, write the rule and isolate/fix the error. These handwritten corrections are due tomorrow, along with your original graded essay.

Grammar Codes

1. Misspelled word. Write the correct spelling of the word 10 times on your paper. And, yes, those of you who misspelled the same word, say, 17 times will need to write the correct spelling of that word 170 times.
2. Comma error – You have either left out a needed comma or added one where it doesn't belong.
 - 2a. Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. (FANBOYS)
 - 2b. Use commas to separate items in a series (Ex: I like pears, apples, and oranges.)
 - 2c. Use a comma between two adjectives of a similar meaning or tone used to describe the same noun.
Ex: The yard was full of romping, running children.
 - 2d. Use a comma to set off introductory elements.
Ex: Screaming for help, the girl wrestled the raging bear.
 - 2e. Use commas to set off the explainers of the direct quotation.
Ex: The girl sighed, "Just go without me."
 - 2f. Use a comma to prevent misreading.
Ex: Ever since, Frank has been a better boy. vs. Ever since Frank has been a little boy (fragment)
 - 2g. Do not use unnecessary commas.
 - 2h. Semicolons are fancy periods, not fancy commas. Do not use them in place of a comma.
3. Sentence fragment. A sentence must have a subject and a predicate. Your sentence is incomplete.
4. Comma-splice and/or Run-on. You've joined two or more independent clauses without proper punctuation.
Incorrect: I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast.
Correct: I got up late this morning. I didn't have time for breakfast.
Also correct: I got up late this morning, so I didn't have time for breakfast.
Also correct: I got up late this morning; I didn't have time for breakfast.
Also correct: Since I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast.
5. An apostrophe is in the wrong place and/or missing.
 - 5a. Use an apostrophe to form the possessive of nouns and indefinite pronouns.
 - 5b. "It's" only ever means "it is." The possessive form of "it" is "its."
Incorrect: It's feet are bruised, so it cannot walk.
Correct: Its feet are bruised, so it cannot walk.
Incorrect: Its going to rain today.
Correct: It's going to rain today.
 - 5c. Use an apostrophe to form the possessive of plural noun ending in "s."
Ex: It was my parents' decision.
6. Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.
7. Avoid needless shifts in verb tense. Verb tense shifting confuses your reader.
8. Pronoun-antecedent agreement error. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender, person, and number. Most of these errors are fixed by turning the antecedent into a plural form to match a plural pronoun.
9. Use parallel construction to create a smooth flow.
Incorrect: He liked to play basketball and riding horses.
Correct: He liked playing basketball and riding horses.
10. Title was mishandled. Titles of major works (novels, plays, long poems, etc.) are underlined in handwritten essays and italicized on typed essays. Titles of minor works (short stories, poems, songs, etc.) are placed within quotation marks on both handwritten and typed essays. The title of your own original essay is only capitalized. Since your essay hasn't been published, it doesn't receive quotes, underlining, or italics.
11. Avoid ALL contractions! Unless you are directly quoting another text, avoid using contractions such as *don't*, *won't*, *can't*, *isn't*, and *its*. Instead, use *do not*, *will not*, *cannot*, *is not*, etc.
12. Avoid repeating the same idea or word. There are two types of repetition, which you should try to avoid in essays: ideas or arguments important words or phrases. Repeating ideas or arguments suggests that you have not thought enough about the question and its implications. You are not offering enough **substance** in your response. The solution to this problem is to generate more ideas at the planning stage. A well-constructed plan will help you to avoid duplicating your arguments - because you should be able to see the topic defined in your notes.

Content Codes

- A. Avoid chopppiness in your writing. You likely have stacked several short sentences, used the same sentence starter, or left out crucial transitions.
- B. Omit unnecessary words. This section is fluff or filler or just taking up space without saying anything new. Get to the point, already.
- C. Stick to third-person pronouns. You've slipped unnecessary first- or second-person pronouns into your writing and have, therefore, hurt the power of your essay. Avoid these words: I, me, my, we, us, our, you, your.
- D. Never, ever, ever ask a question in a formal essay. Rhetorical questions are a sign that the writer doesn't really know his/her mind. Instead, make bold, powerful statements.
- E. Avoid clichés, tired phrases, and/or slang. This is formal writing, so use formal language while still keeping it fresh.
- F. Avoid ending with "to be" verb forms or prepositions. Ending a sentence with these types of words creates a too-casual tone for formal writing. Avoid this by using more polished word choices and/or sentence structures.
- G. Confused or contradictory language. I've read this passage three times and I still don't understand what you're trying to say.
- H. Avoid unsure language ("may," "might," etc.) in formal writing; it makes you sound as though you are not sure of what you are writing about and robs your essay of its power. Such words lead to wishy-washy writing.
- I. All literary analysis is written in present tense.
- J. You are far too dependent on plot summary instead of providing unique, thoughtful analysis.
- K. Weak analysis. You aren't thinking deeply enough here. You're either just repeating an earlier point you made, you've given strange/off-topic analysis that doesn't really connect to your thesis, or you've played it safe and provided analysis that anyone who read the story could provide. Instead, you must dig deeper in your thinking and provide unique, compelling analysis.
- L. Frame the quote. Do not slap a quote into a body paragraph without providing the proper framing structure, including a transition and lead-in.
- M. All material from the text (whether quoted or paraphrased) must be cited in proper M.L.A. format. You have either neglected to include your citation or you have improperly formatted your citation. Also, your essay might be missing the Works Cited page at the end of the essay. M.L.A. citation is not complete without the Works Cited page.
- N. Weak/Missing topic sentence.
- O. Don't assume the reader knows the story. You need to fill in the story or character background so that someone who doesn't know the story will still be able to understand. Assume your Aunt Mildred from Iowa is reading this essay. Would she understand what you're talking about?
- P. Avoid empty flattery. Telling me that the author uses "marvelous" imagery or "excellent" symbols is no substitute for actual analysis of that imagery or symbolism.
- WC. Word choice: Look in a thesaurus and choose a more descriptive word or you may have chosen the wrong word

