Common Assignments across the Curriculum
Writing in College
Informative Reports
Understanding the assignment
Approaching writing an informative report as a process
Interpretive Analyses and Writing about Literature
Understanding the assignment
Approaching writing an interpretive analysis as a process
Arguments
Understanding the assignment
Approaching writing an argument as a process
Other Kinds of Assignments
Personal essays
Lab reports in the experimental sciences
Case studies in the social sciences
Essay exams
Oral presentations
Coauthored projects
Portfolios
Designing Documents for Page and Screen
Getting margins, spacing, type, and page numbers right
Thinking intentionally about design
Using and integrating visuals
Designing pages for the Web
Researching
Understanding the Purpose of Research Projects
Understanding primary and secondary research
Recognizing the connection between research and college writing
Choosing an interesting research question
Creating a research plan
Finding Print and Online Sources
Consulting sources
Using the library
Searching the Internet
Evaluating Your Sources
Print sources
Internet sources
Evaluating a source’s arguments
Conducting Research in the Archive, Field, and Lab
Adhering to ethical principles
Preparing for archival research
Planning your field research
Keeping a notebook when doing lab research
Working with Sources and Avoid Plagiarism
Maintaining a working bibliography
Note taking, paraphrasing, and summarizing
Avoiding plagiarism and copyright infringement
Taking stock
Writing the Paper
Planning and drafting
Integrating quotations, paraphrases and summaries
Documenting your sources
Discipline-Specific Resources in the Library and on the Internet
MLA Documentation Style
MLA Style: In-Text Citations MLA In-Text Citations: Directory to Sample Types
MLA Style: List of Works Cited MLA Works-Cited Entries: Directory to Sample Types
MLA Style: Explanatory Notes
MLA Style: Paper Format
Pages from a Student Paper in MLA Style
APA Documentation Style
APA Style: In-Text Citations APA In-Text Citations: Directory to Sample Types
APA Style: References APA In-Text Citations: Directory to Sample Types
APA Style: Paper Format
Pages from a Student Paper in APA Style
Other Documentation Styles
Chicago Documentation Style Chicago Style: Directory to Sample Note and Bibliography Entries
CSE Documentation Style CSE Name-Year Style: Directory to Sample Reference-List Entries CSE Number Style: Directory to Sample Reference-List Entries
Editing for Clarity
Avoid Wordiness
Redundancies and unnecessary modifiers
Wordy phrases
Roundabout sentences
Add Missing Words
Compound structures
The word that
Words in comparisons
The articles a, an, the
Unscramble Mixed Constructions
Mixed-up grammar
Illogical predicates
Fix Confusing Shifts
Shifts in point of view
Shifts in tense
Shifts in mood and voice
Use Parallel Construction
Items in a series
Paired ideas
Fix Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers
Misplaced modifiers
Ambiguous modifiers
Disruptive modifiers
Split infinitives
Dangling modifiers
Use Coordination and Subordination Effectively
Coordination used for ideas of unequal importance
Major ideas in subordinate clauses
Excessive subordination
Vary Your Sentences
Sentence openings
Sentence length and structure
Cumulative and periodic sentences
An occasional inversion, a rhetorical question, or an exclamation
Choose Active Verbs
Alternatives to be verbs
The active voice
Use Appropriate Language
Slang, regional expressions, and nonstandard English
Levels of formality
Jargon
Euphemisms and doublespeak
Biased or sexist language
Use Exact Language
Connotations
Specific and concrete words
Standard idioms
Clichés
Figures of speech
Misusing words
Glossary of Usage
Editing for Grammar Conventions
Fix Sentence Fragments
Dependent-clause fragments
Phrase fragments
Other types of fragments
Repair Comma Splices and Run-on Sentences
Joining two clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction such as and or but
Joining two clauses with a semicolon
Separating clauses into two sentences
Turning one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause
Transforming two clauses into one independent clause
Maintain Subject-Verb Agreement
When a word group separates the subject from the verb
Compound subjects
Collective subjects
Indefinite subjects
When the subject comes after the verb
Subject complement
Relative pronouns
Phrases beginning with ing verbs
Titles of works, names of companies, or words representing themselves
Master Problems with Verbs
Regular and irregular verbs
Lay and lie, sit and set, rise and raise
Adding an or es ending
Adding a or ed ending
Use of the past perfect tense
Uses of the present tense
Complete verbs
Mood
Master Problems with Pronouns
Pronoun agreement
Pronoun reference
Pronoun case
Who and whom
Master Problems with Adjectives and Adverbs
Adverbs
Adjectives
Positive, comparative, and superlative adjectives and adverbs
Double negatives
Watch for Problems with English Grammar of Special Concern to Multilingual Writers
Using articles (a, an, the) appropriately
Using helping verbs with main verbs
Using complete subjects and verbs
Using only one subject or object

Editing for Correctness: Punctuation, Mechanics, and Spelling

Commas
After an introductory word group
Between items in a series
In front of a coordinating conjunction joining independent clauses
Between coordinate adjectives
To set off nonessential elements
With transitional and parenthetical expressions, contrasting comments, and absolute phrases
To set off words of direct address, yes and no, mild interjections, and tag questions

To separate a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence
With dates, addresses, titles, and numbers
To take the place of an omitted word or phrase or to prevent misreading

Common errors

Semicolons
To join independent clauses
With transitional expressions that separate independent clauses
To separate items in a series when the items contain commas

Common errors

Colons
To introduce lists, appositives, or quotations
When a second independent clause elaborates on the first one
Other conventional uses

Common errors

Apostrophes
To indicate possession
With indefinite pronouns
To mark contractions
To form plural numbers, letters, abbreviations, and words used as words

Common errors

Quotation Marks
To indicate direct quotation

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