



The Workshop: Critique of Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, and Format

Directions: Use the instructions on this sheet with your writer's workshop critique group to take a closer look at the grammar, mechanics, spelling, and format. Then staple this sheet to the back of the essay.

Step 1: Setting the Tone for the Group

Introduce yourselves and trade papers. Remember that all criticism should be constructive and specific, and that all compliments should be genuine and specific.

Step 2: Identifying Grammar Crimes

After reviewing the Grammar Crimes Hot Sheet, check for any grammar crimes that you can identify. Circle them and mark them with the number of each grammar crime. The most common grammar crimes are #6 and #12. There/their/they're (#11) and you/you're (#10) are also common problems.

Step 3: Noticing Mechanics and Spelling

Scan for spelling mistakes, misuse of punctuation, or anything else that you question may not be correct. Circle anything that you question. Does it look like the writer used spellcheck? If not, you might mention that he/she should use spellcheck before printing a draft.

Step 4: Checking the Format

Read the following questions about the paper. Check the ones for which the answer is yes.

Format: Overall

- Is the paper typed?
- Is the paper double-spaced?
- Is each paragraph indented? Is the indent only 5 spaces in length? (using the TAB key helps)

Format: The Paper

- Is the MLA heading on the left?
- Is the MLA heading in this order: student's name, teacher's name, class name, date? (see box for example)
- Is the name in normal order: John Smith?
- Did the student spell the teacher's name correctly?
- Did the student spell the class name correctly? (Writer's Workshop)
- Is the date in MLA format: 30 September 2014 (date month year, with no commas)?
- Is the prompt printed out at the top of the essay (below the header and title, but before the essay starts)?
- Does the paper have a title? Is the title underlined (if so, don't!)? Are all the big words capitalized?
- Is the header set up so that the student's last name and the page number are at the top right of each page?
- If the prompt has other requirements for formatting, does the paper follow the formatting requirements?
- If the prompt requires a word count, is the word count indicated at the end of the essay?
Word Count = 503 (example)