

Common Writing Errors

Your paper may contain several kinds of writing errors which are easily corrected by proofreading and revising. When reviewing your paper, ask yourself if the following problems are evident:

Awkward or confusing expressions

- Avoid wordy phrases, clichés, and slang

Capitalization problems

- In general, do not capitalize adjectives unless they are part of a title. Ex: Bible but not biblical, Premillennialism but not premillennial (Rule 24.6)
- Pronouns referring to deity should not be capitalized unless they start a sentence (Rule 24.6)

Lack of external support for statements

- Three reasons to use external support (Rule 15.1):
 - (1) To assure readers of the accuracy of your facts
 - (2) To show readers the research tradition that informs your work
 - (3) To help readers follow or extend your research

Improper citations

- Citations are necessary when quoting exact words from a source; paraphrasing ideas associated with a specific source; or using any idea, data, or method attributable to any source you consulted (Rule 15.2.1)

Insufficient or lack of bibliographic data

- Information required (Rule 15.2.2)
 - Author, editor, and/or translator
 - Data identifying the text: title and subtitle of the work; title of the journal, collection, or series; volume number, edition number, etc; page numbers, other locating information
 - Who published the text and when: name of publisher, place and date of publication
 - Where the text can be found: URL or name of database for online sources, place of housing for one-of-a-kind collections

Misplaced or dangling modifiers

- Make sure that adjectives are coupled with the nouns they modify
Incorrect: I ate a **cold** dish of **oatmeal** this morning.
Correct: I ate a dish of **cold oatmeal** this morning.
- For more help: <https://webapps.towson.edu/ows/moduleDangling.htm>

Improper page numbering (Rule A.1.4)

- Should be placed in upper right corner, 0.75 inches from the top
- Title page should not be numbered
- Reference list pages continue the numbering of the body of the paper

Incomplete sentences, fragments, or run-on sentences

- For more help, consult the "Fragments and Run-on Sentences" handout

Subject/verb disagreement

- Subject must agree with the verb in number (singular versus plural) and person (first, second, or third)

Noun/pronoun disagreement

- Do not use a plural pronoun for a singular noun and vice versa.
Incorrect: A **teacher** should always keep **their** students engaged.
Correct: A **teacher** should always keep **his or her** students engaged.
Correct: **Teachers** should always keep **their** students engaged

Punctuation problems

- For more help, consult the "Punctuation Guide" handout

Rhetorical weaknesses

- **Ethos:** Are you presenting your material and yourself as reliable sources?
- **Pathos:** Are you evoking appropriate emotions to persuade?
- **Logos:** Is your argument logical?

Spelling problems & wrong words/use of words

- Beware of homonyms (consult the "What Are Homonyms?" handout)

Split infinitives

- Sometimes unavoidable, but it is best to keep the infinitive marker "to" together with the verb

Turabian errors

- Consult the CU Turabian guide:
https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://www.calvary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2015-Style-Guide-Calvary-University.pdf&hl=en_US
- Papers emailed to learning@calvary.edu to be reviewed by a tutor

Typos

- An error made by every human

Unnecessary repetitions

- Avoiding rephrasing ideas/words using synonyms. Once is enough.

Verb tense disagreement

- Using two or more verb tenses in the same sentence when the dependent clause takes place in the same time as the main clause.
Incorrect: When she **is living** in Japan, she **ate** with chopsticks.
Correct: When she **is living** in Japan, she **eats** with chopsticks.
Correct: When she **lived** in Japan, she **ate** with chopsticks

Weak content

- Can be a result of inadequate research, unnecessary repetitions, or lack of fully developed thoughts

If you would like to improve your writing and reduce these kinds of errors, bring your paper in to the Clark Academic Center and review it with a tutor.