

About Your Graded Papers – Paper #1

Some things you may see on your paper:

Word circled or underlined – indicates a problem (explained in margin). Might be misspelled or wrong tense or wrong pronoun or repetitive

Rep – repetitive

WC – Word Choice problem – wrong word or phrase – doesn't fit with rest of sentence

RO or FRAG – Run-on sentence or sentence fragment – a serious sentence boundary problem

Unclear or ? – I wasn't sure what the sentence or the underlined part meant (usually accompanied by questions in the margin)

Tense river – series of circled verbs connected by lines – points out tense shifts

Tips for Improving Writing

When each graded paper is returned to you, we will go over writing tips—a few on this paper, a few more on each additional paper. You need to pay attention to them because I will expect you to begin correcting these problems on future papers.

Content

Be sure you have done what the assignment asks for (for instance, did you include a 1-2 sentence brief summary before the first paragraph of your longer summary?)

Style

Wordiness is a problem with young writers. Have you stated things as clearly and as simply as you could?

- Avoid over-using BE verbs, especially as helping verbs (like are verb-ing or is verb-ing). Instead use action verbs in their most active voice ("They rejoice" instead of "they are rejoicing" or "Others respect this" instead of "others are respectable of this").
- Avoid repetition of words or phrases. If you see them in a draft, they usually indicate places where you could combine two sentences into one: "Crevecouer wrote a series of essays. He wrote these essays about what he saw in the new world" might be better written as "Crevecouer wrote a series of essay about what he saw in the new world."
- Pay attention to sentence structure. Notice how your sentences begin. All the same? If so, try to revise for variety.

Surface Language – some quick fixes for picky problems

- Use "who" for people and "that" for things: The people who came here were looking for land that they could farm.
- Periods and commas go INSIDE quotation marks
- Are first-person pronouns (I/we) and second-person pronouns (you) the best choices for a formal summary? Or should it be objective (and use third-person pronouns)?