



How to Track Patterns of Error

Tracking patterns of error is not just about proofreading. It is understanding and noticing common mistakes made in your own writing, so that you can avoid them in the future.

Strategies

1. **Identify errors by using the search function on your computer or by reviewing your instructor/tutor's feedback.**

If you know you tend to confuse “its” with “it’s”, search for “it” and you can see each time you use it in your writing. You can then correct it as needed. If you notice this mistake appears a lot when you search for it, you are now made aware of it and can focus on correcting as you write your next paper.

2. **Create a table to list your common errors**

Example Error Log

Sentence of Error	Type of Error	Corrected Sentence	Notes and Resources
The government has passed two new pieces of legislation, which <u>is</u> related to public safety.	Subject-verb agreement error.	The government has passed two new pieces of legislation, which <u>are</u> related to public safety.	The quantity (two pieces) is specified, so the subject is plural *See class handout on subject-verb agreement.
It is important for schools to effectively provide <u>to</u> the needs of their students.	Preposition error: Provide takes the preposition “for”.	It is important for schools to effectively provide <u>for</u> the needs of their students.	*See Advanced Learner's Grammar, P. 30.