

Common Writing Mistakes

Purpose:

This document was created to demonstrate the most common writing mistakes students make. These mistakes are almost all easily avoidable, but many students continue to make them unit after unit. How could that be? How could a student, whose purpose is to learn and improve their skills with practice, keep making the same mistakes all year? The answer is simple, they are not actually practicing or reading their work. Many students claim they do not know what to look for or why they were graded down on a writing assignment, this document clarifies much of what they should be doing in their writing if they want to improve scores.

The following mistakes will be broken down in three categories:

- ***Easy to Fix***
- ***Fixed With Attention***
- ***Harder to Improve***

PLEASE USE THIS GUIDE TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY AND CORRECT THE MISTAKES YOU ARE CURRENTLY MAKING IN YOUR WRITING! Do not be embarrassed by them, most students make these mistakes frequently, but do not accept them as part of your work. They are the wrong way to go about writing and you can easily correct them if you pay attention.



EASY TO FIX:

INDENTING THE PARAGRAPH: The first rule students learned about writing paragraphs back in second and third grade was that you indent the beginning of the paragraph to signal to the reader you are moving on to a new idea or portion of your writing. Not indenting your paragraph is an automatic 1 point deduction from your score, but can be avoided easily. ***If you are not sure how big the indentation needs to be, just press the 'spacebar' 5 times to begin the paragraph and you will be safe.*** This is not the correct approach in word processing programs, but it will be consistent and is an easy temporary fix until you learn to properly set a first line indent.

BAD...



This paragraph will be about the most important Roman achievements. First, an roman achievement was art and this was including statues and sculptures they were important because art later influenced the renaissance. Next, another roman achievement was roads which is an man-made path-way they were important because they help people trade easier. Finally, the last roman achievement was aquaducts which was a man-made channel they were important because they helped bring water to the city of Rome. In conclusion i think that Rome was great because of all there amazing achievements.



GOOD!



Roman achievements were really helpful for the Romans and made life more easy. First, Roman achievement is an aqueduct which are man-made channels and it was really important because it would travel water to the city from mountains. Another Roman achievement are road whis is a man made pathway, and it was really important because they would have to move quick and it was more easy to travel. Also, a Roman achievement was art which are something that looked realistic, and it was really important because it was realistic for the Renaissance. In conclusion, I really think that Rome was great cause of all there achievements that worked really good.



EASY TO FIX:

PROPER CAPITALIZATION AND PERIOD USE: Capitalization and simple punctuation should have been mastered by the end of 3rd grade, but for most students, it was not. Writing in school is meant to help practice these simple and necessary rules to communicate clearly and with purpose. When capitalizing, **remember two things: 1) ALWAYS capitalize the first letter of a sentence, and 2) ALWAYS capitalize the names of things (proper nouns). DO NOT RANDOMLY CAPITALIZE WORDS IF THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE PREVIOUS TWO RULES!** If you can remember these two things, then almost all your capitalization errors will be fixed!

When it comes to not using periods to end your sentences, this just shows a complete lack of attention to your work. This is a 1st grade standard and should not be an issue for a middle school student. **Check your writing to make sure you used punctuation at the end of your sentence!**

BAD...

in this paragraph I will tell you about three roman achievements. First, one Roman achievement were aqueducts which were a man-made channel that carried water and was important because it brought water to a city. Next, another Roman achievement were roads which was a man-made road and was important because it helped the Army travel faster. Finally, a third Roman achievement was art which was a painting that looked realistic and was important because it was later going to impress the emperor. In conclusion, I think the Roman Empire had many great achievements.

GOOD!

Today, I will be talking about what I think the most important achievements of the Roman Empire are. To start off, one Roman achievement was roads. Roman roads were made out of pebbles, sand, stone, and cement. Since the roads were so strong because of the way they were built, they were important to the Romans because they connected the Roman Empire and they helped get the Roman army to move faster. Next, another Roman achievement was aqueducts. Aqueducts were artificial channels that carried water and it included arches. This was important to the Romans because it brought water to the empire. With all of the water provided, people had enough to drink and use for many other things. Lastly, another Roman achievement was Christianity. Christianity was a religion created by Jesus Christ, this religion is also based off of his life. Christianity was important to the Romans because at first, this religion was not allowed in their empire. Not until an emperor named Constantine made people see his faith in this religion. Once people saw his hope, Christianity spread and it then became the official religion of Rome. In the end, I think that the Roman Empire was amazing because of the way they lived and on how they influenced the modern world today with all of their great achievements.

EASY TO FIX:

CORRECT SPACING BETWEEN WORDS AND PUNCTUATION: This is an easily avoided mistake if the student is paying attention to their work. To correctly space you only need to **remember two things: 1) never use more than one space between words and 2) do not use a space before punctuation, only after.** While punctuation like hyphens may not follow this exactly, following these two rules will eliminate almost all the spacing errors that student make when they write. Also, **NEVER PRESS 'ENTER' WHEN TYPING A PARAGRAPH!** Pressing enter begins a new paragraph and automatically gets a score of 0 if done on the test because you will not have produced an actual paragraph if you do so.

BAD...

The Roman Empire had a lot of important acheivements. First, There were many Roman acheivements such as the aqauduct which was a man made chanel used to transport water. The aquaduct was imp^ortant because it helped the people get water and need to stay clean and to drink. Another Roman acheivements was roads which was with an was important because it helped trade and the armies travel faster. A third Roman acheivement was christianity and christant (a reason the people used to get killed for but then there was a new emperor that made a new chang anyone with any religon or belif will not be killed and that was important because people that christan were not being killed any more for what there religon was. In conclusion the Roman Empire had a lot of amazing acheivements such as the aquaduct, roads and christianity.

GOOD!


There are many achievements of the Roman Empire that I think are the most important. One Roman achievement were roads which is a long trail of stones or cement that people or carts can go through and were important because romans make trade possible. Another achievement was aqueducts which structures that was able to carry water from a river to towns and was important because that was being carried from an aqueduct, went to the center of town for the people to drink. A third Roman achievement was architecture which was a structure that romans like arches and domes and was important because it was able to put people and all of those designs that were made back then, are used to this day. I think that all of these Roman achievements were important because that was what Rome was mostly known for.

FIXED WITH ATTENTION:

CORRECT SPELLING: This correction requires students to pay more attention than the previous three. Spelling is a skill that comes with practice, attentiveness, and a willingness to correct mistakes. Fortunately, students have **multiple opportunities to check for spelling errors through reading their work out loud, having peers review their writing, typing out practice paragraphs to use Google spell check, and employing the Free Grammar Check website.** **SPELLING IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST REASONS STUDENTS LOSE POINTS!** Sometimes they only need to correct the spelling of one or two words to increase their score on a retake. **Notice how many times ‘achievement’ and ‘because’ were misspelled in the example below.** Arguments about spelling not being important have no merit. Proper spelling shows the reader that the author cares about their work and gave it the appropriate attention.


BAD...

This paragraph will be about the achievments of the Roman Empire. To begin with, one of the Roman achievments were the arches, they were dome shaped structures in a building or aquaduct, they were important becasue they used up less building materials and added strength to the building. Secondly, a different Roman achievment were the aquaducts, they were used to carry water from the source to the city they were important because people could have running water in their homes and did not have to travel long distances to be able to get it. One last Roman achievment were the roads, they were made up of layers of rocks and sand, they were important becasue they helped the many travel from one place to another a lot faster, it also helped traders get from one city to another so things could happen faster. To conclude, the Roman Empire was an amazing city with many achievments that like these, and more which= were very modern and advanced for its time.



GOOD!

The Roman Empire gave themselves a place in history with all their wondrous achievements, here are some of the most important ones. To begin with, one Roman achievement was art, which is a form of expression, and was important because its realism later inspired the Renaissance. Roads were another achievement of the Romans. Roads are paths used for travel and were important because it connected the cities so things could happen more often. The final achievement was the arch, an arch is a curved structure and was important because it could support many times its weight and was used for holding up other buildings and structures. In conclusion, I think that the aqueduct, a structure used to transport water across land, is an achievement that changed the way Romans lived because it gave the Romans clean and fresh water.



FIXED WITH ATTENTION:

PROPERLY USING COMMAS: The dictionary definition of a comma reads as follows: **a punctuation mark (,) indicating a pause between parts of a sentence. It is also used to separate items in a list and to mark the place of thousands in a large numeral.** Using this common and simple punctuation device is easy if students read their sentences out loud and pay attention to pauses and the parts of sentences they are writing in their paragraphs. Since our **paragraph sentences often contain transitions and two or three pieces of information, using commas will be frequent.** Be sure to master these to help your score!

BAD...

This paragraph will be about three achievements of the Roman Empire. First the first achievement was art which are like paintings, statues and designs and they were important because it was very realistic. Next another achievement was acuducts which is a man-made passage that carreys water and it was important because it carreys water to the Roman cities. Finally a third Roman achievement were roads and it was important because it helped Romans go from place to place and trade. In conclusion, the Roman Empire was awesome because they had many great achievements.



GOOD!

In this paragraph I will be talking about what I think are the most important achievements from the Roman Empire. First, I think one of the most important achievements was the aqueduct, which is a large channel that transported water from one place to the cities. Next, another Roman Empire achievement was the Colosseum, a type of stadium that held events such as fights and was important because it helped the Romans build structures and that is also known as architecture. Finally, the last achievement was art, which is a type of painting, drawing, or sculpture and was important because it helped us learn about the Roman culture and many others. In conclusion, I believe the Roman Empire had so many great and important achievement that helped our civilization become more advanced.



FIXED WITH ATTENTION:

PROPER GRAMMAR: In simple terms, *the definition of grammar is the study of the way words are used to make sentences*. The *easiest way to check for grammar is to simply read your writing out loud*. Does it sound like the way someone would speak or does it sound awkward and strange? Most grammar issues can be corrected when written words are spoken. When we do that, it is possible to hear our mistakes, instead of trying to locate them in the writing itself. Proper grammar does take more attention to fix, but it is something that can be greatly improved with a little effort consistently applied over time. ***Read the examples below out loud and try to hear the difference.***

BAD...

The most important achievements of the Roman Empire are first one of the important achievements was art, art included statues and paintings that later influenced the Rennissance. Secondly, one of the important achievements was the aqueduct, aqueduct was a man-made river that help all the water get to the Roman Empire. Lastly, the achievement was enginering, enginering was roads, enginering helped the Empire and army get to places faster. Those are the most important achievements in the Roman Empire.

GOOD!

The Roman Empire gave themselves a place in history with all their wondrous achievements, here are some of the most important ones. To begin with, one Roman achievement was art, which is a form of expression, and was important because it's realism later inspired the Renaissance. Roads were another achievement of the Romans, roads are paths used for travel and were important because it connected the empire and trade could happen more often. The final achievement was the arch, an arch is a vertical curved structure and was important because it could support many times its weight and was good at holding up other buildings and structures. In conclusion, I think that the aqueduct, a build that is used to transport water across land, is an achievement that changed the way Romans lived because it gave the Romans clean and fresh water.

HARDER TO IMPROVE:

WRITING STYLE: Style is the hardest thing in writing and is very difficult to develop. You should not even worry about style if you are making any of the previous mistakes touched on in this document.

Worry about the foundational writing mechanics like spelling, grammar, and punctuation before you tackle the subject of style. Your writing **style is made up of your word choices and the form you put them in to communicate with the reader.** A great example of style is the chef Gordon Ramsey. When he describes a plate of food, the listener really wants to eat it! Instead of just saying “meat with gravy”, he would say “a succulent lamb dish, seared to perfection, with a spicy au jus sauce drizzled over a mint reduction.” Two different styles describing the same thing, but with completely different results.

BASIC STYLE: *There is nothing wrong with the style below*, but it is **very basic** and is meant to serve a purpose rather than get the reader interested.

This paragraph will be about three Roman achievements. First, one Roman achievement is art which is realistic and would later influence the renaissance. Next, another Roman achievement is aqueducts which is a man made tunnel or pipe that transfers water to the cities of Rome. Finally, the last Roman achievement is roads which is a man made path that can help the military or traders get to places quickly and easily. In conclusion I think the Roman empire is great because of all the achievements they managed to do in the past.

IMPROVED STYLE: In this paragraph, you can see that ***the writer has taken an interest in exciting the reader to continue*** by using words like ‘wondrous’ and choosing to begin their writing in a more exciting way.

The Roman Empire gave themselves a place in history with all their wondrous achievements, here are some of the most important ones. To begin with, one Roman achievement was art, which is a form of expression, and was important because it’s realism later inspired the Renaissance. Roads were another achievement of the Romans, roads are paths used for travel and were important because it connected the empire and trade could happen more often. The final achievement was the arch, an arch is a vertical curved structure and was important because it could support many times its weight and was good at holding up other buildings and structures. In conclusion, I think that the aqueduct, a build that is used to transport water across land, is an achievement that changed the way Romans lived because it gave the Romans clean and fresh water.

Style comes over time, but the fun thing about writing is that you get to choose your own words and make decisions about how you want the reader to see what you are telling them.