Grammar Checklist

Commas

1. Use a comma to separate two independent clauses (sentences that express a complete thought and can be a complete sentence on its own) that are joined by any of the following conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS).
   1. *Example: Max went to the Red Wings game, but they lost.*
2. Use a comma when a dependent clause (not a complete sentence on its own) comes before an independent clause (can be a complete sentence on its own).
   1. *Example: When Lauren and Andrew arrived at school today, they realized that they forgot her essay on the printer! (not really though ;)*
3. Use a comma when you insert extra information in the middle of a sentence.
   1. *Example: Malachi, a smart boy, is continuously on his phone in class.*
4. Use a comma to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.
   1. *Example: Sarah, Jalon, Carlos, Don, and Mykaela got together on Tuesday, filmed their trailer, and published it to YouTube. (I have no clue if that’s true)*
5. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that describe something.
   1. *Example: JB has a nice, blue shirt on.*
6. Use a comma when writing a direct quote…place a comma before quote.
   1. *Example: Colby said, “Catcher in the Rye is a pretty good book.”*
7. Use a comma when you are using a transition word (therefore, consequently, etc.). Place the comma after the transition word.
   1. *Example: Landen, Tracie, Dalen, Akbar, Will, Jalen, Briana, Elijah, Dean, Alex, and Freman were not used in a sentence; therefore, I just made this one up.*

Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out (the two independent clauses connect).
   1. *Example: Call me tomorrow; I will give you my answer then.*
2. Use a semicolon before introductory words such as *however, therefore, consequently etc.* when they introduce a complete sentence.
   1. *Example: I ate like a pig; therefore, I expect to feel sick later.*
3. Use a semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.
   1. Example: This conference has people who have come from Boise, Idaho; Los Angeles, California; and Nashville, Tennessee.

Quoting vs. Paraphrasing

1. A quote is a statement copied verbatim from an outside source and used in the essay.
   1. *Example: “What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though” (Salinger, 118).*
2. A paraphrase is a summary of a statement from an outside source using your own words.
   1. *Example: Holden explains how he wishes he was good friends with the author of a book he just read so that he can call up the author whenever he wants (Salinger 118).*

Note: Both a quote and paraphrase serve as support to the argument of the paper and are both helpful in proving your argument.

In-Text Citations (Incorporating Quotes into Essays)

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using a citation, which comes after a quote or a paraphrase. The order is as follows:

1. Quotation Mark
2. Quote or paraphrase
3. Quotation mark
4. Open Parentheses
5. Author’s Last Name
6. Page Number of Quote
7. Close Parentheses
8. Punctuation
   1. *Example: “What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though” (Salinger, 118).*

NOTE: When you include a quote in a body paragraph as evidence to prove your claim, your quote must NEVER stand alone. You must always introduce your quote.

*Example: For example, Holden states, “What really knocks me out…”*

Do’s and Don’t’s of Essay Writing – Wednesday, October 30th

1. Do not use “a lot” because “a lot” is where cars are parked. Think about it…how much is “a lot” anyway? It is different for everyone, so if you are trying to give the reader an idea about how much of something there is, be more specific than “a lot.”
2. Do not use “things” or “stuff” – again, not specific enough for the reader to imagine…don’t do that stuff, okay guys? Those things aren’t good.
3. You do not have to be fancy and use words that you would not normally use…word choice is about picking the best words for what you want to say rather than trying to make yourself sound like a stuffy professor
4. Do not include the reader in a formal essay (no “you, us, we, our,” etc.) – Think about it…if you include the reader and they do not agree with what you are saying, you lose credibility with them… More importantly, DON’T command either (see what I did there?? Haha) So for example, don’t say “Imagine…” “Think about it…” etc.
5. Make sure your tenses match – an essay should always be in the present tense (he GOES vs. he went) unless describing something that happened in the past (then you can use past tense). So make sure you never say anything like, “Holden **stops** in front of the museum and **stared** at it for a while” because “stops” is in present tense and “stared” is in past tense; they should be in the same tense.
6. Make sure your pronouns match. Never say, “**A person** walked down the street and **they** stopped at the library” because “a person” and “they” don’t go together. “A person” goes with “he/she.”
7. Do not make generalizations (“Everyone, always, never, all people,” etc.) You do not want to come off as someone who makes assumptions about people…everyone hates that
8. Only use first person (“I, me, my”) if you are describing a personal experience that is important to the essay…do NOT say, “I believe,” “I think,” “In my personal opinion,” “I realize,” etc. I think that’s unnecessary
9. Questions: It is unnecessary to ask questions in an essay – if you ask the reader a question and do not answer it, readers can get annoyed OR if you ask the reader a question and do answer it, then what was the point of asking the question?
10. Do not use contractions (“don’t, won’t, can’t, wouldn’t” etc.) – if you don’t just type out the whole word, you seem lazy or careless (I’m lazy)
11. Clichés: Beginning paper with a quote, a dictionary definition, or “Imagine…”; saying, “In today’s society”
12. Be direct…don’t dance around the subject. It could be that if you say what you have to say in a way that is seemingly straightforward, then your point can easily be much stronger in that it will make more sense.
13. Take pride in your work; make it polished and refined…have someone proofread it for spelling and grammar mistakes. Look how hard it is to raed a sentence that don’t follow any rules of grammar and has lots of spelling mistakes because it is hard to read and their are no commas and this is a really long drawn out sentence and your probly thinking okay when is this gonna end but it’s not its just gonna to go on until youre like okay fix this nafso before my brain explodes.

MLA Format

All essays are required to be in MLA format (for more information and a sample, visit the OWL Purdue MLA website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

12-Point Font, Times New Roman, All 1-Inch Margins, Double Spaced, One Space Between Sentences, heading on the left side of the paper, centered title, header is last name and page number (see sample on Intro/Conclusion page)

Your Name (First and Last)

Instructor’s Name (Ms. Nafso)

Class Name (11 LC)

Date (28 March 2016)

Creative Title of Essay

Begin your introductory paragraph one double-spaced line below your centered title. The paragraph should begin with a 0.5 inch tabbed indent. The heading goes in the upper left corner of the first page only. Use 1-inch margins all around and double space everything (ONE double spaced line in between EVERYTHING). Insert proper MLA header (click on “View” tab; click on “Header and Footer”; format the header to be on the right side; type your last name, then click on “Insert Page Number” on the header and footer toolbar; make sure you change the font to 12 point, Times New Roman). Thesis goes at the end of your intro paragraph.

Your body paragraphs should follow. Notice there is no extra spacing in between the lines. Also notice how the paragraph is indented 0.5 inches. You should do this for each body paragraph. Your WHOLE essay should use Times New Roman font at size 12. Nothing should be bolded or in a different size. Book titles should be *italicized*; titles of articles/journals and other shorter works should be in “quotation marks.” The first letter of each word in a title (besides a, an, that, the, etc.) should be CAPITALIZED. There is only ONE space after periods.

In text citations are simple in an essay. If you take anything from a source, you need to cite it. If you mention an author in the sentence, you only need the page number if there is one. For example, Turner says, “People should not use the internet for more than two hours per day” (54). If the author is not mentioned in the sentence, the citation needs to include the author’s name. For example, “People should not use the internet for more than two hours per day” (Turner 54). If numbers 1-9 are used in a sentence, they are always spelled out. If a number begins a sentence, no matter what the number is, it is spelled out. When a source has no known author, use the title in the citation instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work such as an article, or italicize it if it is a longer work such as plays, books, or websites and provide a page number if there is one. For example, “We see so many global warming hotspots in North America” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6). Ideas that are paraphrased (summarized in your own words) should still be cited. For example, the internet is said to harm us if used for over two hours a day (Turner 54). Other citation examples can be seen using Purdue Owl. (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>)

Formatting your essay in MLA format will make your essay look nice and professional! And you won’t have to redo it.