

## Common Errors

1. Works Cited! If you use sources other than the prompt or your brain cells, you must cite your sources either internally or parenthetically. In both cases, you must include a Work(s) Cited. Failure to do so at the college level = failure.

Fact: The top starting salary for 2007 college graduates for chemical engineering majors is \$59,361/yr. Source: Mary Lorenz, "Today's Best Entry-Level Salaries." Career Builder.com

a. Write a sentence for the above fact using internal citation.

b. Write a sentence for the above fact using parenthetical citation.

2. You must reference the prompt. Otherwise, how can you react to it? Here's one who did it correctly:  
Ever wonder why more and more people these days are getting fat? It's not necessarily what you are eating. A lot of people are getting fat because of their friends. Are friends a positive influence on your weight or a negative influence? Think about it; take a second. "How Friends Make You Fat" written by Steve Rushin has shown that most friends are a bad influence when it comes to weight. He called it the "fat flu". He also said you can catch it from any of your friends, whether it is your best friend or your new friend of one month.... —Annette Jackson

3. Don't misinterpret the facts. Use your critical thinking to put facts into perspective. The following is from a paper written using the "Did You Know" video.  
"In 2006 there were 1.3 United States graduates, in India 3.1, and in China there were 3.3 college graduates. I thought the United States was one of the higher percentages of graduates but come to find out they are not."

Problem #1. In the video, the numbers 1.3, 3.1, and 3.3 refer to millions, so the above should include that word after each number — 1.3 million...

Problem #2. The numbers listed refer to the actual number of graduates, not the percentage of graduates. So the numbers, though startling, can be misleading since the populations of both China and India are far greater than the population of the U.S. Consider. In 2006, the U.S. population was around 300 million, so the percentage of college graduates is 1.3 million divided by 300 million or roughly 4.3%. The population of China was 1,329,349,388. So 3.3 million divided by roughly 1.3 BILLION is 2.5%. So statistically the U.S. produces a higher percentage of college graduates, but far fewer actual college graduates. Compare apples to apples and don't mix up the two.

4. Commas need to be used according to the rules. My present to you: Commas Gone Crazy. This is a chapter in the book I'm going to publish when I retire. We will study commas, so you can use them correctly.
5. Fragments and run-ons! At this point, you should not ever have any sentences that are fragments or run-ons unless you are using them for effect. I found a few who did; I found most who didn't. NO FRAGMENTS and RUN-ONS. Read your papers out loud to "hear" the natural rhythm of the sentence, the natural flow of sound. If it doesn't sound right to your ear, it is no doubt just wrong. Consider the following sad arrangement of words.

"From the article Environment: A Good Drink at the Sink by Karen Breslau who believed that drinking tap water is better than drinking from a water bottle due to the cost which she said, "in 2006 the bottled water industry saw sales triple to \$10.8 billion'."

6. " " versus \_\_\_\_\_ or *italics*. Learn when to use which. Learn the short/long and "contained in" rules. Which do you use for the following?

	" "	_____ or <i>italics</i>
a. short stories		
b. the name of a music album		
c. a song on a music album		
d. a movie		
e. a novel		
f. a magazine		
g. a newspaper		
h. an article from a magazine		

7. Jones' Junk: Unfortunately, it is alive and well. Fix the following sentence I found in one essay. :(

Its because when you are with your friends it's a different kind of energy then when your by yourself.

8. Who versus that. Rule: If the noun in front of the relative pronoun refers to people, use who. If the noun in front of the relative pronoun refers to an object or an animal use that. Practice on the sentences below:

- a. Most people choose the friends that seem like they would be bad influences.
- b. Some places that do not encourage recycling that should are Englewood High School, some malls, restaurants, and all the families that do not recycle.
- c. Of all my friends' families, I only know of one that sits down every night and has dinner with each other.
- d. To be nervously employed is to be an employee that has a temporary job.

9. Noun/pronoun or pronoun/pronoun antecedent agreement. Rule: 1 ≠ 2+.

The rule explained: If you use a singular noun or pronoun first in a sentence, it is considered the antecedent, and any subsequent reference to that noun or pronoun must agree with it in number. In other words, a singular noun must be referred to by a singular pronoun. A plural noun or pronoun must be subsequently referred to by a plural noun or pronoun.

Fix the following sentences that violate this rule.

- a. This can cause that friend to become self-conscious and cause them to eat less or more.
- b. Steve Rushin says that a person's weight is always the result of their lifestyle.
- c. If a person wants to be skinny, they should choose a slim friend.

10. Most importantly, a personal reaction essay must be written as a CRITICAL REACTION to a given prompt, NOT as a mere SUMMARY (regurgitation) of the prompt.

Thank you to the following students who wrote papers that opened the door to CRITICAL REACTIONS.

- a. Prompt: "Friends make you fat" — Everyone wants to be accepted by the people they associate with, but sometimes in the process of being accepted, we are unconsciously making ourselves unhealthy. Kelli Kavinski
- b. Prompt: Bottled water — Instead of getting rid of bottled water we as a society can always use certain methods to help our environment. Stephanie Marragos
- c. Prompt: "Friends make you fat" — Americans are typically mindless about how much they eat because of their lack of self-control. Avril Barbour
- d. Prompt: Bottled water — Reverse osmosis can be installed in a home and makes the same if not better quality water than what comes from water companies. Mike Schneider
- e. Prompt: "Did you know" — Although the presentation was meant to focus on the educational uncertainties for the future, I am more concerned about how technology is growing faster than our way of life. Technology and education change on a daily basis in order to keep up with the demands of living. Kris Lawan

## Rules you need to know if you don't already know them

1. If you ask a rhetorical question, you must answer. Don't use rhetorical questions in place of stating your opinion. If you want to say something, just say it. Don't throw out an unanswerable question.
2. When you refer to people, the first time use both their first and last names. Thereafter, use their last names only. Referring to people you don't know by their first names is often viewed as rude.
3. Generally speaking, you should avoid using the exclamation point. Is it really that exciting? No!
4. Internet is always capitalized. "I read it on the Internet."
5. Rules for capitalizing after a colon:
  - a. Capitalize the first word if it is a proper noun. Many poets provided inspiration: Donne, Wordsworth, Shelley.
  - b. Capitalize the first word if it is the start of a new sentence. Mrs. Jones lives by her personal philosophy: Prior planning prevents pitifully poor performance.
  - c. Do NOT capitalize the first word if what follows the colon is NOT a sentence. For many people, the following are considered necessities in life: a good job, enough money to live on, family and friends to care about, and a large supply of chocolate.
6. YOU. Don't use it inappropriately. For example, when writing about applying to college and your audience is a teacher or college admissions' officer, the following type of sentence is NOT addressed to the reader, and therefore, it is an inappropriate use of you: "When you're applying to college, it is best to clean up your MySpace account."
7. Similarly, avoid use the understood you in command sentences. Study hard and take classes in high school to prepare for college. The subject of this sentence is you. [You] study hard and take classes .....
8. When using the "Modes of Development" worksheet to generate supporting evidence, you are supposed to identify new ideas you think of as your response to the prompt you are writing about. You defeat your purpose if all you list are the ways the author of the prompt used these techniques. When you do that, all you accomplish is repeating what the author said in the first place, and then you write a summary of the article and do not write a response to it. Generate new ideas using these techniques.
9. Learn the difference between these two words.
  - Defiantly = showing defiance. Standing in opposition to a person or idea. Note: When you say this word, you hear the word ant in it. Ants will be defiant against anything that stands in their path.
  - Definitely = certainly, without a doubt. I definitely am getting tired of correcting these errors.
10. Webs are more a brainstorming tool than an organizational tool unless they are developed to 3-4 levels. The smaller your web; the weaker your body development.
11. Cumbersome way to write about money = twenty-four million dollars.  
Better way to write about money = \$24 million.