

Giving Appropriate and Useful Feedback on Writing

Respond Precisely

Balance notes about grammar and sentence-level clarity with specific questions and suggestions for improvement. A combination will emphasize students' ideas and help them connect certain grammatical structures to meaning. Also, avoid generic responses like "awkward" and "clarity." These words do not explain, so they do not empower.

- Try using the "Revision Symbols" at the end of the Hacker guide. Add "ww" for "wrong word form" and "wc" for "word choice."
- While the Hacker guide "Revision Symbols" list does include "awk" for "awkward," add an explanatory word like "awkward tense," "awkward phrasing," or "awkward structure" to give students direction.
- With consistent comments correlating to the Hacker manual's widely recognized and accessible resource, students can move forward efficiently.
- Grammar guides overwhelm students, so precise terminology or section numbers will help them enter the text.

Expect Written Accents

You may notice quite a few insignificant errors, like a missing "the," a wrong preposition, or an unnaturally worded expression. Try not to be distracted by these errors and focus on the ideas that the writer is attempting to convey.

- Articles and prepositions often take a long time to truly learn.
- New college students devote energy to learning new concepts and developing complex higher-order thinking skills, resulting in small regressions regarding less necessary conventions.
- Refer students to the Writing Center resource "Using Articles (a, an, the) Correctly" on the Student Resources page under "For International and Bilingual Students"
- Contact Kate Oakley (oakley@lakeforest.edu) for information about *The Article Book* by Tom Cole.

Address Serious Errors

If consistent errors prohibit you from understanding the student's argument, help the student by identifying and naming them. The longer these errors go unchecked, the more difficult it will be for the student to address them due to habit.

- Require a visit to the Writing Center for a specific grammar error in a specific assignment.
- Require a visit to the Writing Center to review a particular section of a grammar handbook or an online grammar review (See the "Grammar and Style Review" section on the Student Resources page) with a tutor.
- Rewrite various sentences in your own words before asking the student to write other versions with you or a tutor.
- Encourage your student to use Grammarly and then review its suggestions with you or a tutor.