

## GRAMMAR AND SPELLING GUIDE

This checklist covers spelling and grammatical errors found in the first museum papers that were returned to you, as well as the most common errors I've found in students' papers over the years.

A NOTE OF CAUTION: The spelling and grammar check in WORD makes mistakes in both spelling and grammar. **Among other mistakes**, you should watch out for incorrect "corrections" of agreement between singular and plural subjects and predicates (nouns and verbs). You can use spell check, but **do not rely upon it!** You should own and study a grammar guide. Use it, along with a dictionary, to double-check for grammatical and spelling errors in your paper.

**Recommended: William Strunk and E.B. White, Elements of Style**

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Have I correctly used "who" and "that?"  
"Who" refers to people, and "that" refers to things.  
  
Incorrect: the artist that made the painting  
Correct: the artist who made the painting
2. Do my paragraphs focus on a single point or idea?  
Changing ideas will result in a new paragraph
3. Do my paragraphs flow easily from one to another?  
In order to make them flow, have I used transitions when appropriate? Among those transitions are words and phrases such as the following: therefore, also, too, however, but, in as much as, etc.
4. Are my paragraphs more than one sentence long?  
Paragraphs generally have at least two sentences.
5. Do all my sentences have both a subject and predicate (both a noun and a verb)?
6. Is my verb tense consistent throughout my paper?

Incorrect: He paints in muted colors. He uses gray and tan.  
Incorrect: He paints in muted colors. He used gray and tan.  
Correct: He paints in muted colors. He used gray and tan.  
Correct: He paints in muted colors. He uses gray and tan.

Choose one tense, and stick with it for your entire paper!

7. Have I avoided run-on sentences?

Incorrect: Byzantine and Romanesque art are similar, they both use elongated forms.  
Incorrect: Byzantine and Romanesque art are similar, they both use elongated forms.  
Correct: Byzantine and Romanesque art are similar. They both use elongated forms.  
Correct: Byzantine and Romanesque art are similar; they both use elongated forms.

8. Have I properly used commas, periods, semi-colons, and colons?

All of the following punctuation marks create pauses, and they separate ideas, but to different degrees, with periods separating them most strongly.

Look at the following examples and ask yourself what the differences are:

Correct: Assyrian art is often violent. There are many images of killing, bloodshed, and carnage.

Correct: Assyrian art is often violent, with images of killing, bloodshed, and carnage.

Correct: Assyrian art is often violent; there are many images of killing, bloodshed, and carnage.

Correct: Assyrian art shows many violent images; killings, beatings, torture, etc.

9. Am I consistent in my use of singular and plural? Do my noun and verbs match in number?

Correct: The pyramid is large. The pyramids are large.

Correct: Hammurabi's law was introduced. Hammurabi's laws were introduced.

Avoid the following common mistake:

Incorrect: There's s three paintings on the wall.

Correct: There are three paintings on the wall.

10. Have I avoided prepositions at the end of a sentence?

Incorrect: There's the sculpture we were talking about.

Correct: There's the sculpture about which we were talking.

11. Have I caught these spelling errors, the first groups of which are especially common, if English is not my native language?

Their - belongs to them

There - a place

They're - They are

You're - You are

Your - belongs to you

Were - the past tense of are

Where - a place

Were - the past tense of are

Its - possessive pronoun

Example: Its meaning is vague.

It's - contraction of "it is"

Example: It's over there.

12. The following periods and styles of art are often misspelled. Although they may not be germane to this course, you should be aware of the correct forms.

Medieval

This is not to be written nor pronounced as "mid evil." There's nothing "mid" nor "evil" about it. Pronounce all four syllables.

Renaissance

Baroque

Rococo