lilyPD
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Credibility Activity: Grammar Top 5 Checklist

Task: Edit specifically to avoid the Top 5 grammatical / conventional errors in student writing.

Use the table below to work through five common errors in student writing.

The Error	Example	The Fix	I've Edited My Paper for This
Missing Comma After Introductory Element	**Error:** After reviewing the data from three school districts the committee recommended a later start time. **Correction:** After reviewing the data from three school districts, the committee recommended a later start time.	Read your writing out loud. You will naturally pause after an introductory element. If there is no comma there, add one. Be attentive to AAAWWUBBIS (After, Although, As, When, While, Until, Before, Because, If, Since) words when they appear at the beginning of a sentence. They usually signal an introductory element that will need a comma.	
Wrong Word	**Error:** The study effects how students feel about homework. **Correction:** The study affects how students	Be attentive to commonly confused words and scan your writing for these words in particular to ensure correct usage.	

Adapted from Lunsford, A. A., & Lunsford, K. J. (2008). "Mistakes are a fact of life": A national comparative study. *College Composition and Communication, 59*(4), 781–806.
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	feel about homework.		
Vague Pronoun Reference	**Error:** When the principal met with the coach, he announced the new schedule. **Correction:** When the principal met with the coach, the principal announced the new schedule.	Scan your writing for pronouns. Where you see a pronoun, stop and read the preceding sentence and the sentence in which the pronoun appears. Does it make sense? Is it clear what the pronoun is referring to? Would it make more sense to replace the pronoun?	
Mechanical Error with a Quotation	**Error** The author argues that "schools should start later", and that students need more sleep. **Corrected:** The author argues that "schools should start later," and that students need more sleep.	Scan your writing for quotes. Does each have an opening and a closing quotation mark? Scan your writing for end punctuation. Commas and periods go INSIDE quotation marks. Colons and semicolons go OUTSIDE quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation go inside the quotes *if* they apply to the quoted words. If not, they go OUTSIDE. Scan your writing for capitalization within a quote. If your quote is a complete sentence, make sure it begins with a capital letter. If it's not a complete thought, it shouldn't begin with	

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		a capital letter.	
Capitalization	**Error:** The Committee voted to ban Cell Phones in Classrooms because they distract Students from Learning. **Corrected:** The committee voted to ban cell phones in classrooms because they distract students from learning.	Scan your writing for capitalized words. Is it the first word of a sentence? Great! Keep it! Is it a specific person, place, thing, or idea? Yay! Keep that capital! Is it just an important-sounding word? Nope! No capital letter. Is it a random word in the middle of the sentence? No capitals there!	

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