

To: Emily Johnson, Coordinator  
 CC: Greg Luft, Department Head; Marilee Long, Assistant Department Head  
 From: Hayley Blackburn, Graduate Teaching Assistant  
 Date: May 5, 2019  
**Subject: Activity Report for the Spring of 2019**

Per request of the Journalism and Media Communication Department at Colorado State University, the following report outlines my activities as a Graduate Teaching Assistant over the semester.

I served as a graduate research assistant in the Fall of 2018, so the reported information relates only to my teaching activities in during the Spring 2019 semester. Please reference the table below for course information and enrollment.

### Course Information

Course	Section	Lead Instructor	Credit Hours	Enrollment
LB 300	R: 001 19945	Emily Johnson	3	21
LB 300	R: 002 19947	Emily Johnson	3	22

### Activity Summary

My activities are categorized into four content areas: pre-semester material preparation, recitation structure, grading strategy, and professional development.

Prior to the semester, I worked closely with Dr. Johnson to rewrite the assignment sheets to reflect the standards of workplace communication and adopt more reflexive activities. Every assignment was presented as a memo with more abstract instructions to prompt critical thinking and problem solving—rather than direct replication—among students. I also developed videos, posted to YouTube, with verbal instructions for students to access. *See section 1, pg. 2 for additional details and examples.*

I introduced several changes to the structure of my recitations this semester with the aim of increasing student engagement and self-efficacy. I replaced the “attendance sheet” with two types of participation points: a Discovery Journal completed outside of class and a weekly activity completed within class. The activities represented *low-stakes* writing assignments that reward effort and learning over accuracy and perfection. Overall, this shift lightened the burden of grading each week while increasing the active learning time. *See section 2, page 8 for sample lesson plans.*

I adopted a comprehensive grading structure that slightly curved grades upward while establishing a clear threshold for excellence (A quality papers). Students were provided a list of “minimum requirements” to earn at least a “C” while only being rewarded for truly effortful and inspired work. Those who earned an “A” stood apart from the majority scores, which corrects a tendency for grade inflation due to the analytical rubrics of past semesters. *See section 3, page 10 for details on the grading framework and sample scores.*

I participated in student success activities, networked with education scholars, and read additional books on writing and teaching to increase my competency as a mentor in the classroom. *See section 4, page 22 for details on my activities.*

## Section 1: Pre-Semester Materials

This section overviews my pre-semester preparation of learning materials. You will find my recitation syllabus and an example of the assignment memos I developed. My syllabus includes my contact information, office hours, teaching philosophy, recitation expectations, overview of my grading scheme, and tentative schedule for the semester.

I end with a quote rooted in agency and student self-efficacy that mirrors my teaching philosophy.

Syllabus:

### Professional and Technical Writing Syllabus: LB300

**GTA: Hayley Blackburn**

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hylyb/>

**Email:** [Hayley.Blackburn@colostate.edu](mailto:Hayley.Blackburn@colostate.edu)

**Skype:** Hayley.blckbrn

**Website:** [hylyb.com](http://hylyb.com)

**Office Location:** Clark C224 (Second Floor, facing the BSB)

*Stop by my office hours from 1-2 on Tuesdays, Noon-2 on Wednesdays, or Noon-1 on Fridays. I respond to email when available (typically within a few hours) Monday-Friday. Do not expect responses past 7 pm on weeknights or over the weekend. You can also connect through Skype if you cannot make it to office hours: we can video chat or text chat. Note that I am **unavailable** from 3-5pm on Mondays and Tuesdays.*

#### **MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

I value student self-efficacy and skill applicability in my classrooms. The assignments, activities, and grading scheme reflect a combination of education theory and my own experiences in the workplace. I provide the resources to help you succeed while leaving enough space for you to engage in critical and creative thinking. When grading your assignments, understand that you must exceed expectations to merit an “A.” Completing the basic requirements outlined on assignments earns a “C.” If you complete everything well, as expected of you, that may be worth a “B.” The “A” level work leverages course concepts (e.g., headings, graphics, style) to improve the document, reflects your writing and editing skills, and demonstrates effort. I reward excellent work while encouraging growth.

In short, my role involves crafting opportunities and facilitating a learning environment that holds you accountable; *your role is taking advantage of the opportunities to grow, refine, and practice your skills.*

#### **GOALS OF RECITATION**

Over the semester, we will review concepts from lecture; clarify assignments in a small group setting; complete scenario-based activities; and collaborate to achieve learning objectives. Recitation complements the materials posted to Canvas: I expect you to watch any video content, read any materials, and prepare as indicated **before class**.

## ELEMENTS OF RECITATION

- Share our discovery entries and ask questions | 10 minutes
- Complete activities | 40 minutes | **Bring a laptop every day**
- Upload your activities to Canvas and look ahead to next week | Final minutes

You are required to attend recitations on Friday because these small group sessions provide space for activities, collaboration, and engagement with the material. The bulk of recitation will involve drafting, revising, and completing written documents for workplace scenarios. It may be helpful for you to develop a “business” that you work for to frame the activities that you complete. The business should reflect the career goals and expectations of your industry. Some of you may work in a lab, an office, a factory, etc. and having an imagined workplace will provide context for your activities.

**Please bring a laptop or tablet every class period to download assignments, work through drafting, and to upload the work you complete at the end of the period. The library has laptops for check-out with your student ID if you need equipment.** You may turn in hard-copies of the in-class activities if a laptop is not accessible (complete on pen/paper during recitation).

To receive credit for recitation, you must complete the *weekly Discovery entries* (use your composition notebook: *5 points*) and turn in the activity from that day (*5 points*). Twice in the semester, I will collect your notebook to assess your participation. Make sure to label each entry with the week and date clearly. Be ready to discuss your discovery with your peers—I may call on you at random to share. **For the Discovery entry, write 2-3 sentences reflecting on the previous weeks’ activities or skills that connect with the current week AND complete one of the following options:**

- A 200 (+/- 50) word reflection on the week’s readings
- An example from your own life of the week’s topic—200 (+/-) words. (Did you have to give a presentation in another class? Did you have to draft a memo at work? Did you find yourself witnessing an ethical dilemma?)
- A 200-word summary of an article related to the week’s topic

Having the dedicated time to complete the activities with the benefit of asking questions of your peers and me are the incentives for attending recitation. If you miss a recitation, you will still receive partial credit by completing the Discovery entry (5 points). No make-ups will be offered for the in-class activities.

## CANVAS AND OTHER DIGITAL RESOURCES

All the materials you need will be hosted through the Canvas platform. Materials include the syllabus, schedules, assignments memos, assignment expectations, supplemental readings, and instructional videos. Canvas is your first stop when you have questions—for any remaining clarification, please reach out to me or stop by my office hours. I will periodically post supplemental materials including relevant articles or additional activities you may be interested in.

As an added digital resource and task tracker, I will invite you (through your Canvas email) to a task board on Trello. Trello offers both a web and mobile app to increase productivity as a digital to-do list.

I highly encourage trying the tool out this semester—it may be helpful for some of you. On the board, you will find several bins with information relevant to the assignments and grading process.

- Notes and Reminders: Big things to keep in mind
- FAQs: Any common questions I receive
- Currently Grading: Estimates on the progress of grading
- Completed Grading: The assignments that are posted to Canvas

I created and uploaded short videos explaining each major assignment. I overview the tasks and explain my expectations. Some assignments *may* have an example. Note that any examples reflect only the basic requirements (C level work). Copying the example is not adequate to earn a higher grade; you need to innovate and improve on the example to demonstrate your critical and creative thinking while applying the fundamentals from class. Treat the example as a launching point if you feel stuck.

Additionally, I created a LinkedIn Group to build a community across recitations and semesters. Once you have completed the resume/LinkedIn assignment, I will invite you to be a member of the group. I will also be inviting former members of JTC/LB 300 to join. Use this space to connect and network with your peers and alumni. I will post tips, articles, videos, and other professional development materials to this group every week (or so). Use this space to post appropriate, relevant, and helpful articles, reflections, videos, and other content to the group. Take advantage and build a community of support.

### **GRADING MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

The grading scheme follows a comprehensive format, which considers the effectiveness of the whole document in meeting the objectives rather than assigning point values per section. **Any missing elements from the core requirements specified in the assignment memo will result in an automatic “C” or less.** The expectations for every assignment are framed as a performance evaluation. The evaluation includes three components: text comments, a general comment, and a quantitative score. In Canvas, you need to select the green “View Feedback” link on your assignments to see the text comments on your document. Allow at least ten business days for grades to be posted.

The text comments will provide the most specific revisions and feedback. The quantitative score correlates with a workplace framing of the performance level, see Table 1: Expectations. Imagine that your boss asks you to complete a project with a few essential items that must be included. You can choose to amaze them as the best employee, to satisfy them as a solid member of the team, or disappoint them as an underperformer, depending on how you demonstrate your skills.

“A” level work—being the best employee ever—meets the assignment objectives with critical and creative elements (editing, design, and style) that go beyond expectations. You can receive full credit, 95%, or 90% depending on any minor errors. “B” level work meets the basic expectations—you are a solid member of the team—and is worth either an 85% or an 80% depending on the effort, application of course concepts, and type of errors. “C” level work is below basic expectations due to missing requirements or a lack of editing/design principles. Don’t disappoint your boss.

This structure for grading rewards creativity, innovation, and effort while encouraging growth compared to point-based rubrics. Writing is a nuanced discipline with boundless ways to present ideas effectively, so this grading style provides more flexibility and fewer limitations on you. But, there are specific issues that harm your credibility and effectiveness as a writer such as cluttered design, disorganized themes, minimal formatting, and other pitfalls we will cover throughout the course.

All of you hold the potential to earn an “A” by integrating the course concepts for macro and micro-editing into your unique documents. You need to consider how the format and paragraph styles will help your reader navigate the information. Lastly, grammar is important. Too many mistakes with spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure will affect your grade. **I recommend Grammarly to help you proofread and edit your work.** The app will explain your error and help you improve your micro-editing. Grammarly includes a free version that works with Google Chrome, Word, and many other applications.

Table 1: Expectations

Very Effective <i>Minimal Improvements</i>	Effective <i>Minor Errors or Improvements</i>	Solid Foundation <i>Few minor Errors/a large error</i>	Less Effective <i>Significant Errors</i>	Requires Extensive Revisions <i>Unacceptable Errors</i>
<b>Full Points</b>	<b>95% to 90%</b>	<b>85% to 80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>Dependent</b>
Work that demonstrates creative and critical thinking to achieve the objectives in innovate and highly effective ways.	Strong work that demonstrates competency in the objectives with some creative and critical elements.	Work that fulfills the objectives but does not demonstrate additional creative or critical elements.	Lesser work that fulfills some of the required objectives. Note that missing any of the core requirements results in an automatic “C.”	Poor work that does not fulfill the objectives. Your recitation leader will be reaching out for a meeting with you.
<i>This type of work is worth a big promotion, ASAP</i>	<i>This type of work is worth a raise. You have amazed your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work is doing what you are paid to do: nothing more. You have satisfied your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work indicates a need for additional training. You have disappointed your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work would warrant termination.</i>

You are expected to hand in all assignments on time. **Late assignments will be given a zero (zero points); even if it was only 5 minutes past.** *I understand that emergencies may arise; speak with Dr. Johnson or me as soon as possible when circumstances arise.* If you are nearing a deadline and haven't yet finished an assignment, turn in what you have done so far for partial credit. **Assignments are assumed to be finished (to the best of your ability) once submitted to Canvas.** Grading may begin before a deadline has passed AND resubmissions are not accepted. You will receive **ONE Assignment Re-Do.** Notify me of your intention to use this Re-Do within two days of the grade posting. You then have three days to complete the revisions. The assignment re-do will replace the original grade, including an assignment that received a zero due to a missed deadline.

## RESOURCES

- CSU Writing Center | [writingcenter.colostate.edu](http://writingcenter.colostate.edu) | Eddy Hall Room 23
- Grammarly Free Writing Assistant | [www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com) | Download for Chrome, Word (Mac and PC)
- Communication Café for Presentations | [www.echorivera.com](http://www.echorivera.com)
- Melonie Dodaro | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/meloniedodaro/> | LinkedIn Expert
- Heather Lloyd-Martin | [www.seocopywriting.com](http://www.seocopywriting.com) | SEO and Online Content Strategy

### Schedule for Spring

Week	Activity Scenarios
1: Jan 25	Overview: Made to Stick
2: Feb 1	Grammar and Audiences
3: Feb 8	Infographics
4: Feb 15	Position Descriptions
5: Feb 22	Personal Branding Strat
6: Mar 1	Prof. Workshop
7: Mar 8	Safety Poster   <b>Turn in Discovery Notebook</b>
8: Mar 15	Midterm Exam
9: Mar 22	Spring Break!
10: Mar 29	Digital Writing and SEO
11: Apr 5	Intercultural Presentations
12: Apr 12	Training/Safety Poster
13: Apr 19	PowerPoint and Other Visuals
14: Apr 26	Personal Development   <b>Turn in Discovery Notebook</b>
15:	
16:	

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*Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.*

*George S. Patton*

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*Example of Memo for the Industry Analysis Essay*

# Memorandum

TO: All Associates of LB 300 for Modern Solutions

CC: Hayley Blackburn, Branch Supervisor

FROM: Dr. Emily Johnson, LB300 for Modern Solutions

DATE: Due on 2/3

SUBJECT: Analysis Essay of Your Industry

To begin the semester, this assignment requires you to research, analyze, and summarize the state of your future industry/career.

## Tasks

For your industry, you must **first identify and outline the chain of positions for your career choice**: consider entry level, mid-level, and senior positions. Then for each level investigate the trends and challenges you may face using the following questions. You may want to search sites like GlassDoor, LinkedIn, the CSU Career Center, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics as sources.

1. What are the current job numbers for your industry, generally?
2. What is the future job outlook? What regions and areas provide the strongest and weakest outlooks?
3. What skills and requirements are most often connected to this title in your industry?
4. What is the average salary for this title? What is the average starting salary?
5. Why are you interested in or feel you are well-suited for this industry?

## Expectations

Your paper should be 1-2 pages, double spaced. In writing your analysis, pay attention to how you structure your essay. Include good topic sentences and transitions for each paragraph followed by supporting details. Choose an organizational strategy that flows topically to improve readability of the essay (not necessarily in order of the questions listed).

You need to incorporate the following minimum requirements into the tasks outlined in the previous section:

- Paragraphs, full sentence form
- 2 sources cited within your work

To earn an “A,” you must meet the minimum expectations WITH critical and creative additions that demonstrate thoughtful organization, provide smooth transitions between topics, and include minimal editing errors. Your sources may be cited with a reference list or footnotes.

## Section 2: Recitation Structure

Each Friday students came prepared with a pre-activity (distributed on Wednesday), listened to a short lecture, and completed various collaborative activities.

The Wednesday activities were short in nature and built on concepts from the unit. Below is an example of the pre-activity.

For this activity, answer the three less-common interview/small-talk questions. Then, write two of your own questions.

*Think beyond the typical questions-- because you have plenty of resources, such as the Mock Interview software, to answer those. These questions are designed to draw out more of your values, traits, and reflective nature: the soft-skills that can help a company determine your cultural fit.*

**Question 1:** Who are two people, dead or alive, that you want to have dinner with and WHY. *In answering this question, consider what you would gain by talking to these individuals.*

**Question 2:** How do you define success, and when was the last time you felt successful? *In answering this question, make sure the story is concrete--and concise-- to demonstrate the core values an employer might be interested in.*

**Question 3:** Can you share a story about a time when you lost your temper and what the outcome was? *In answering this question, consider your emotional intelligence and how you might demonstrate your ability to communicate, collaborate, and learn to an employer.*

**After answering those questions, post TWO questions of your own.**

When students enter the room, a discussion question was posted on the board to set the tone for the class (the tone being a collaborative environment for sharing resources and ideas). Questions were items like...

“Do you believe polite and direct are in tension when writing emails?”

“What strategies do you use for editing and revising documents?”

Students discussed in small groups for the first 2-3 minutes of class before sharing out with the larger group. I worked across the room, asking each row to share one item discussed, to engage the breadth of the learning community. I listened in active ways to validate the students who chose to share.

I will continue this opening to my classroom sessions because it involves students as active participants in thinking, problem solving, and discussion rather than me jumping immediately into the lecture.

After several weeks, I did adjust the recitation structure to increase the engagement and deal with the lack of time provided in recitations. In the future, recitations would serve much more utility as a workshop and project-based opportunity if oriented as a “lab” with extended hours. **A two-hour lab with all 50 students could be manageable and provide more opportunity to apply skills, share the results, and discuss the writing process.**

The next pages feature the memo I released to students to explain the structural adjustments in recitations and the participation point strategy.



# Memorandum

**TO:** All Associates, 300 Analytical for Modern Solutions  
**CC:** Dr. Johnson, CEO 300 AMS  
**FROM:** Hayley Blackburn, Branch Supervisor 300 AMS  
**DATE:** February 10, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** New Policies for Recitation

Recitations provide space for activities, collaboration, and engagement with course materials. The prior policy did not meet the objectives for collaboration nor adequate engagement with the materials. I provided the instructions with an expectation that you would finish the product by 5 p.m. that day. We spent most of the hour working individually with minimal interaction or peer feedback. I assessed your grade with a “5” or a “3” depending on the quality of the product you finished in the short time frame.

*Starting immediately*, we will adhere to several policy changes. The restructured time-usage, increased collaboration, and altered participation measurements will enhance the Friday learning environment. The following sections outline the new policies and expectations for you to follow.

## Summary of Changes

Restructured Time-Usage: I will release the activity instructions every Wednesday at 3 p.m. for you to complete before recitation on Friday. During recitation, we will adhere to a new schedule, Table 1.

Table 1

Segment Description	Approx. Length (minutes)
Opening Discussion	5
Discovery Sharing	5
Partner and Group Discussions of Activity	30
Participation Responses (Post to your submission)	10

Increased Collaboration: Each segment of recitation centers around discussions with your peers and collaborative feedback. I will provide worksheets, prompts, and other resources to guide the peer-discussions depending on the activity. During the “Participation Responses” segment, you will post your answer to a prompt I provide in-class and respond to TWO of your peers’ work. Do not critique the same person you worked with during partner sharing.

Altered Participation Measurements: You will complete three actions to earn five total points.

1. Upload your product to the discussion module before Friday | **2 points**
2. Respond to the prompt; click “Reply to your original post | **1 point**
3. Provide a thoughtful comment on your peers’ work | **1 point each**

*You will have 10 minutes at the end of class to complete the participation responses. The discussion threads will close **30 minutes** after your recitation time (R1- 2:30, R2- 3:30).*

## Expectations of You

You are expected to complete the activity product before class on Friday. The activities will remain short; I do not expect you to spend more than an hour on any product. The activities are an opportunity for you to apply what you are learning in a quick, low-stakes scenario.

When sharing and responding to your associates' work, I expect honest and kind critiques to help your peers improve while demonstrating your grasp of the course material.

All written elements on the Discussion Forum should demonstrate appropriate mechanics, grammar, and design considerations.

## Action Items Every Week

- Get the activity instructions every Wednesday at 3.p.m.
- Complete the activity product over the next two days
- Upload your product to the Discussion Forum before class on Friday
- Post your participation responses to the Discussion Forum

You can download an updated copy of the syllabus from Canvas. If you have any concerns, questions, or another commentary, please do not hesitate to contact your 300-branch supervisor (recitation instructor).

\*\*\*In future recitations, I will keep a similar structure but focus more heavily on the outlining and revision process for the major writing projects. \*\*\*

## Section 3: Grading

As foreshadowed in the recitation syllabus, I approached grading with a comprehensive style to assess the document rather than focusing on the parts. While grading, I used verbal feedback with audio recordings of my thoughts (only on the two assignments that focused on document design), written comments within the document, highlighting for mechanical and grammatical feedback, and a general paragraph comment. I asked my students their thoughts on the audio feedback to mixed reactions: many felt positively because I could explain particular points more fully than in writing while others felt “weird” due to the one-sided conversation.

Moving forward, I see value in a 5/4/3/2/1 grading scheme to encourage students to focus on the feedback more than the points. Canvas can weight the various assignments accordingly, so every assignment could be graded out of 5.

Below is a further explanation of the grading philosophy and examples of the Cover Letter grading process. After grading is complete, I write a reflection memo (included with the Cover Letter Example) and post to Canvas for students to access.

The grading scheme follows a comprehensive format, which considers the effectiveness of the whole document in meeting the objectives rather than assigning point values per section. **Any missing elements from the core requirements specified in the assignment will result in an automatic “C” or less.** The expectations for every assignment are framed as a performance evaluation. The evaluation includes three components: text comments, a general comment, and a quantitative score.

In Canvas, you need to select the green “View Feedback” link on your assignments to see the text comments on your document. Allow at least 10 business days for grades to be posted.

Table 1: Expectations \*\*\* the categories can be adapted to the 5-1 scheme mentioned above\*\*\*

Very Effective <i>Minimal Improvements</i>	Effective <i>Minor Errors or Improvements</i>	Solid Foundation <i>Few minor Errors/a large error</i>	Less Effective <i>Significant Errors</i>	Requires Extensive Revisions <i>Unacceptable Errors</i>
<b>Full Points</b>	<b>95% to 90%</b>	<b>85% to 80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>Dependent</b>
Work that demonstrates creative and critical thinking to achieve the objectives in innovate and highly effective ways.	Strong work that demonstrates competency in the objectives with some creative and critical elements.	Work that fulfills the objectives but does not demonstrate additional creative or critical elements.	Lesser work that fulfills some of the required objectives. Note that missing any of the core requirements results in an automatic “C.”	Poor work that does not fulfill the objectives. Your recitation leader will be reaching out for a meeting with you.
<i>This type of work is worth a big promotion, ASAP</i>	<i>This type of work is worth a raise. You have amazed your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work is doing what you are paid to do: nothing more. You have satisfied your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work indicates a need for additional training. You have disappointed your boss.</i>	<i>This type of work would warrant termination.</i>

I began using this general rubric in the Spring of 2018 with strong feedback and outcomes. I find this scheme to be more efficient for me and more effective for the students. Rather than spending my time adding up point totals and wavering between a “6 or 7 out of 10” for every section, I can focus on the student’s work with meaningful feedback. At the end of the assignment, I determine how well the student met the core objectives to assign the correlating grade. I also establish the core qualities of each grade level to assist with the comprehensive grading. Below are the core qualities for each major assignment this semester.

Rubric for the assignments:

Industry Analysis Essay:

**A:** within the page limit, 1>3; every paragraph begins with a topic sentence followed by supporting information; every paragraph transitions into the next topic with a clear signpost for the readers; the content answers each of the questions for 3 titles related to a career in a thematic organizational pattern; the content reflects accurate data from credible sources; the document includes design elements such as headings and typography; the author provides strong voice with minimal grammatical errors; the author includes a distinct introduction and conclusion to overview/review core points.

**B:** over the page limit; some paragraphs are missing topic sentences; some paragraphs blend themes or include irrelevant information; some paragraphs are missing transitions between ideas; the organization moves in order of the questions posed in the memo; minimal attempt at design/ ineffective or distracting design elements are included; the author makes several grammatical errors; the author is missing either an introduction or conclusion that overview/reviews core points.

**C:** under the page limit; most paragraphs are missing topic sentences; topics jump around with no transitions; the author does not answer all the questions posed in the memo; little support or evidence is provided/cited within the essay; the author makes several grammatical errors.

**Minimums:** Paragraphs and 2 sources

Resume

**A:** 1-2 full pages; clearly positioned contact information; easy to navigate design with headings per section; highly skim-able; presents education with appropriate degree titles, experience with clear details of the responsibilities; evidence of relevant skills; use of strong verbs in the appropriate tense; additional design elements with alignment, fonts, and text size; one or fewer grammatical/spelling errors

**B:** less than 1 full page; contact information present but not clearly positioned; cluttered design; limited headings; missing degree titles; vague explanations of responsibilities; some evidence of relevant skills; some incorrect tense; poor design that hinders skim-ability; several grammatical/spelling errors

**C:** half a page or less; missing contact information; difficult to navigate design due to missing headings; minimal explanation of responsibilities; little evidence of relevant skills; more than 5 grammatical/spelling errors

**Minimums:** Personal summary statement/key skills; contact information; education; experience

Cover Letter

**A:** addressed to a specific person or specific position appropriate for the position (ex. Director of X Division); open with an orientation to the position and personality; demonstrates key skills with concrete details and stories; ends with review of qualifications and call to action; company focused (how you will help them); evidence of research into the company; clear voice; adhere to fundamentals of writing (transitions, topic sentences, focused content and support); fewer than 3 major grammatical errors

**B:** addressed to a general title related to the position (ex. Hiring Manager); open with an orientation to the position; discusses key skills in abstract terms; ends with call to action; limited company focus (how they will help you); limited tailoring to the company; limited voice; missing one or more transition, topic sentence; poor organization; 3 -5 grammatical errors

**C:** addressed to "To Whom It May Concern; very limited to no tailoring, orientation, or company focus (could be sent out in mass); lists skills without explanation; missing transitions throughout; more than 5 grammatical errors

**Minimums:** contact information for you and your company; specific person in address; three paragraphs of information

#### Training Manual: 50 points

**A:** clear title to orient the topic; opening paragraph with the purpose of the manual; strong purpose statement; identified appropriate warnings and liabilities; offered a table of contents with clear design and formatting; defined jargon and terms in a glossary; images provided to complement steps or information; overall thoughtful and strong design that looks professional and effortful

**B:** unclear title; opening paragraph does not overview the purpose and task; information is vague or incomplete for the task; limited warnings and dangers; some images are decorative rather than informative; steps are incomplete or too vague; missing helpful design elements such as headings, numbers/bullets, white space; limited professional elements or effort

**C:** under page limit; lacking an opening paragraph to orient the reader; information is not focused on a topic or task to complete; mostly decorative images; most steps are incomplete; limit design elements

**Minimums:** list of figures/table of contents; list of materials, tools, or equipment; 1 illustration or image; glossary of key terms

#### Final Paper: 125

**A:** Cover letter addressed to stakeholder with clear summary of the report; title page includes descriptive language and author information; table of contents includes the page numbers to help readers navigate; Introduction that orients the reader with a clear **PURPOSE STATEMENT and ROADMAP**; Literature and Background with enough context to build the argument; Method with types of sources, areas of research, and data collection including interview; Results with data to help the audience make a decision in problem-solving; Final Discussion/Recommendation with the ultimate recommendation or position statement; Final **CONCLUSION** that reviews all the core points; strong document design with clear headers and graphic choices. Ultimately, report explains the WHAT of the issue, the WHY of the issue, and the IMPACTS or SOLUTIONS with STRONG ARGUMENTS.

**B:** Cover letter with some summarizing of the report; title page includes vague language and author information; table of contents is difficult to navigate due to missing page numbers; introduction missing the orientation elements but includes a purpose statement; background bleeds into the results or leaves the reader behind without enough context; Method is vague or lacks credibility by missing the analytical framework; results lack in data and citations; Final Discussion does not answer or serve the purpose statement of the report; Report is missing persuasive information about WHAT, WHY, or the IMPACTS

**C:** Missing any of the required elements below OR introduction is missing the purpose statement; context vaguely identifies the topic; method is lacking in explanation of research process; results offer little to no citations to help in decision-making; final discussion not connected to data from the report; missing a conclusion; very poor document design with little to no effort

**Minimums:** Cover Letter; Table of Contents; One Graph; 1 interview; 8 Sources; Glossary

# Memorandum

TO: All Associates, 300 AMS  
CC: Dr. Johnson, CEO 300 AMS  
FROM: Hayley Blackburn, Branch Supervisor  
DATE: 3/8/2019  
SUBJECT: Grading Reflection for Cover Letter

We asked associates to search for a position and draft a cover letter as if they were applying for that job. Within the letter, associates were expected to follow professional business formatting with the appropriate contact information in the heading and to complement the skills from the resume with concrete details and support. Before this assignment, we hosted several guest speakers who emphasized cultural fit, experience details and tailoring within the cover letter. We also provided lectures and activities about the elements of a strong letter: persuasive introductions, concrete information, and clear connections to the keywords of the position.

The grading took approximately 8 minutes per cover letter over the course of 7 days. The 44 submissions produced an **average of 14.7 out of 20 points**. The most common errors were missing contact information/headers, rehashing of the resume without expansion, and disconnected experiences/minimal tailoring to the position. Moving forward, I recommend implementing additional activities for concrete writing—asking students to draft sentences based on vague skill statements.

*The qualities of each paper group follow below.*

## **Top Papers | 18-20 points | (N=8)**

Addresses a specific person or specific position (ex. Director of X Division); opens with an orientation to the position and company mission; demonstrates key skills with concrete details and stories; ends with review of qualifications and call to action; focuses on company (how you will help them); tailors to the company; adheres to fundamentals of writing (transitions, topic sentences, focused content and support); very few major grammatical errors

## **Mid Papers | 16-17 points**

Addresses a general title related to the position (ex. Hiring Manager); discusses key skills in abstract terms; focuses mainly on the individual (how they will help you); offers blanket/vague statements about the company/position; several grammatical errors

## **Other Papers | 19**

Addresses to “To Whom It May Concern; presents a fully blanket/templated letter (could be sent out in mass); lists skills without explanation; missing organization throughout; more than five grammatical errors

If you have any concerns, questions, or other commentaries, please do not hesitate to contact your 300 branch supervisor (recitation instructor).

February 24, 2019

Mr. Joshua Hartwell  
HR Coordinator  
J.P. Morgan Chase  
1201 16th St Mall,  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Hartwell:

My name is ■ and I am a senior at Colorado State University, majoring in Economics and minoring in Business Administration. I am very interested in the financial analyst opportunity in the Denver branch. I am a reliable, adaptable and humble individual with a growth mindset.

J.P. Morgan Chase has always been my ideal workplace. J.P. Morgan Chase has also become the top 10 world's most admired companies with its collaborative, innovative and inclusive environment. I believe I would be able to develop myself and contribute to the company which has the same core values as mine. Moreover, I was recently introduced to your firm via Ms. Tara Luke and I was impressed with the organization's focus on employee growth. I want to solve challenging problems with supportive colleagues and mentors as she is doing.

My academic background and experience have equipped me with strong analytical skills and organizational skills. I have excelled at Economics Data Analytics, Econometrics, and Investments. From these classes, I have utilized software to find correlations among data and predict future trends. In addition, having been the Vice Head of Academic Department, I learned to accommodate people's needs, prioritize jobs and delegate tasks to achieve the common goals.

Currently in a financial analyst position at Summit Fund, I provide research, financial modeling, and reviews, including:

- Forecasting economic trends using current key indicators and announcements
- Performing DCF valuation to identify undervalued stocks in the Telecommunication sector
- Providing quarterly risk analysis on equity of \$500,000
- Researching financial and operational data contributing to the investment process of up to \$30,000
- Benchmarking analyses giving directors overview of the fund's relative performance

If you are searching for a financial analyst with intellectual curiosity and a strong work ethic, we should speak. I can be reached at (970) ■ or via email at ■ @rams.colostate.edu. A copy of my resume is enclosed for your reference. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

■



This is one of the best cover letters I have read this week-- excellent work. You open with discussions about the company, specifically, demonstrating critical thinking and tailoring. The bullet points offer key items that you want to draw attention to.

The green areas are really strong statements that can be tailored for each position with the language they use. The purple is areas to consider being more concrete to anchor your skills. The yellow is a place to remind/connect the reader exactly how your experience will benefit the company.

Great work overall.

██████████ Drive  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
(925) ██████████  
██████████@yahoo.com  
February 24, 2018

Marathon Petroleum Company  
Human Resources Department  
1515 Arapahoe St Twr1 Ste 1600  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Davies,

Thank you for considering my application for Credit Analyst at Marathon Petroleum Corporation. Your company has values that I myself possess which provokes my interest in building a career with you. My interest in the economy and the oil industry have led me to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Economics. Additionally, I have always been intrigued by other cultures and languages which caused me to study Spanish language as a minor. The Credit Analyst position you recently posted matches my experience perfectly as well as aligns with my career goals.

Currently, I fill the role of Sales Lead at Francesca's. In this capacity I maintain a relationship between management and other boutique team members as well as ensure that our company morale is always being upheld. Here I am gaining valuable leadership experience and learning how to improvise in stressful situations as well as how to cater to the customer.

Previously, I worked as an intern at Diablo Valley Oncology and Hematology Medical Group. In this position I learned how to use several online patient tracking systems and uploaded all the printed copies to those databases. I was also responsible for completing research to write medical blogs that were posted on the practices website. Working as an intern gave me a foundational idea as to what an office workplace is like. This experience was very valuable in my professional development because I had my own workspace and was given tasks to complete by certain dates. This has given me a true sense as to what a workplace environment would be like down the road.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

██████████

This is a solid start to the letter but needs to be more tailored to and anchored by the position you are applying for. The content could be sent to any company in any field for any position.

The purple sections require more expansion on your skills by showing. Instead of stating you ensured company morale.. prove it with a strategy you implemented or task you completed that relates to the position you are applying for.

The yellow sections are areas that need to be directly connected to the company or position. Don't assume the reader will connect the dots for you-- tell them directly the benefit you will provide to the company.

The green is the best example of demonstrating skills-- now connect that to a responsibility in the position description.

R [REDACTED] H [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] St. SW

Loveland, CO, 80537

970-[REDACTED]

2/3/2019

Jessica Yanes

HR Coordinator

Office: 303-728-3882

[JessicaYanes@haselden.com](mailto:JessicaYanes@haselden.com)

Dear Ms. Jessica Yanes

I am applying for the position of field engineer. I was referred from [REDACTED] friend to check the online postings and apply. I have worked for Haselden since mid-December on the AZ Project at CSU. I enjoyed my time on the project and would like to make Haselden my home. I believe I could play a role in the company and be a part of the culture.

This summer I am interning with Haselden and hope to pick up more skills to further my education in construction. I have been involved in construction for over 15 years and have been through multiple sizes of projects. Most of my time has been in residential, but over the last year I have been on multiple commercial, school projects. I have worked in multiple areas and think that would benefit me in the project engineer position.

I have attached my resume for more detailed information on my construction history. If possible, I would like to follow up with you in one week's time. You can reach me at 970-[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@rams.colostate.edu, I hope to hear back from you soon, thank you for your time.

Sincerely

R [REDACTED] H [REDACTED]

You have so much experience yet didn't tell us about any of it in this letter. The main body is vague rather than demonstrating to Mr. Yanes how qualified you are. Provide details about a project or instance that clearly prepares you for the job of the field engineer.

The cover letter should draw that direct connection between your unique experiences and the responsibilities listed in the position. This cover letter could be turned into any company for any position... tailor it to the job you want.

For example, the second sentence (in your body) would serve as a perfect topic sentence. Then spend the next 3-4 sentences expanding on the multiple sized projects that required skills related to a field engineer.

Overall, this cover letter isn't representing the skillsets and experiences that you have. Make this document work harder for you--- return to the position description and highlight 2-3 key verbs, skills, or responsibilities. Then make sure to you use and directly connect to those highlighted items through your cover letter. Expand. Explain. Show.

## Section 4: Professional Development/Other

My teaching philosophy of self-efficacy and agency extends to my professional development. I participated in several events and read two books related to writing and teaching.

I highly recommend the books be integrated into the graduate teaching assistant reading list/training.

Activity Type	Summary	Benefit
Campus Engagement	Served as a U-Turn Navigator	Engaged in student success strategies
Academic Engagement	Attended education panel at the Western States Communication Conference	Networked with education researchers, learned strategies for stronger feedback (and got the idea for the audio comments)
Guest Lecture	Shared the Switch method with LB 300 lecture	Lectured with the large group about behavior change and management
Guest Lecture	Shared additional resources and salary negotiation strategies with LB 300 lecture	Lectured with the large group about workplace scenarios and documents not covered by the book
Guest Lecture	Provided an example of the Pecha Kucha style of presentation to JTC/LB 300	Presented to several lecture sections as an example of the oral presentation assignment
Learning Material/Reading	Made to Stick, Heath & Heath	Learned strategies for “sticky” writing--- engaged and informative communication.
Learning Material/Reading	Switch, Heath & Heath	Learned strategies for modifying behaviors

The following pages include other materials and items of potential interest.

- Teaching Observations from Dr. Johnson
- Grammar Guide Hand Out
- Growth Opportunity Hand Out (about revisions)
- Revision Checklist

Instructor: Hayley Blackburn    Observer: Emily Johnson  
 Class and Date Observed: Friday, February 22, 2019

### Observation Checklist

Scale: 1 =Very Poor; needs serious substantial improvement  
 3= Good; needs a fair amount of improvement  
 5 = Excellent; needs little improvement

<b>Content and Delivery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Appropriate use of time (begins/ends on time)					5		
Provides overview of topic/daily goals					5		
Appropriate level (depth & breadth)					5		
Clarity (prepared/explains jargon)				4			A little more explanation around the end-of-class points activity/discussion would be helpful. See my comments below.
Relevance (stays on topic)					5		
Knowledgeable & answers questions well					5		
Logical flow (organized & effective transitions)					5		
Pace of presentation/speaking					5		
Poses appropriate & clear questions					5		
Repeats students' questions/comments					5		
Uses of relevant examples					5		
PowerPoint (avoids reading off screen)					5		
PowerPoint (grammar & spelling)					5		
PowerPoint (font size & visual clarity)					5		
Use of demonstration/links to concepts					5		Very well done.
Use of active learning techniques					5		Great! The entire class period seemed to focus around active learning.
Handouts (useful in understanding topic)					5		'Handouts' were digital in nature (Canvas) – seemed to work well.
Provides conclusion/take home message					5		
<b>Physical &amp; Social Presence</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Makes eye contact with students					5		
Facial expression					5		
Movement about room					5		Great – you made an effort to stop by individuals and/or pairs of students and make sure they were on the right track.
Posture					5		
Professional attire					5		
Uses appropriate hand gestures					5		
Voice—audible					5		
Voice—variation in inflection & tone					5		
Composure/confidence					5		
Reinforces student participation					5		
Has rapport with students					5		
Engaging (interesting and informative)					5		
Demonstrates enthusiasm					5		
Demonstrates respect for students					5		
Uses of student names					5		

Addison, W. E., & Stowell, J. R. (2012). Conducting research on student evaluations of teaching. In M. E. Kite (Ed.), *Effective evaluation of teaching: A guide for faculty and administrators*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology web site: <http://teachpsych.org/ebooks/evals2012/index.php>

-Additional comments on back

## Overall impressions and comments

### What worked well?

- Nice opening activity by asking students to come up with stronger descriptions of the common resume content. Good way to incorporate active learning, though I feel like the majority of your class period was active-learning based!
- Your recap of resumes and why some points were taken off for not including specific information (e.g., educational titles/degrees) was helpful.
- **Cover letter diagram** – this was great. I like the way you diagrammed how students should provide specifics, such as a work ethic anecdote.
- **Personal Branding Strategy** – you did an awesome job explaining this. You personalized it by explaining most items in the context of your own personal brand.
- **Partner Google Search activity** – I like this activity a lot! I think bringing the class back together after they completed the research part of the activity to discuss what was found and what it means would have been fun and interesting. I witnessed this activity in several of the other recitations I observed, and some of the TAs did a group discussion after the activity.
  - It was interesting to hear what students learned from assessing their peers' profiles. Could be something to consider for the future.

### What could be improved?

- Confusion around the Participation Responses/Discussion:
  - A few of the students sitting near me had confusion about what they were supposed to do for the Discussion. I think spending a minute or so more explaining this, possibly even pulling it up on Canvas, would be helpful.



**Observation Checklist**

Scale: 1 =Very Poor; needs serious substantial improvement 3= Good;  
needs a fair amount of improvement  
5 = Excellent; needs little improvement

<b>Content and Delivery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Appropriate use of time (begins/ends on time)					5		
Provides overview of topic/daily goals					5		
Appropriate level (depth & breadth)					5		
Clarity (prepared/explains jargon)					5		
Relevance (stays on topic)					5		
Knowledgeable & answers questions well					5		Very knowledgeable. Questions did not arise during your lecture.
Logical flow (organized & effective transitions)					5		
Pace of presentation/speaking				4.5			At times, your speaking was a bit fast-paced. This did not necessarily 'hinder' your lecture, but I recommend trying to implement strategies that can help you to slow your pace (e.g., ask students questions and allow yourself to pause). Easier said than done!
Poses appropriate & clear questions				4.5			I encourage you to ask a few more questions during your lecture. This would help you to slow your speaking pace (i.e., it will give you a second to 'breathe') and also increase engagement.
Repeats students' questions/comments					5		Yes, you do a great job providing positive reinforcement when students participate.
Uses of relevant examples					5		Yes, great examples included throughout your lecture.
PowerPoint (avoids reading off screen)					5		
PowerPoint (grammar & spelling)					5		
PowerPoint (font size & visual clarity)					5		Excellent!
Use of demonstration/links to concepts					5		
Use of active learning techniques					5		Active learning is demonstrated through the lecture activity you assigned. If you want to bring more of this into the lecture itself, I suggest infusing your talk with a few more thought-provoking questions. *I realize it can be harder to do this depending on the topic.
Handouts (useful in understanding topic)						N/A	
Provides conclusion/take home message					5		Yes – very strong takeaway message.
<b>Physical &amp; Social Presence</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Makes eye contact with students					5		
Facial expression					5		Great – you smile a lot and make it clear that you are passionate and enthusiastic about the topic(s).
Movement about room					5		
Posture					5		
Professional attire					5		
Uses appropriate hand gestures					5		
Voice—audible					5		
Voice—variation in inflection & tone					5		
Composure/confidence					5		
Reinforces student participation					5		
Has rapport with students					5		
Engaging (interesting and informative)					5		
Demonstrates enthusiasm					5		
Demonstrates respect for students					5		
Uses of student names					5		

## Overall impressions and comments

### What worked well?

- Nice introduction to explain the rationale and significance of your topic
- Slides are effective – I liked your visual representation of the licensing agreement
  - The example of the licensing agreement and insurance policy
    - I like how you looped back to what students should pay attention to the most in using the insurance policy page
- Communication Contract slides:
  - You did a great job explaining the various types of contracts
  - Liked the tie-in to the ‘Shut Your Damn Mouth’ giphy!
- I liked the examples you intertwined throughout your discussion. One suggestion would be to spend a little time talking about the language and design featured in these types of technical documents.
  - This could have been an interesting critique to blend into your lecture.
- Getting (or not getting) the job slides:
  - This was great. I liked how you talked about the job search process and how it can take a long time. Encouraging students to apply for jobs early was helpful.
  - I liked your explanation about why it’s important to make sure conditions are in writing in the offer letter.
  - Performance Evaluations – this was great. Visual example was good and your discussion around this was well done. I like how you looped back to the ‘weaknesses’ discussion from Rusty’s lecture.
- Salary Negotiation – wonderful lead-in to this topic! Also, great giphys on your slide.
  - I like how you broke this down into steps **AND** included the ‘Tools to get you started.’
  - I really liked Step #2 and the focus on being concrete – knowing your value and how you would be valuable to the company.
  - LOVED the keep track of your accomplishments slide – this is such a good idea.
  - I liked your closing – the message you gave about being sure to back up your skills / track your progress was strong and the ‘things to take away from this talk’ was solid!
- **Lecture Point Activity:** I reviewed the assignment you posted on Canvas and thought it was well done. I think the writing prompt you assigned is highly relevant and also connects to the portion of the Personal Brand Strategy where they were asked to talk about their plans for ‘self-analysis/measurement.’ I like your focus on encouraging students to track their progress (which you back with strong examples of why it is important/how it can come into play [e.g., Preston’s promotion example]).

### What could be improved?

- This is not necessarily a ‘negative,’ but I do think your lecture could have been enhanced by creating more dialogue with the class. You did this with the performance evaluation topic, but I think it could have strengthened some of the earlier topics by generating some discussion with the students.
- One other small suggestion is to blend in some examination or critique of the language and design featured in the technical documents you reviewed.

# Grammar Cheat Sheet

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*This document defines and provides examples of parts of speech, sentence construction, punctuation, common errors, and citation elements to guide your writing.*

---

## Parts of Speech

Sentences contain several parts of speech to convey your message. Additional parts of speech exist; the list below focuses on the most common for general writers.

**Noun:** names a person, place, object, or idea

**Verb:** denotes an action or a state of being

**Adjective:** modifies a noun with descriptions

**Adverb:** modifies a verb with descriptions and usually ends in -ly

**Conjunction:** joins words or phrases

- **Coordinating:** joins elements of equal value (FANBOYS)
  - For—introduces effect and cause
    - I failed the test, for I did not study.
  - And—adds information to the previous statement
  - Nor—removes alternatives in the context
  - But—indicates contrast or unexpectedness to previous statement
  - Or—offers a choice in the context
  - Yet—expresses a stronger contrast than “but” for the context
  - So—introduces cause and effect
    - I did not study, so I failed the test.
- **Subordinating:** creates a dependent clause
  - although, as, since, unless, whenever, while
- **Conjunctive Adverb:** modifies an entire clause but does not make it dependent. Often used with semicolons
  - however, therefore, consequently

## Sentence Construction

A sentence is a group of words dictated by syntax to express a thought, statement, question, or command.

**Subject:** states the topic of the sentence (the WHO)

**Predicate:** comments about the subject (the WHAT HAPPENED)

**Fragment:** lacks either the subject or the predicate

**Independent Clause:** stands alone as a sentence

**Dependent Clause:** requires a main clauses to complete the context

**Modifier:** adds additional information to its object

*When you are constructing sentences, make sure that you can answer WHO and WHAT every time. After you have the basic structure, add in modifiers and clauses as needed.*

# Grammar Cheat Sheet

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## Punctuation

Every punctuation mark serves specific functions to enhance your writing. Misusing punctuation can decrease the clarity, credibility, and flow of your sentences.

**Period:** marks the end of a sentence that does not ask a direct question nor represent emotion. Periods also separate decimals and abbreviations.

**Comma:** separates sentence components: modifiers, clauses, listed items. A comma does not necessarily indicate a pause or breath. There are 14 functions of a comma—ensure you know the function of the comma you place

- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/607/02/>
- Pages 483-486 in Markel & Selber, 2019

**Semicolon:** connects closely related independent clauses without any coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS). Semicolons can (but rarely) be used to separate list items that include commas to reduce confusion

- The class is divided into three learning areas: editing for grammar, punctuation, and style; writing technical and academic documents; and planning, creating, and delivering presentations.

**Colon:** introduces words, phrases, or clauses that expand on general statements. You must have an independent clause before the colon, so make sure you *could* place a period there first. You may use a colon before lists or formal quotes as well

- Preston’s mother lures us to her house with her secret weapon: homemade apple pie.
- Gatsby takes several naps throughout the day: every morning, just before lunch, the late afternoon, and just before bedtime.
- Thanos smiled as he spoke his last words: “You should have aimed for the head.”

**Hyphen:** shows that two words function as a single unit

- Open-ended survey questions
  - The question is not open AND ended: it is a type of question

**Dashes:** sets off a change of thought, tone, or emphasis. Often dashes are a stylistic rather than mechanical choice as commas serve similar functions

**Apostrophe:** indicates possession, contraction, and certain plurals

- Can’t = cannot
- Hayley’s or Thomas’
- The test scores clustered around several 10’s, four 7’s, and many 3’s.

# Grammar Cheat Sheet

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## Common Errors in Writing

Authors have flexibility and power when choosing the style, voice, tone, and construction of sentences; however, with great power comes great responsibility to the mechanical clarity of the sentence.

**Subject-Verb Agreement:** the subject and verb do not match in plurality

Singular subjects (the WHO is one) agree with singular verbs. In most cases, the singular verb form ends with an “s.”

- Gatsby **play**(s) with his toys.

Plural subjects (the combination of multiple subjects) agree with plural verbs

- The toys (go)**es** in the toybox.

**Faulty Predicate:** the predicate does not comment logically on the subject. The subject cannot complete the action you described.

- The observations **conclude**...
  - Only humans can conclude, but the observations could reflect or show
  - Academic authors often use “The research suggests” **but** “the authors argue”

**Misplaced/Dangling Modifier:** the clause is separated from the correct object. Modifiers are connected to the closest noun.

- Hayley, **who was late with another essay**, waited for the slacker student.
  - The student is late, but the modifier is connected to Hayley.
- **Confused**, the question was left blank.
  - The modifier has no actor and connects to “the question” that cannot be “confused”

**Tense Shift:** the timeline of action contradicts logic or changes arbitrarily

- I **wrote** the paper after I **outline** the topics.
  - Wrote is in the past yet outline is present.

**Faulty Parallelism:** related items do not share grammatical structure.

- I like to go on walks, hikes, swim**ming**.
- I like dogs, cats, and **riding** horses.

## Adding Unnecessary Commas

- If you are listing only TWO items, you do not need a comma
- Just because you want to “take a breath” in the sentence, you don’t NEED a comma. Make sure all your commas **serve a purpose** in technical writing
- NEVER separate the subject from the verb with a **single** comma

# Grammar Cheat Sheet

## Fun Rules to Remember

American English is a composite language from many cultures and traditions, which creates interesting syntax and rules. The rules evolve over time and can differ by region and dialect.

In American English, the “e” typically gets dropped when adding “ment” to a root word.

- Judgment
- Acknowledgment.

Who vs. Whom

- Who is the subject of the sentence (he or she)
  - Who stole the ball? She stole the ball.
- Whom is the object of the sentence (him or her)
  - Pat stole the ball from whom? Pat stole the ball from him.

Numbers ten and below are written out

- I have two favorite movies. I have watched them over 30 times each.
- I own seasons 1-4 of the show.
  - If the numbers represent a grouping or series, you can use numerals.

## Citation Formats

Use citations to indicate the origin of information within your writing. Unless the information is common knowledge (k-12 education would teach this) or completely original, you need to show the logic of your arguments and statements.

Style	Citation Format	In-Text Format
<b>APA: Reference</b>	Last name, First initial. (Year). Title of the article. <i>Title of the Journal</i> , Volume Number (Issue Number), Pages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blah blah blah (Blackburn, 2019).</li> <li>• Blackburn (2019) suggests that “blah blah blah” (p. 18).</li> </ul>
<b>MLA: Works Cited</b>	Last name, first name. “Title of the article.” <i>Title of the Journal</i> , Volume Number. Issue Number (Year): Page numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blah blah blah (Blackburn 18).</li> <li>• Blackburn suggests “blah blah blah” (18)</li> </ul>
<b>Chicago: Bibliography</b>	Last name, first name. “Title of the article.” <i>Title of the Journal</i> , Volume Number, Issue Number (Year): Page numbers.	<p>Use a footnote <sup>1</sup></p> <p>You can abbreviate for directly subsequent citations<sup>2</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> First Name Last Name, “Article title.” *Journal Title* Volume Number, Issue number (Year): Page

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Page Number

**Original Introduction:**

Lived experiences of humanity shape language just as language influences the experiences within a world: members of a community, be it national or niche, navigate the intersections of language and experiences to develop a sense of self and other (Althusser, 1968/2017; Barthes, 1964/2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Often, the arbitrary constructions of practice and meaning transform into seemingly objective assumptions about truth in the world; what we express and believe to be true is limited by the routines we follow (Bourdieu, 1980/2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The mediated landscape of reality television offers a site to consider how history, language, and behavior [re]produce scripts for normative practices and character development within interpretive communities (Althusser, 1968/2017; Reisman, 1950/2017). I analyze *Bachelor Nation*—the community of the popular television program(s) including *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, and *Bachelor in Paradise*— to tease out the ways that contestants navigate several layers of practice and linguistic expectations that adhere to romanticized ideals in the simulation of love and niche routines. Through the deconstruction of *Bachelor Nation*'s system of practice, I identify how *Bachelor Nation* offers love in a reproduced and exhibitionist sense to reinforce ideological scripts for “appropriate” romance in Western society to audiences: namely heterosexual and monogamous.

**Original Topic Sentences/Idea Organization:**

1. Language provides a system for members to follow and understand themselves and Others.
2. *Bachelor Nation* exists within the Western superstructure for courting behavior guided by a language of “love” relations.
3. The matrix of commodified love, the reproduction of nuanced and private human expressions into an inauthentic consumable devoid of contextual value (Benjamin, 1969/2012), ascribes to a language of imagined romantics that unites each text within the structure.
4. Turning within *Bachelor Nation*, the members of the community follow a habitus. Habitus describes the understood and practiced, yet not explicitly stated, norms of a community (Bourdieu, 1980/2017).
5. *Bachelor Nation* rests on and reinforces the dominant value that a one, true love defined through a marriage commitment leading to a family is the ideal existence to attain (Friedan, 1963).

**Original Conclusion:**

In the end, the enjoyment and pleasure that members of *Bachelor Nation* experience in the process, either on the show or viewing the program, are real enough in the moment to reinforce an ideological belief in dominant love scripts while distracting the viewer from other issues or authentic expression and experiences (Benjamin, 1969/2012; Marcuse, 1964/2017). *Bachelor Nation* navigates social and internal practices that reinforce heteronormative, monogamous constructions of true love within the boundary of Western ideology.

**Revised Introduction:**

Members of a community, be it national or niche, navigate the intersections of language and experiences to develop a sense of self and Other (Althusser, 1968/2017; Barthes, 1964/2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For members of the community, the arbitrary constructions of practice and meaning transform into objective assumptions about truth in the community (Bourdieu, 1980/2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The interpretive communities of reality television share histories, linguistic symbols, and behaviors to establish inside and outside members (Althusser, 1968/2017; Reisman, 1950/2017). I consider how *Bachelor Nation*—the community of the popular television program(s) including *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, and *Bachelor in Paradise*—establishes in and outgroup membership through language and shared symbolic meanings.

**Revised Topic Sentences/Organization:**

1. Language provides a system of values for members to follow and understand themselves and Others.
2. Members within *Bachelor Nation* must understand and buy into the history of the romance genre that informs the ideology of the interpretive community
3. The members of the *Bachelor Nation* community also follow a habitus.
4. Contestants who hope to *continue their journey for love* (as the code for future participation in *B Nation*) behave in accordance to the habitus.

**Revised Conclusion:**

In the end, the enjoyment and pleasure that members of *Bachelor Nation* experience in the process, either on the show or viewing the program, unite members while dividing Others from participating in the *Nation*. Members understand the linguistic nuances, decode a shared meaning to roses, and participate in the ideology of the romance genre; non-members often reflect cynicism and perform as ‘haters’ because they lack the shared interpretation to the symbols of *Bachelor Nation*.

**Summary of Changes Made:**

- Revised the argument statement to focus on the prompt: in and out group formation
- Cut topics 3 and 5 completely—a discussion of reproduction and commodification of love diverge from the argument
- Reframed topic 2 as a discussion of the material existence that informs the in and out group
- Expanded topic 4, the discussion of habitus, to inform my argument about in-group behavior

My professor pointed out how far I strayed from the central argument about in/out group identity formation. The general topic of *Bachelor Nation* ideology offers many exciting strands of inquiry—I went down a rabbit hole. Avoid this mistake in your writing by highlighting and RETURNING to your argument/purposes statement frequently. Every new topic sentence should align with and enhance your central purpose. If the topic does not, consider if it belongs in the paper at all.



Use this checklist to draft and improve every document you create moving forward. The items reflect the fundamental writing skills we have covered and frequently emphasized this semester. The checklist is appropriate for documents of any length with the purpose to inform, persuade, or instruct an audience.

The checklist is organized in sequential order, by the concept.

### First Round Drafting

- ✓ Generate a **rough outline** to brainstorm the topics and content organization
  - Spend no more than 10 minutes on this stage for rapid ideation
- ✓ Expand on the rough outline with topic sentence drafts, potential sources, and a **purpose statement/argument**
- ✓ Translate your extended outline into a full draft of the document
  - Do not spend time refining every sentence at this stage; focus on fleshing out every idea with complete sentences and appropriate data
- ✓ Leave your document for a short time: walk away for at least 30 minutes
- ✓ Return to your document for the revision and refining process
  - Look at the content with attention to your purpose statement. Ask yourself if every topic sentence relates to the purpose and argument of your document

### Second Round Editing

- ✓ Highlight **every** topic sentence
  - Ensure that the following statements in your paragraph support the topic sentence
- ✓ Count your headings
  - Typically, documents will have 2-4 headings with 2-3 subheadings. For each heading, circle the central topic to ensure the usability (*readers use the headings to navigate through content topics*)
- ✓ Consider the design
  - Think critically about the **proximity, alignment, contrast, and white space** throughout the document
  - Add bullet points, bold, italics, underlines, and graphics as necessary to increase the design

### Final Revision

- ✓ Read your introduction and conclusion
  - Take note of the topics you promised to cover—are they included in the report AND in the order you previewed
  - Imagine the audience only reads the conclusion—have you reviewed the core points from your document in the last paragraph
- ✓ Run Grammarly
  - Use the resources and technology available to proofread your work