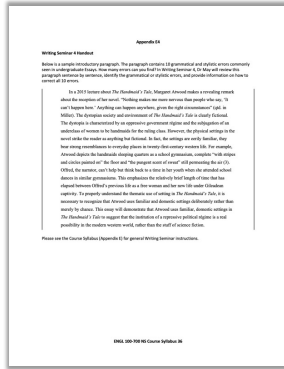


Writing Seminar 4



Appendix D4

- a sample introductory paragraph
- contains 10 errors commonly seen in undergraduate English essays:
 - **grammatical:** involving specific rules of syntax, punctuation, usage, etc.
 - **stylistic:** involving established norms of formal expository essay writing

Writing Seminar 4

✗ In a 2015 lecture about *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood makes a revealing remark about the reception of her novel. "Nothing makes me more nervous...."

✓ In a 2015 lecture about *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood makes a revealing remark about the reception of her novel: "Nothing makes me more nervous...."

integration (integ)

- integrate direct quotations properly into the text of formal expository writing
- methods:
 - ✓ use a *colon*
 - ✓ use a *signal phrase* and a *comma* ("Atwood writes,")
 - ✓ break down the quotation into individual words or phrases and combine them into your own phraseology

Writing Seminar 4

✗ The dystopian society and environment of *The Handmaid's Tale* is clearly fictional.

✓ The dystopian society and environment of *The Handmaid's Tale* are clearly fictional.

agreement (agr)

- the *nouns*, *pronouns*, and *verbs* in a sentence must agree in number:
 - ✓ *singular* with *singular*
 - ✓ *plural* with *plural*
- avoid mixing singular and plural nouns, pronouns, and verbs

Writing Seminar 4

✗ The dystopia is characterized by an oppressive government régime and the subjugation of an underclass of women to be handmaids for the ruling class.

✓ An oppressive government régime and the subjugation of an underclass of women to be handmaids for the ruling class characterize the dystopia.

passive voice (psv)

- know the difference between *tense* and *voice*:
 - **tense:** when in time the sentence takes place
 - **voice:** the relationship between the subject and the object of a sentence
- avoid the *passive voice* in formal expository writing
- use the *active voice* instead

Writing Seminar 4

Active Voice		
noun	verb	noun
The dog	bit	the boy.
subject	→	object
	performs	
Passive Voice		
noun	auxiliary verb / past participle	noun
The boy	was bitten by	the dog.
subject	←	object
	is performed upon by	

Writing Seminar 4

✗ However, the physical settings in the novel strike the reader as anything but fictional.

✓ However, the physical settings in the novel seem anything but fictional.

point of view (*pov*)

- avoid referring to “the reader” or “the audience” in formal expository writing
- there is no such thing as a single, transcendent “reader” or “audience”
- rephrase the sentence to avoid referring to the non-existent “reader” or “audience”

Writing Seminar 4

✗ In fact, the settings are eerily familiar, they bear strong resemblances to everyday places in twenty-first-century western life.

✓ In fact, the settings are eerily familiar, and they bear strong resemblances to everyday places in twenty-first-century western life.

comma splice (*splice*)

- avoid *comma splices* in formal expository writing (two complete sentences (i.e., *independent clauses*) joined together with a comma)
- correct comma splices by repunctuating the sentence:
 - ✓ use a *semicolon*
 - ✓ use a *comma* with a *coordinating conjunction*
 - ✓ use two separate sentences

Writing Seminar 4

✗ For example, Atwood depicts the handmaids sleeping quarters as a gymnasium, “with stripes and circles painted on” the floor, and the “smell of sweat” in the air (3).

✓ For example, Atwood depicts the handmaids’ sleeping quarters as a gymnasium, “with stripes and circles painted on” the floor, and the “smell of sweat” in the air (3).

possessive (*poss*)

- use an *apostrophe* to indicate *possession*, not *pluralization*.
- there are different arrangements of the apostrophe and the letter “s” according to the type of possessive:
 - ✓ singular vs plural noun
 - ✓ proper vs common noun
 - ✓ nouns ending in double s
 - ✓ historical personages

Writing Seminar 4

noun	type	possessive
king	singular noun	king's
marquis	singular noun -s	marquis's
mistress	singular noun -ss	mistress'
Richard	singular proper noun	Richard's
Dickens	singular proper noun -s	Dickens's
Weiss	singular proper noun -ss	Weiss'
monarchs	plural noun -s	monarchs'
Dickenses	plural proper noun	Dickenses'
men	plural irregular noun	men's
Socrates	historical personage	Socrates'

Writing Seminar 4

✗ This emphasizes the relatively brief length of time that has elapsed between Offred's previous life as a free woman and her new life under Gileadean captivity.

✓ This disparity emphasizes the relatively brief length of time that has elapsed between Offred's previous life as a free woman and her new life under Gileadean captivity.

demonstrative pronoun (*dem*)

- *demonstratives*: "this," "that," "these," and "those"
- *demonstrative pronouns*: when followed by a *verb*
✗ e.g., "This is mine."
- *demonstrative adjectives*: when followed by a *noun*
✓ e.g., "This pen is mine."
- use *demonstrative adjectives*, not *demonstrative pronouns*, in formal expository writing

Writing Seminar 4

✗ Offred, the narrator, can't help but think back to a time in her youth when she attended school dances in similar gymnasiums.

✓ Offred, the narrator, cannot help but think back to a time in her youth when she attended school dances in similar gymnasiums.

contraction (*cont*)

- a *contraction* is the shortening of two common words into one by replacing letters with apostrophes:
✗ e.g., "can't" vs "cannot"
✗ e.g., "don't" vs "do not"
✗ e.g., "won't" vs "will not"
- avoid contractions in formal expository writing, as they are a form of *abbreviation*, an informal style of writing

Writing Seminar 4

✗ To properly understand the thematic use of setting, it is necessary to recognize that Atwood uses familiar and domestic settings deliberately rather than merely by chance.

✓ To understand properly the thematic use of setting, it is necessary to recognize that Atwood uses familiar and domestic settings deliberately rather than merely by chance.

split infinitive (*spl inf*)

- the *infinitive* form of the verb is *to + present participle*
- splitting the infinitive involves inserting an *adverb* between the two components of the infinitive:
✗ e.g., "to boldly go"
- avoid splitting the infinitive in formal expository writing
- either delete the adverb or move it elsewhere in the sentence
✓ e.g., "to go boldly"

Writing Seminar 4

X This essay will demonstrate that Atwood uses familiar, domestic settings in *The Handmaid's Tale* to suggest that the institution of a repressive political régime....

✓ This essay will demonstrate that Atwood uses familiar, domestic settings in *The Handmaid's Tale* to suggest that the institution of a repressive political régime....

signposting (*sgnpst*)

- avoid *signposting* words and phrases in formal expository writing
- a *signposting* word or phrase is one in which the writer tells the reader “out loud” what they intend to prove in an essay:
 - X e.g., “This essay will prove that....”
 - X e.g., “This quotation shows that....”

For More Information

Dr May's Class Web Site
<https://www.queensu.ca/academia/drrgmay/docs/>

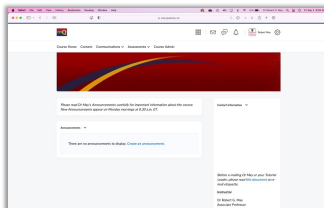
- “Grammar and Style Notes”
- “Comma Use”
- “The Passive Voice”
- “The Split Infinitive”
- “Integrating Quotations”

The Purdue Online Writing Lab
<https://owl.purdue.edu/>

- “General Writing” > “Writing Style”
- “General Writing” > “Mechanics”
- “General Writing” > “Grammar”
- “General Writing” > “Punctuation”

Queen's Student Academic Success Services (SASS) Online Resources
<https://sass.queensu.ca/onlineresource/topics/>

onQ Quiz 4



<https://onq.queensu.ca>

- test your knowledge of Writing Seminar 4 by writing onQ Quiz 4
- access the Quiz on onQ (under “Assessments” > “Quizzes”)
- the onQ Quiz consists of a series of multiple-choice questions
- the suggested due date for this onQ Quiz is this Friday, but you may complete it anytime this term
- this onQ Quiz is worth 2% of your final grade

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