

A Guide to Sentence-Level Markings

This guide should help you understand the little “x”s you get in the margins of your papers. If you have many of the same type of error and are not sure how to correct the problem, please come see me so we can straighten it out before your next paper.

Code	Translation	Meaning
sp	spelling	Word is misspelled.
ww	wrong word	Word is spelled correctly but doesn't make sense in the sentence.
art	a/an/the articles	You've used <i>a</i> where <i>an</i> is correct, or vice versa, or you left the article out.
pl	plural	You've misused a plural — either you made a word singular that should be plural or vice versa.
pron	pronoun agreement	Your pronoun does not match the noun it refers to.
cap	capitalization	A word is capitalized that shouldn't be, or a word that should be capitalized is not.
hom	homonym	You've chosen incorrectly among words that are homonyms (sound the same), e.g. they're/their/there, it's/its, to/two/too.
poss	possessive	You've inserted a possessive apostrophe where there is no possession, or you've failed to do so where there is possession, or you've placed the apostrophe in the wrong place.
contr	contraction	The contraction has been punctuated incorrectly (apostrophe in wrong place or left out entirely).
 ism	parallelism	Your sentence has a list that doesn't follow parallel structure.
v.t.	verb tense	You have the wrong verb tense for the time frame you are talking about or you've switched tenses in the middle of a sentence.
v.f.	verb form	You have the right verb tense for the time frame but the wrong form of the verb.
-ed	-ed endings	You either left off an -ed ending where one should be or you added one where one should not be.
core	sentence core	Your sentence core (subject and verb) is confusing or unidentifiable.
s-v	subject verb agreement	Your subject and verb do not match in this sentence. (Both should be plural or both should be singular).
frag	fragment	This is not a complete sentence. It could be a dependent clause or an appositive that has been incorrectly punctuated.
RTS	run together sentence	You have smushed together two independent sentences and punctuated them as one sentence.
s.f.	sentence focus	You've used weak or abstract subjects and/or verbs in your sentence core.
d.m.	dangling modifier	The subject of your sentence must be the “doer” or agent of your verbal phrase.
idiom	idiom	You've made an idiomatic error; the idea you're expressing isn't traditionally used this way in English.
AC	adjective clause	You've made an adjective clause error (e.g. who/whom, where, when, which/that).
comma	comma	You've added a comma that shouldn't be there or you've left out a comma where there should be one.