

Common Problems Noted in FCS Student Essays*

Problem	Example
<i>misspelled words</i>	<p>e-mail (<i>not</i> email) et al. (note punctuation) Internet (capitalize proper nouns) lifecycle <i>or</i> life-cycle (<i>not</i> life cycle) naïve (note the diaeresis) Unix (not UNIX, because it is not an acronym) Web and Web-based (capitalize proper nouns), <i>but</i> webpage, webserver and website</p> <p><i>Note</i> also that hyphens are required for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjectival phrases <i>aka</i> compound adjectives such as ‘end-user’ in ‘end-user documentation’ • all cases where they eliminate ambiguity
<i>meaningless words</i> (with improvements)	<p>period of time → period <i>or</i> time in order to → to due to the fact that → because <i>or</i> since interval of time period → interval <i>or</i> time interval actually (when used solely for emphasis) → <i>omit</i> really (when meaning very)</p>
<i>imprecise language</i>	<p>mention (an incidental reference) ... <i>when</i> noted, said, found, commented, etc. is what you mean intuitive ... <i>when</i> you mean familiar or common practice easy-to-use ... <i>when</i> you mean to refer to the concept of <i>perceived</i> <i>ease-of-use</i> or to a more elaborate concept of usability</p>
<i>colloquialisms</i>	<p>a lot, lots of → much <i>or</i> many plenty of → much way better → much better has gone way high questions run through the mind access (<i>as a verb</i>) → <i>perhaps</i> use <i>or</i> gain access to</p>
<i>inappropriate terminology</i>	<p>user friendly using this term incorrectly will result in an automatic \mathcal{F}</p>
<p><i>proposed solⁿ?</i> <i>lacking necc. foundation</i> <i>unaware of existing research</i> })</p>	<p>CSCI 6606 students see <i>Principles for Term Paper Grading</i></p>

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(This is the first of 3 pages.)

Notation	Meaning																
<i>act</i>	Unless you have a good reason, use only the active voice and 1st person																
<i>ambig.</i>	Ambiguity should be resolved																
<i>cite</i>	The full bibliographic record must be included when referring to people, projects, publications, software etc. <i>and</i> in the reference section (☛ see also <i>proof?</i> and <i>ref</i>)																
<i>colloq.</i>	Avoid colloquialisms and jargon in formal writing Examples of the most frequent uses of jargon etc. are on page 1																
<i>cont.</i>	Avoid contractions in formal writing																
<i>dang.</i>	Avoid dangling referents such as in the sentences ‘ <i>They found ...</i> ’ and ‘ <i>This means ...</i> ’ (Who are ‘they’? This <i>what?</i>)																
<i>defⁿ?</i>	Key terms should be defined earlier In a summary the key terms should be explained not merely referred to.																
<i>d/s</i>	use double-spacing																
<i>expand</i>	Expand acronyms and abbreviations at first use <i>except</i> for the very common non-technical abbreviations such as the usual Latin ones (for example, ‘a.m.’, ‘e.g.’, ‘et al’, ‘etc.’, ‘i.e.’, ‘p.m.’), names of days and months, academic degrees (e.g. PhD), names of countries (e.g. UK, USA), GMT for standard time, units of measure, and US states in addresses.																
<i>hyph</i>	Use hyphen (-) not dash (– or —) – (en dash) is for ranges of numbers <i>or vice versa</i> (☛ see also <i>symbol</i>) — (em dash) is the usual dash																
<i>m/u</i>	Your meaning is unclear – make it easier to understand																
<i>N/S</i>	Not a sentence																
<i>para</i>	Paragraphs must be clearly delineated by vertical space, indentation, or both																
<i>proof?</i>	Factual claims must be justified by evidence or by citations to work that include evidence (☛ see also <i>cite</i> and <i>ref</i>)																
<i>p.#?</i>	Missing page number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page numbers are required for quotations. • Remember that copying illustrations is the same as quoting. 																
<i>Q</i>	More detail is needed																
<i>rel?</i>	You must explain why this passage is relevant When you describe experimental method (or include any detail from an experiment or study) that detail <i>must</i> be clearly relevant to the point of your summary. If the reason for including the detail is not obvious then you must make the reason clear to your reader.																
<i>ref</i>	References must be parenthetical. Do not use references as nouns. (☛ see also <i>cite</i> and <i>proof?</i>) References should not need to be read aloud for sentences to make sense. For example <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td><i>As [1] says ...</i></td> <td>WRONG!</td> <td><i>As (Jones, 1993) says ...</i></td> <td>WRONG!</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>As Dillon [1] says ...</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> <td><i>As Jones (1993) says ...</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>In the previous reading [1] ...</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> <td><i>In the previous reading, Jones (1993) ...</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>It has been shown that ... [1].</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> <td><i>It has been shown that ... (Jones, 1993).</i></td> <td>BETTER</td> </tr> </table>	<i>As [1] says ...</i>	WRONG!	<i>As (Jones, 1993) says ...</i>	WRONG!	<i>As Dillon [1] says ...</i>	BETTER	<i>As Jones (1993) says ...</i>	BETTER	<i>In the previous reading [1] ...</i>	BETTER	<i>In the previous reading, Jones (1993) ...</i>	BETTER	<i>It has been shown that ... [1].</i>	BETTER	<i>It has been shown that ... (Jones, 1993).</i>	BETTER
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<i>symbol</i>	Use the appropriate symbol (☛ see also <i>hyph</i> and examples that follow) minus is – not - (hyphen) multiplication is × not lowercase X																

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<i>stet</i>	Do not change ignore other editorial mark
<i>than?</i>	Comparisons must be complete e.g., do not write 'X is better' without making it clear <i>what</i> X is better than
<u>word</u>	Use a different word or words I recommend using a thesaurus <i>and</i> a dictionary to find appropriate words. The Cambridge and Oxford <i>Advanced Learner's Dictionaries</i> are often helpful.
W/C	Please consult with the Writing Centre for help
○	Close gap (☛ see also × ¶) remove unnecessary horizontal space
<i>in order to</i> <i>in order to</i> }	Delete the text that has been struck out
^ } ^ } ⊙ }	Insert (examples follow)
'	insert apostrophe
—	insert dash
,	insert comma
-	insert hyphen
□	insert blank
⊙	insert full stop (period)
¶	Start paragraph here
× ¶	Paragraph should not start here (☛ see also ○) Remove break
Ⓢ	Check your spelling Examples of common spelling mistakes are on page 1
✂ } &< }	Trim (avoid excessive words – be neither pleonastic nor abstruse)
/g	Make this change globally, i.e., throughout your document, not just at this one place
!!	Indicates a particularly important or worthwhile part of your essay
<u>a</u>	Change underlined letter to capital (uppercase) e.g., <u>i</u> nternet (should be Internet) and <u>www</u> (should be WWW)
lc	Change indicated letter to lowercase (uncapitalized) form
Ⓢ	Move the circled character to the location indicated
<u>second first</u>	exchange position of words or letters indicated