Common Problems Noted in FCS Student Essays*

Problem	Example
misspelled words	e-mail (*not* email) et al. (note punctuation) Internet (capitalize proper nouns) lifecycle *or* life-cycle (*not* life cycle) naïve (note the diacritical sign) Unix (not UNIX, because it is not an acronym) Web and Web-based (capitalize proper nouns), *but* webpage, webserver and website *Note* also that hyphens are required for • adjectival phrases *aka* compound adjectives such as 'end-user' in 'end-user documentation' • all cases where they eliminate ambiguity
meaningless words (with improvements)	actually (when used solely for emphasis) → *[omit]* due to the fact that → because *or* since in order to → to interval of time period → interval *or* time interval period of time → period *or* time really (when meaning very) → *[omit]*
imprecise language	easy-to-use … *when* you mean to refer to the concept of *perceived ease-of-use* or to a more elaborate concept of usability intuitive … *when* you mean familiar or common practice mention (an incidental reference) … *when* noted, said, found, commented, etc. is what you mean prove … *when* you mean test *when* you mean corroborate or verify
colloquialisms	a lot, lots of → much *or* many access *(as a verb)* → *perhaps* use *or* gain access to has gone way high plenty of → much way better → much better questions run through the mind
tricky pairs (choose carefully)	• can not / cannot • like / such as • use / usage • in addition / additionally, also, furthermore (etc.) • significant / substantial
inappropriate terminology	user friendly using this term incorrectly will result in an automatic $\mathcal{F}$
proposed sol^{n}? *lacking necc. foundation* *unaware of existing research*	CSCI 6606 students see *Principles for Term Paper Grading*

*Version: 26 April 2017 (This is the first of 3 pages.)

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Notation	Meaning
act	Unless you have a good reason, use only the active voice and 1st person
ambig.	Ambiguity should be resolved
cite	The full bibliographic record must be included when referring to people, projects, publications, software etc. *and* in the reference section (☛ see also *proof?* and *ref*)
coloq.	Avoid colloquialisms and jargon in formal writing Examples of the most frequent uses of jargon etc. are on page 1
cont.	Avoid contractions in formal writing
dang.	Avoid dangling referents such as in the sentences *'They found ….'* and *'This means ….'* (Who are 'they'? This *what*?)
def$\underline{n}$*?*	Key terms should be defined earlier In a summary the key terms should be explained not merely referred to.
d/s	use double-spacing
expand	Expand acronyms and abbreviations at first use *except* 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.
hyph	Use hyphen (-) not dash (– or —) *or* vice versa (☛ see also *symbol*) – (en dash) is for ranges of numbers — (em dash) is the usual dash
lc	Change indicated letter to lowercase (uncapitalized) form
m/u	Your meaning is unclear — make it easier to understand
N/S	Not a sentence
para	Paragraphs must be clearly delineated by vertical space, indentation, or both
proof?	Factual claims must be justified by evidence or by citations to work that include evidence (☛ see also *cite* and *ref*)
p.#?	Missing page number • Page numbers are required for quotations. • Copying illustrations is essentially quoting.
Q	More detail is needed
rel?	You must explain why this passage is relevant When you describe experimental method (or include any detail from an experiment or study) that detail *must* 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.
ref	References must be parenthetical. Do not use references as nouns. (☛ see also *cite* and *proof?*) Also, references must be attached to sentences (or images) not section headings. References should not need to be read aloud for sentences to make sense. For example *As [1] says …* WRONG! | *As (Jones, 1993) says …* WRONG! *As Dillon [1] says …* BETTER | *As Jones (1993) says …* BETTER *In the previous reading [1] …* BETTER | *In the previous reading, Jones (1993) …* BETTER *It has been shown that …[1].* BETTER | *It has been shown that …(Jones,1993).* BETTER

continues…

Notation	Meaning
stet	Do not change ignore other editorial mark
symbol	Use the appropriate symbol (☛ see also *hyph* and examples that follow) minus is – not - (hyphen) multiplication is × not lowercase X
than?	Comparisons must be complete e.g., do not write 'X is better' without making it clear *what* X is better than
word	Use a different word or words (for clarity or style) I recommend using a thesaurus *and* a dictionary to find appropriate words. The Cambridge and Oxford *Advanced Learner's Dictonaries* are often helpful.
W/C	Please consult with the Writing Centre for help
⁀	Close gap (☛ see also ×¶) remove unnecessary horizontal space
~~*in order*~~ *to* ~~*in order*~~ *to*	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
sp.	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
/it/	The indicated text should be italicized (like *this*)
!!	Indicates a particularly important or worthwhile part of your essay
a	Change underlined letter to capital (uppercase) e.g., internet (should be Internet) and www (should be WWW)
9	Move the circled character to the location indicated
second first	exchange position of words or letters indicated

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