

The Pennington Manual of Style

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Curricula Designed to Teach the Essay e-Comments Content

The Essay e-Comments have been derived from the following comprehensive curricula: ***Teaching Essay Strategies, Grammar, Usage, Spelling, and Mechanics, Teaching Grammar and Mechanics, and Teaching Reading Strategies*** and are available at www.penningtonpublishing.com. Each curriculum uses the same language of instruction as does *The Pennington Manual of Style*. Each curriculum provides diagnostic assessments to determine the individual needs of students in writing, spelling, grammar, mechanics, and reading. Each curriculum provides targeted worksheets with formative assessments and activities to enable the teacher to differentiate instruction.

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Introduction

The Pennington Manual of Style has been designed to serve both students and teachers.

The user-friendly *The Pennington Manual of Style* provides 438 writing tips. Each writing tip has a concise definition, explanation, and a clear example. Writing tips are organized into these categories: Essay Organization and Development (Introduction, Body, and Conclusion), Coherence, Word Choice, Sentence Variety, Writing Style, Format and Citations, Parts of Speech, Grammatical Forms, Usage, Sentence Structure, Types of Sentences, Mechanics, and Conventional Spelling Rules. As a quick reference guide, this style manual will help developing writers learn *what* is correct and *why* it is correct.

For teachers, this guide will provide a common language of writing instruction and discourse for teachers and students. Teachers will find the concise writing tips useful for both direct instruction and essay comments. And most importantly, all 438 writing tips have been formatted as Essay e-Comments for the Autocorrect function of Microsoft Word®. After adding in the comment bank, the teacher simply types in the assigned alphanumeric code and the entire formatted writing comment appears where desired on the student's Word document or on a printed comments page.

Using Essay e-Comments Makes Sense

- Manually responding to essays in red ink can be time-consuming and frustrating. Teachers find themselves using the same comments over and over again, while most students barely glance at their final grade or rubric score and maybe skim the comments before cramming their papers into the depths of their backpacks.
- Using Essay e-Comments will save time. Most teachers can respond to and/or evaluate essays in half the time it takes to manually correct.
- Using Essay e-Comments simply does a better job than manual correction. Each comment has a definition, explanation, and example to help students learn *what* is correct and *why* it is correct. And teachers can certainly add in their own comments. Unlike other e-grading programs, teachers can save their custom comments.
- Having students submit their essays on the computer allows the teacher to insert comprehensive and prescriptive comments into their Microsoft Word® documents. Teachers can require their students to address each comment by using Microsoft Word® "Track Changes." Students then re-submit revisions and edits for peer and/or teacher review. Just like real professional writers do with their editors!
- Teachers can select and print out Essay e-Comments for paper submissions to provide response/editing feedback and/or to supplement an evaluative rubric.
- Using the 438 e-comments enhances the interactive writing process. The teacher-student interaction changes from static summative evaluation to dynamic formative assessment.

How to Insert Essay e-Comments into Microsoft Word® Docs

1. Click on this link to download all 438 Essay e-Comments:

<http://blog.penningtonpublishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Autocorrects.exe>

Save if prompted and click RUN despite the scary Microsoft warning that it doesn't recognize the software. Don't worry: This program is virus-free. The download has been tested for Microsoft Word® 2003, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016 (Windows XP, Vista, and Win 7, 8, and 10. The program works fine with Google docs. Simply batch download into Word®, open the docs in Word® and insert the comments. Upload back to Google docs, if you wish, and maintain the comments.

2. Open up a student's essay in Microsoft Word®. Use the Quick Reference Guide with the alphanumeric entry codes and a short comment description, to guide your essay e-comment selection. The Quick Reference Guide organizes the essay e-comments into writing response categories. Highlight the ones you use most often.

3. Go to the **Review** tab in the **Comments** group. Left click the mouse where you want to place a comment. Click the **New Comment** image. In older Microsoft Word® versions, go to the **Insert** tab and then to **Comments**.



4. The comment balloon will appear in the right margin or in a reviewing pane at the bottom of the screen or to the left of the screen. Adjust the comment location under **Reviewing Pane** in the **Track Changes** group. The keyboard shortcut to include a new comment is **Ctrl + Alt + M**.

5. Type in the alphanumeric code for the selected essay e-comment and full comment appears in the comment balloon or where you decide is best.

To be or not to be: that is the question.

Comment [M1]: Revise: Too Many "to-be" Verbs Consider limiting use of *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been* to one per paragraph. To replace "to be verbs" 1. Substitute a more active verb 2. Begin the sentence with another word from the sentence 3. Change one of the words in the sentence into a verb form.

6. For repeated errors, simply **highlight** the text. The yellow marker is found under the "Home" tab. Of course, not every error need be marked. Consider using a balance of content and process essay e-comments, depending upon the instructional focus and the needs of each writer.

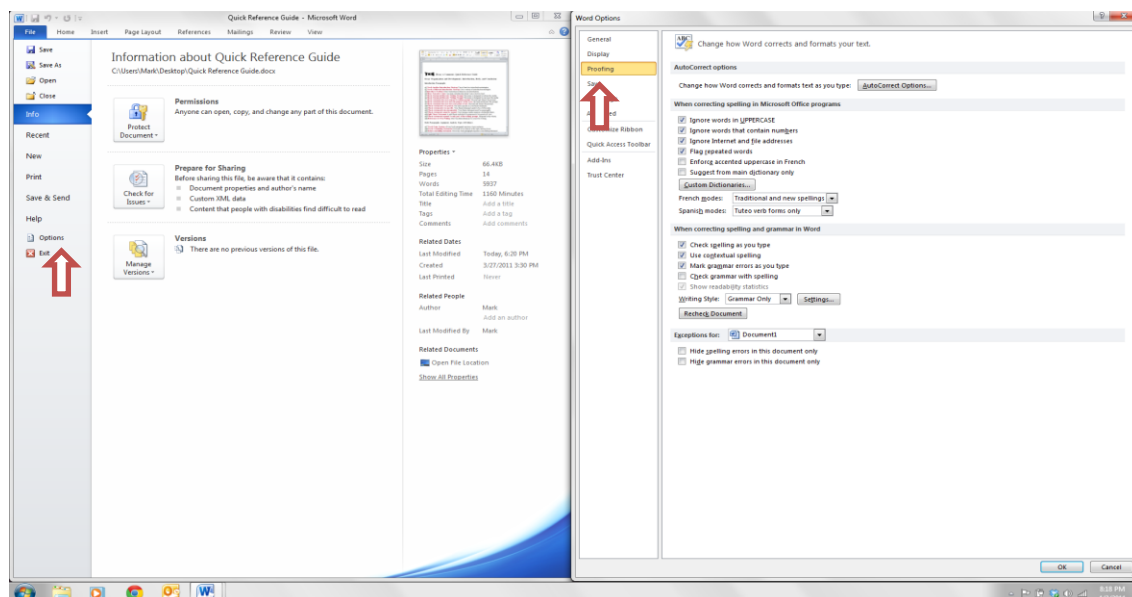
7. You can also personalize comments by adding to the comment balloons. You can even add audio comments to summarize overall strengths and weaknesses. To add an audio file (Sound Recorder) into Microsoft Word®, open **Start**; open **All Programs**; open **Accessories**; then open **Sound Recorder**. Click the button to start and stop recording. The **Save** menu will pop open and you can create a folder to save all of your audio files. Once saved, open up the folder and right click to copy the WMA file. Place your cursor where you want the file to appear in the student's essay and paste **Ctrl + V**. The Sound Recorder file stays minimized as you open up other Microsoft Word® files, so you don't have to go through the process each time. For better sound quality, I suggest using a microphone.

8. Teach your students to revise and edit their documents in response to your essay e-comments. I suggest using Microsoft Word® **Track Changes**. Teach your students to go the **Review** tab and click on **Track Changes**, then revise and edit their document by inserting, deleting, moving, or formatting text. The resources in **Change Tracking Options** provide custom color and formatting options. The keyboard shortcut to turn on **Track Changes** is **Ctrl + Shift + E**.

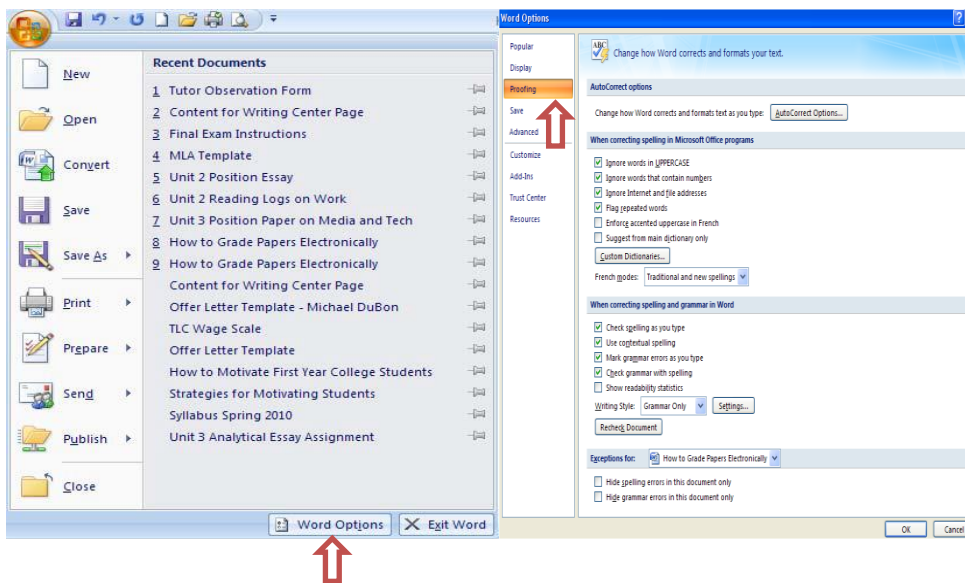
How to Add Your Own Permanent Autocorrect Entries in Microsoft Word®

1. You can add your own e-comments onto the 438 essay e-comments bank. Here's how: Type your e-comment. The text can include up to 255 characters of hyperlinks, different fonts, colors, italics, boldface, etc. Highlight the e-comment, but don't copy it.

2. Click the Microsoft Word® 2010 **File**. Then click **Options**. Next click **Proofing**.

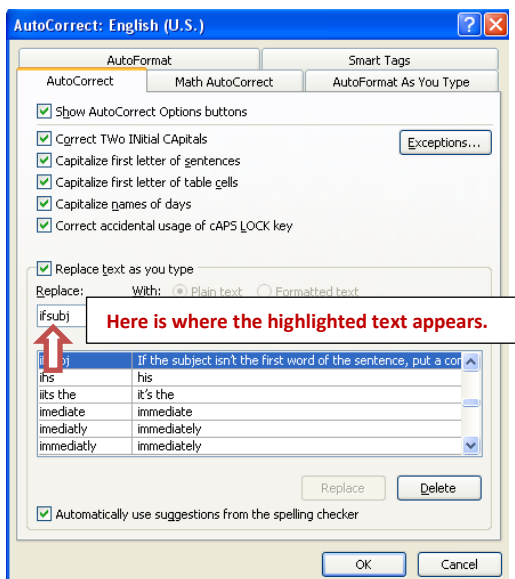


3. With previous Microsoft Office® versions (before 2010), click **File**. Then click **Word Options**. Next click **Proofing**.



4. Now click **AutoCorrect Options**. This page is similar in all recent Microsoft Word® versions. The highlighted text will appear within the **With:** text box.

5. Enter an alpha-numerical code in the **Replace:** text box and click **OK**.



6. Your own essay e-comment is now permanently saved on your computer. I suggest that you save all of your additional e-comments in a Microsoft Word® document so that you can easily add these on to other computers.

Essay Writing Tips (formatted as Essay e-Comments)

Students:

A style manual is a writer's reference guide. This guide is designed to help you write better essays and research papers. Following are 438 writing tips to help you do just that. Each writing tip has a concise definition, explanation, and a clear example. Writing tips are organized into these categories: Essay Organization and Development (Introduction, Body, and Conclusion), Coherence, Word Choice, Sentence Variety, Writing Style, Format and Citations, Parts of Speech, Grammatical Forms, Usage, Sentence Structure, Types of Sentences, Mechanics, and Conventional Spelling Rules.

The alphanumeric listings are coded so that your teacher can easily insert these comments into Microsoft Word® documents and/or onto printed comment pages. Your teacher may ask you to use the comments to respond to writing completed by your peers.

Your teacher may not choose to comment on every writing error or issue. However, if your teacher does include a comment, do your best to revise your writing accordingly and make a mental note, or better yet an actual note, to learn the writing terms and rules to apply on future writing assignments.

Mark Pennington

Essay Writing Rules and Style

e73 **Redundant** Avoid repeating ideas, words or phrases, and cited sources. Redundancy suggests padding or over-reliance on single ideas or sources of information.

e74 **Needs Parallel Structure** Repeat key words or grammatical structures to create a memorable writing rhythm. These parallel structures can improve reader comprehension. **Example:** We cannot dedicate... We cannot consecrate... We cannot hallow this ground (Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address").

e75 **Delete Slang** Essays are formal writing, so slang is not permitted. **Example:** The kids studied hard for their exams. Revision: The children studied hard for their exams.

e76 **Delete Poetic Device** Essays are formal writing, so poetic devices are not permitted. **Example:** The cold passed reluctantly from the earth... (Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*) Revision: The weather warmed.

e77 **Delete Figure of Speech** Essays are formal writing, so figures of speech are not permitted. **Example:** Jean let the cat out of the bag about the plot of the upcoming episode. Revision: Jean revealed the plot of the upcoming episode.

e78 **Revise Rhetorical Question** Avoid rhetorical questions in essays. A rhetorical question is a question needing no response because the answer is in the question itself. **Example:** Does anyone really think we should start over?

e79 **Revise Informal Writing** Essays are formal writing, so informal, conversational writing style is not permitted. **Example:** FYI... Ron and Hermione have been going out for a year. Revision: Ron and Hermione have been dating for a year.

e80 **Revise: Too Many “to-be verbs”** Consider limiting use of *is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been* to one per paragraph. To replace “to be verbs”: 1. Substitute a more active verb 2. Begin the sentence with another word from the sentence 3. Change one of the words in the sentence into a verb form.

e81 **Revise: Too Many Prepositional Phrase Strings** Avoid using more than two prepositional phrases back-to-back. **Example:** The rabbit ran under the fence, through the garden, to the cabbage patch. Revision: The rabbit ran under the fence and into the garden. It stopped at the cabbage patch.

e82 **Revise Parenthetical Remarks** Avoid using parenthetical remarks in essays. Try using commas for appositives or a subordinate clause to include the information. **Example:** He continued to try (the man in red had failed twice). Revision: He continued to try, although the man in red had failed twice.

e83 **Don’t start sentences with coordinating conjunctions.** Avoid beginning sentences with the coordinating conjunctions (F.A.N.B.O.Y.S.-*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) unless you finish the thought. Otherwise, fragments often result.

e84 **Don’t split infinitives.** Infinitives consist of “to” plus the base form of the verb and serve as adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. Don’t add in a word(s) between the “to” and base form of the verb in formal essay writing. **Example:** To quickly leave made sense. Revision: To leave quickly made sense.

e85 **Don’t end sentences with prepositions.** A preposition always appears at the beginning of a prepositional phrase and connects in time, space, relationship, or position to its object. A preposition can’t be used by itself in formal essay writing. **Example:** Don’t ever give up. Revision: Always persevere.

e86 **Revise Double Negative** Avoid using double negatives to indicate a positive in formal essay writing as this construction tends to confuse the reader. **Example:** Do not ever fail to use soap to wash dishes. Revision: Always use soap to wash dishes.

e87 **Using not as Denial** Avoid using the word *not* to deny a positive assertion. **Example:** She was not frequently on time to class. Revision: She was frequently late to class.

e88 **Revise Passive Voice** Avoid using passive voice, in which the subject of the sentence receives the action of the predicate. Instead, revise to active voice, in which the subject of the sentence does the action. **Example:** The pen was given to the teacher by Jim. Revision: Jim gave the pen to the teacher.

e89 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Eliminate unnecessary words at the beginning of sentences. **Examples:** It is... There is... There are... This... I think... I believe... In my opinion.

e90 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Eliminate “who,” “which,” and “that” if possible. **Example:** oatmeal which was mushy Revision: mushy oatmeal **Example:** The children, who talked loudly, didn’t listen. Revision: Talking loudly, the children didn’t listen. **Example:** She was acting like a child. Revision: She acted childishly.

e91 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Replace wordy and weak verb forms with strong verbs. **Example:** She was acting like a child. Revision: She acted childishly.

e92 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Replace “_tion” and “_sion” noun constructions with strong verbs. **Example:** He turned in the application for the job. Revision: He applied for the job.

e93 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Replace prepositional phrases with modifiers when possible. **Example:** The principal of the school supervised the painting of the gym. Revision: The school principal supervised painting the gym.

e94 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Combine two sentences with a colon to indicate their relationship. **Example:** The teacher discussed two subjects. The subjects were reading and writing. Revision: The teacher discussed these subjects: reading and writing.

e95 **Excessively Wordy** Concise writing is better understood than wordy writing. Combine two sentences into one to form a complex, compound, or compound-complex sentence. **Example:** She was not happy. This was a result of her being lonely. Revision: Because she was lonely, she was not happy.

e96 **Omit Needless Words** Delete expressions that do not add meaning to a sentence, especially those that include the word *that*. **Examples:** owing to the fact that, despite (in spite of) the fact that, call your attention to the fact that, the fact that.

e97 **Omit Needless Words** Delete expressions that do not add meaning to a sentence, especially those that include the phrases: *who is* and *which is*. **Examples:** My wife, who is a gourmet cook, used cumin, which is my favorite spice. Revision: My wife, a gourmet cook, used cumin, my favorite spice.

e98 **Needs 3rd Person** Compose essays in the third person, not in first or second person voice. Focus on the subject, not the author-reader conversation. Don't use first person pronouns: *I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, our, ours, ourselves* or second person pronouns: *you, your, yours, yourself, yourselves*

e99 **Overstated Idea** The idea or evidence is exaggerated or overstated. Understatement and statements as to the limitations of an argument or conclusion are more convincing to your reader.

e100 **No Abbreviations** Formal essays do not permit abbreviations. However, common acronyms are permissible. **Examples:** The U.A.R. supplied an astronaut for the new N.A.S.A. space launch. Revision: The United Arab Emirates supplied an astronaut for the new N.A.S.A. space launch.

e101 **No Contractions** Formal essays do not permit contractions. **Examples:** They shouldn't talk when they don't understand the subject. Revision: They should not talk when they do not understand the subject.