

## Common Writing Errors

- Putting your spell checker on “auto pilot”. They’re our ah lot off miss takes that yore spell cheque will knot cache.
- Homonyms - its/it’s, there/their/they’re, to/too/two, etc.
- “Would of”/”could of” should be “would have”/”could have
- Sentence fragment - an incomplete thought written with a capital letter and a period.
  - Example: “Before he was tackled.”
  - Correction: :“Before he was tackled, Gene tossed the ball back to Don.”
- Comma splice - two complete sentences (independent clauses) are joined with a comma.
  - Example: “The team has been picked, the list has not been posted.”
  - Correction: “The team has been picked; the list has not been posted.” Or “The team has been picked, but the list has not been posted.” Or “The team has been picked. The list has not been posted.”
- Fused/Run-on sentence - two or more sentences are joined together.
  - Example: “Hit the ball and run to first base if the pitcher catches the ball you are out.”
  - Correction: “Hit the ball and run to first base. If the pitcher catches the ball, you are out.”
- Person agreement - the subject does not agree with its antecedent.
  - Example: “A student can wear hats on Friday if they pay \$1.00.”
  - Correction: “Students can wear hats on Friday if they pay \$1.00.”
- Faulty parallelism - not using the same form for words, phrases or clauses.
  - Example: “I enjoyed watching *Gladiator* because of its music and it holds the viewer in suspense.”
  - Correction: “I enjoyed watching *Gladiator* because of its music and its suspense.”
- Wordiness - using too many words. Use language to clarify, not mystify.
  - Example - “The purple-blue icy cold water danced happily and vigorously under the hot glaring round late summer sun.”
  - Correction: “The periwinkle water danced under the late summer sun.”
- Tense shift - changing from one verb tense to another within a sentence.
  - Example:
  - Correction:

## **Tips for Success**

- always use a word processor to do your writing.
- make effective use of the planning stage of the writing process (brainstorming, concept webbing, outlining, etc.)
- set your own deadlines for your outline, first draft, and final draft.
- never hand in an assignment late.
- ask if you can earn bonus marks for handing in your paper early.
- always make your work look good.
- remember that your paper will be compared to everyone else's.
- find someone reliable and intelligent enough to help you edit.
- ask your teacher to check your thesis statement, outline, and draft.
- follow instructions carefully (do exactly what your teacher wants).
- find out what time of day, and under what circumstances you do your best work.
- eliminate background noise.
- work in bright light or sunshine.
- get enough sleep, eat nutritious food, and get some exercise.