

Freshman

Proofreading Expectations

If a writing assignment is completed outside of class (nearly everything except bellwork, quizzes, and notes), students are expected to **proofread** their writing for the assignment in order to eliminate mechanical errors **prior** to the due date.



When working on writing assignments outside of the classroom, students should always refer to this guide in order to ensure that submitted work meets ninth-grade expectations. This guide provides a list of **non-negotiable errors** that will not be academically tolerated in students' writing. For **each** of the non-negotiable errors (listed in this document) that are present in a submitted assignment, **10%** of the total possible points for the assignment will be deducted – up to a maximum of 50%.

In addition, once a student has been provided with **teacher feedback** on a graded writing assignment, he or she is expected to research all marked errors and avoid repetition of them in future writing assignments; otherwise, the 10% deduction rule will apply to each of those future errors **as well**.

Mr. Benton provides several **resources** to students to research, study, and practice their personal writing issues. These include direct whole-class instruction, print and digital resources, and individualized after-school tutoring on with Mr. Benton. By the end of each grading period, freshmen are expected to have labored over and mastered the avoidance of the non-negotiable errors listed in the Proofreading Expectations as well as circle-marked errors in graded writing assignments. (For the first grading period, the “Four Questions” should be referred to as a baseline.)

Students' writing is not expected to be mechanically perfect; however, certain errors are considered **non-negotiable** for students who hope to find academic success in **high school** English classes. The non-negotiable errors for this grading period are itemized on the attached pages; these errors are broken down into five categories: ¹**Handwriting and Capitalization**, ²**Usage**, ³**Grammar and Punctuation**, and ⁴**Spelling**. A list of ⁵**Elementary Skills** is also attached, detailing additional non-negotiable errors.

1 Handwriting and Capitalization

- Don't use cursive. Print.
- Dot all "i"s and "j"s; otherwise they appear to be capitalized.
- Use capital letters only when appropriate, such as the first letter of sentences or proper nouns (names of people, places, etc.).
- Be sure that "d"s, "h"s, and other letters with tall stems are shaped correctly so as not to be mistaken for other letters like "a"s and "n"s.
- Make sure that a space is left between each word so as to avoid misreadings.
- Never write letters, such as "f"s, backwards.
- Be sure that all letters that extend below the line (such as "g"s and "p"s) are properly formed in order to avoid confusion.

RESOURCES: online guide ([Handwriting for Kids](#)), hardcopy practice books (available in the classroom by request), after-school tutoring on Thursdays

2 Usage

- Students should refer to the Usage Notes (Parts I and II are given in class during the first two weeks of school and are available online) to avoid misusing commonly confused sound-alike words (including but not limited to "your" and "you're", "its" and "it's", and "than" and "then").

RESOURCES: [Usage Notes](#), [Grammar Monster](#), after-school tutoring with Mr. Benton

3 Grammar and Punctuation

- Sentences should end with a proper end mark (a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point).
- Avoid fragments (incomplete sentences) by ensuring that every sentence expresses a complete, independent thought (with a subject and predicate).
- Avoid run-ons (more than one complete sentence that have been improperly joined together) by either separating the sentences or by joining them in pairs in a proper way.
- One proper way to join two sentences together is to place a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so) between them. The other proper way to join two sentences is to place a semicolon (;) between them. Using only a comma to separate two sentences is called a comma splice and is considered a run-on.
- Use commas to separate items in a list.
- Use apostrophes in contractions (to indicate the removal of letters) and to show possession (when used at the end of nouns).

RESOURCES: online resources ([Purdue Online Writing Lab](#), [Grammar Monster](#), [Grammar Bytes](#), and [Free Rice's English Grammar](#) game), print resources (grammar textbooks, workbooks, and handouts) available in the classroom, and after-school tutoring with Mr. Benton.

4 Spelling

- Students are expected to never submit proofread work that contains misspelled words; thorough, careful use of a digital or print dictionary eliminates the possibility of spelling errors.

RESOURCES: online dictionaries ([Oxford Advanced Learner's](#), [Cambridge Learner's](#)) and a variety of hardcopy dictionaries (available to use in the classroom or to check out for long-term use at home)

The purpose of these Proofreading Expectations is to align students' writing with the conventions of Standard English. Students are expected to demonstrate a grade-level-appropriate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. A full list of the relevant Florida Standards can be found online at the following link: <http://www.fldoe.org/pdf/lafs.pdf>

Below is a partial list of various elementary-level skills that freshmen students are expected to have already mastered:

⁵ Elementary Skills*

KINDERGARTEN EXPECTATIONS

Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.

1st GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Be able to print all uppercase and lowercase letters.

Capitalize dates and names of people.

Use end punctuation for all sentences.

Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.

2nd GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns (e.g. feet, children, teeth, mice, fish).

Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., sat, hid, told).

Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.

Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives.

3rd GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses.

Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs.

Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.

Capitalize appropriate words in titles.

Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.

4th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.

Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two; there, their).

Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.

5th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections.

Form and use the perfect (e.g., I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked) verb tenses.

Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.

Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., either/or, neither/nor).

Use commas to separate items in a series.

Use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you).

Use a comma to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?).

Use a comma to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Steve?).

Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works.

Below is a partial list of middle-school-level skills that students should already have *considerable experience with* before entering high school; however, students are not expected to have mastered these skills entirely until the end of their freshmen year with Mr. Benton:

Middle School Skills*

6th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
Recognize variations from Standard English in their own and others' writing.
Identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.
Spell correctly, consulting references as needed.

7th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal relationships among ideas.
Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.
Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., fascinating, enjoyable movie *but not* an old[,] green shirt).

8th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
Use an ellipsis (...) to indicate an omission.

Below is a complete list of skills relevant to the conventions of Standard English that all students are expected to master throughout high school:

High School Skills*

9th and 10th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Use parallel structure.
Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial)
Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely
Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.

11th and 12th GRADE EXPECTATIONS

Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references as needed.
Observe hyphenation conventions.

* Students and parents are encouraged to refer to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>), other online resources, and Mr. Benton for clarification on any unfamiliar terms used in this guide.