

Low Order Concerns Sentence Structure

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What are Low-Order Concerns

Low order concerns refer to the last errors to be addressed in a piece of writing; they are addressed after higher-level concerns are revised. They include:

- Grammar, sentence structure, diction, spelling, etc.
- Punctuation
- Formatting and other mechanics-related issues.

What is Proofreading?

Proofreading is the identification and correction of low-order concerns.

Important Note: High-order concerns deal with content development (e.g. presence of a thesis and body paragraphs, etc.), organization, appropriate delivery on the rubric expectations, etc. Editing and revising are tasks associated with the identification and revision of high-order Concerns.

What is Sentence Structure?

Sentence is the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence.

There are four types of sentences:

- ⇒ **Simple Sentence:** one independent clause (subject + verb + phrases and other elements to complete the thought)
- ⇒ **Compound Sentence:** two linked independent clauses.
- ⇒ **Complex Sentence:** one independent clause + one or more dependent clauses (can't be sentence on its own)
- ⇒ **Compound-Complex Sentence:** two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause

Examples of the four types of sentences:

- ⇒ **Simple sentence:** Suzanne is happy.
- ⇒ **Compound sentence:** Suzanne is happy, so she made everyone dinner.
- ⇒ **Complex sentence:** Suzanne is happy because her boss gave her a raise.
- ⇒ **Compound-complex sentence:** Suzanne is happy because her boss gave her a raise, so she made everyone dinner.

Why Consider Varying Sentence Structure?

When putting the final touches on a piece of writing, look to see if you have varied the sentence structure sufficiently and correctly: pay attention to properly punctuating each clause.

- ⇒ Only using simple sentences can make a project sound simple
- ⇒ Varying structure keeps writing interesting and show your reader you have mastered all of the possibilities of sentence structure.

What is Punctuation?

Punctuation is the marks used to indicate how sentences fit together by showing where a sentence starts, where it pauses, and where it finishes. This includes marks such as commas, colons, semicolons, apostrophes, periods, hyphens, and more.

What is Diction?

Diction is also referred to as word choice.

- ⇒ Using proper diction allows a sentence to be easily understood.
- ⇒ If the wrong word is used, it shows a lack of attention to detail.

Example: Lack of exercise negatively **effects** the body.

Corrected: Lack of exercise negatively **affects** the body.

How Does Spelling Play a Role in Proofreading?

- ⇒ The expectation is that words are always spelled correctly in academic and other formal genres of writing.
- ⇒ Improper spelling affects the comprehension of a sentence.

Example: **Weather** or not **u** realize it, **spelng** words correctly is important.

Corrected: **Whether** or not **you** realize it, **spelling** words correctly is important.

Why are Punctuation, Diction, and Spelling Low-Order Concerns?

These are all low-order concerns because once major changes to content and organization (i.e. high-order concerns) are made, the final task of proofreading for low-order concerns can be done; otherwise, to correct low-order concerns before all accurate content is included would likely lead to wasting time. Prioritize high- over low-order concerns but always address low-order concerns before submitting work to your professors.

How to Fix Low-Order Concerns

1. Read each sentence aloud until you have read the entire essay. Reading aloud allows for an opportunity to evaluate whether the sentences, as constructed, make sense or not.

- ⇒ Pay close attention as you read.
- ⇒ This allows you to catch fragments, run-ons, and comma splices as well as other errors like comma placement, misused words, and incorrect verb tenses.

2. Have a Writing Consultant, peer, or word processing program read it aloud to you.

When someone else reads aloud for you, sometimes you will hear the error more easily versus when you're just reading silently from the page. (Microsoft Word has a "read aloud" feature that is very useful for this type of work.)

Reading a sentence aloud more than once allows the writer more of an opportunity to catch diction, spelling, and punctuation errors. By hearing the words aloud, you may realize that a different word may better suit the sentence and what you want to convey. Give the reader a priority list to look for and help him/her narrow down the areas of improvement to identify.

3. Use trusted reference materials to assist you in correcting mistakes identified while reading aloud. Your textbook, these Writing Center handouts, and trusted educational websites are great references for addressing low-order concerns.

4. Proofread in Stages. You may find reviewing previously graded work helpful to identify priorities for proofreading in your current project. If you have a lot of comma errors in a previous essay, for instance, read through the entirety your current project just for comma errors before moving on to other priority errors.

Then, read through the draft for each of your priority errors until you have completely re-read your essay a minimum of 3-4 times. You will notice other things along the way as a result, and you will correct those things as they emerge.

It can also be helpful to set proofreading goals and tasks should your schedule allow. For example, you might dedicate one day to proofreading for style and citation issues. You might dedicate another day to look for small diction and spelling errors. Whatever your choice, be sure you have enough time left before a due date or deadline to address lower order and higher order concerns in order.