Writer's Workbench On-Line Analysis Programs Quick Guide

Writer's Workbench provides 26 Analyses that guide writers as they write and revise from a typed or pasted text composition. Writer's Workbench provides immediate and accurate feedback for writers. These analyses, which address specific issues about an essay, are arranged into six categories: **Content, Characteristics, Verbs, Clarity, Words, and Punctuation**.

All analyses provide more instruction and examples when the user clicks on the ⊖ (which is short for More Information) button toward the top-right corner of the on-line site.

This guide was created to provide an overview of information provided by Writer's Workbench Analyses.

1.1 Content – Organization and Development

These two analyses are specifically designed for expository and argumentative/persuasive essays. They may be less appropriate for narrative or journalistic writing. These programs ignore paragraphs with fewer than 22 words.
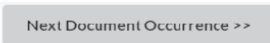
a. <u>ORGANIZATION</u> prints the first and last sentences of each paragraph. When the user clicks on the ⊖ button, the program provides writing suggestions for specifically located sentences.

b. <u>DEVELOPMENT</u> identifies those paragraphs that need more development by predetermined word count. Development alerts the writer to "Check for Development" if the paragraphs do not meet the following standards.
   - ➢ Introductory paragraph: 85 words (Considerably less than 120 words)
   - ➢ Body paragraphs: 125 words (Considerably less than 180 words)
   - ➢ Concluding paragraph: 70 words (Considerably less than 100 words)

1.2 Content - Diversity of Content Vocabulary (FOCUS)

<u>DIVERSITY OF CONTENT VOCABULARY</u> counts content words and, by predetermined percentages, calculates a diversity ratio.
- ➢ A diversity ratio above 59% suggests that the content of the composition does not seem to center on a subject that is adequately developed with clearly identified paragraph topics.
- ➢ A diversity ratio between 30% and 59% suggests that the composition is probably adequately focused on a subject with clearly developed paragraph topics.
- ➢ A diversity ratio below 30% suggests that the composition seems to need more specific and concrete language or perhaps indicates that the subject is too narrow.

In all cases, a list and count of content words is printed below the general explanation of the analysis; and the writer is directed to make sure that the most commonly used words (listed at the top of the analysis) identify the subject and paragraph topics of the composition.

(By clicking on a word in the list, the first occurrence of that commonly used word will be highlighted in the composition. Then, clicking on Next Document Occurrence >> , the next occurrence of that word will be highlighted. To go the next highly used word, click on Close Flagged Text , and the writer can find the next commonly used word(s) in the composition, making sure that the words most commonly used refer to the topic and focus of the composition.

1.3 Content - Vague and Abstract Vocabulary

a. <u>VAGUE VOCABULARY</u> calculates the percentage of vague words and, if the vague ratio is greater than 3%, lists those words and the number of times they were used in the composition.

b. <u>ABSTRACT VOCABULARY</u> calculates the percentage of abstract words and, if the abstract ratio is greater than 2%, lists those words and the number of times they were used in the composition.

If the user clicks on the ⊖ button, WWB will provide examples of how the user can become more focused on his or her writing by eliminating vague or abstract vocabulary.

2.1 Characteristics – Style Statistics
STYLE STATISTICS provides, in tabular format, information about the document's sentences (length and types), verbs (to be, passives, nominalizations), sentence beginnings (subject openers, non-subject openers), and other information (number of words and reading level scores – Kincaid, Coleman-Liau, and Flesch).

2.2 Characteristics - Style Statistics with Support
STYLE STATISTICS WITH SUPPORT offers all the information provided by **STYLE STATISTICS** along with evaluation statements on the document's scores on sentences (length, types, and beginnings) and on verb choices ("to be" verbs, passives, and nominalizations). Sentences of over 50 words are listed as are sentences that include passive verbs and sentences that include nominalizations.

2.3 Characteristics – Writer's Workbench Assessment Scores
WWB ASSSESSMENT SCORES
This sophisticated module provides 22 statistics from other WWB analyses; if the statistic does not achieve an acceptable threshold, the module suggests revision strategies that will guide the writer to improve his or her composition. With administrative permissions, users, teachers, or technicians can adjust thresholds and corresponding suggestions for different grade levels or assignments.

3.1 Verbs – To Be
The **TO BE** analysis in the on-line version only prints the sentences that have "*to be*" verbs in them and highlights those "to be" verbs. If you click on any of them, the passive words will be highlighted in the composition. If the user clicks on the ⓘ button, examples of how to eliminate "to be" verbs will be provided.

3.2 Verbs – Helping Verbs
HELPING VERBS prints sentences that include the following "helping verb" problems.
The "*Missing Helping Verbs*" flags "**been, done, gone, seen**" when a verb is not preceded by the "**has, have, or had**."
The "*Delete Helping Verbs*" flags "**went**" when it is accompanied by a helping verb.
The "Of – Have" flags phrases in which "have" should replace the word "of."

3.3 Verbs – Tense Shift and Modals
Tense Shift prints all text and flags verbs that are ==past==, ==future==, or both ==past and future== tense. The program helps indentify tense shift while providing rules for and examples of unintentional and of appropriate tense shifts.

MODALS prints sentences that include either or both of two modal errors commonly made by ESL students. "Should studies" or "should studying," would be flagged and, by clicking on that sentence, make it easy to fix. "Might can" would be flagged also if it were found in the composition. ⓘ can help!

4.1 Clarity – This These Those
THIS THESE THOSE prints sentences that includes those words, and the analysis alerts the writer that he or she should always use a noun or noun phrase following those words. The sentences that include "this, these, or those" are flagged, and the analysis provide a great tool to make sure that a noun follows.

4.2 Clarity - Self and Personal Pronouns (actually, four analyses)
SELF PRONOUNS prints sentences that include –self pronouns with the sentences with –self pronouns and the sentences flagged. The –self pronouns are flagged so that the writer can check to see whether the –self pronoun should be replaced with a personal pronoun.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS prints sentences that include first, second, and third person pronouns with those pronouns flagged.

The **first person** pronouns (I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours) are flagged to encourage the writer to determine whether first person is appropriate for the assignment. They are appropriate if the assignment is centered on personal experiences or personal views.

The **second person** pronouns (you, your, yours) are flagged to encourage the writer to revise to eliminate these pronouns unless the composition is made up of instructions or directions directly for users.

The **third person** pronouns (he, him, his, she, her, hers, it, its, they, them, their, theirs) are flagged to help the reader check for their clear reference to and for their agreement with their antecedents. All these flagged pronouns, also, enable the writer to check for shifts of person in the composition.

4.3 Clarity – Singular Indefinite Pronouns
SINGULAR INDEFINITE PRONOUNS prints sentences that include singular indefinite pronouns, with them flagged. It identifies the singular indefinite pronouns (any, every, one, somebody, anybody, everybody, no one, someone, anyone, everyone, nobody, something, anything, everything, none, each, another, either, neither) to alert the writer that all verbs and pronouns that relate to these indefinite pronouns must be SINGULAR.

4.4 Clarity - Plural Pronoun Reference
PLURAL PRONOUN REFERENCE prints sentences that include third person plural pronouns. By clicking on the sentence that was printed in the analysis, the writer can check to see that those pronouns refer to plural nouns.

4.4 Clarity – Adjective Clauses
ADJECTIVE CLAUSES prints sentences that include words that may be used as relative pronouns. (who, which, whose, whom, where, that) The writer is instructed to verify that the word is used as a relative pronoun (the first word in an adjective clause) and, if it is the first word in an adjective clause, that the adjective clause immediately follows the noun to which the relative pronoun refers.

4.6 Clarity - Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers
MISPLACED AND DANGLING MODIFIERS prints sentences that include "-ing" words that are not a part of a verb phrase.
The sentence flags "-ing" words and phrases that are serving as nouns or as adjectives. The writer is led to position an –ing adjective word or phrase immediately before or after the noun that it modifies.

Again, lots of examples on how to fix these using "MoreInfo" by clicking on the ⊖ button.

4.7 Clarity - Parallelism
PARALLELISM prints sentences that include one or more of four coordinate conjunctions.

Sentences with the words **and, or, nor, but** are flagged, and (again) by clicking on the button, ⊖, the writer is provided guidance and directed to verify that he or she has used words, phrases, or clauses with the same structure within the pair or series.

5.1 Words - Diction Alerts
DICTION ALERTS lists potentially problematic words and phrases that may lead to wordiness or may be clichés and lists suggestions that will help the writer edit his or her composition where necessary.

5.2 Words - Words to Check
WORDS TO CHECK lists commonly misused and troublesome words (homonyms, homophones) that appear in the composition followed by brief definitions of similarly pronounced words frequently confused with the word used by the writer.

5.3 Words – Negative Words
NEGATIVE WORDS calculates the percentage of negative words used in the composition. If that percentage is over 2%, the analysis prints an alphabetically sorted list of negative words used in the document and the number of times each negative word is used.

Let's not be too negative! By clicking on the ⊖ button, there will be examples on how to revise writing and become more positive.

5.4 Words – Split Infinitives and Article Errors
SPLIT INFINITIVES AND ARTICLE ERRORS flags two points of grammar: split infinitives that may need revisions and incorrect use of articles that should be corrected. "Flagging" consists of listing errors below the explanation.
- a. Instruction on proper handling of each error is provided.
- b. As with all analyses, the writer is instructed to edit the error in his or her document.
- c. Just click on the "Split Infinitive" sentence or the "Article Error" sentence to find the potential error.

5.5 Words - Transitions
TRANSITIONS lists sentences with probable transitional words, phrases, and clauses.
- a. Transitional words, phrases, and clauses are important in compositions and in college entrance exams.
- b. Possible transitional word types are suggested along with the benefits of their use.

6.1 Punctuation - Introductory Elements
PUNCTUATION- INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS prints sentences that probably include an introductory element. The analysis flags the sentence, with the first word in that sentence that begins with a word that is probably being used as an introductory element or that could mark an introductory phrase or clause.

The writer is directed to ensure that the introductory element is followed by a comma in the appropriate location in that sentence. Clicking on the 🄳 button will provide guidance.

6.2 Punctuation - Pairs and Series
PUNCTUATION-PAIRS AND SERIES, like the **PARALLELISM** analysis, prints sentences that include the four words that are always coordinate conjunctions, **and, or, nor, but**, and prints the sentences where it finds them. The top of this analysis provides instruction relevant to punctuation of pairs and series. 🄳 provides guidance.

This analysis focuses on making sure that commas are put in the correct places with series of elements.

6.3 Punctuation – Comma, Semicolon, Colon
PUNCTUATION – COMMA, SEMICOLON, COLON prints sentences that include one or more commas, semicolons, or colons. Each of the sentences that include internal punctuation entities (, ; :) are flagged to encourage the writer to justify the punctuation or to delete it and to consider other punctuation that may be needed in the sentence. The 🄳 function for this analysis provides rules for most internal punctuation.

6.4 Punctuation - Possible Fragments and Long Sentences
PUNCTUATION – POSSIBLE FRAGMENTS AND LONG SENTENCES lists groups of words that may be sentence fragments or that may be run-on sentences or that may not be punctuated correctly.
- a. Writers should read these groups of words to determine if they are, in fact, sentences.
- b. Possible punctuation errors resulting from the creation of long sentences are explained.
- c. General revision suggestions are provided, and examples are provided by clicking on 🄳 .

6.5 Punctuation - Unbalanced or Misplaced Punctuation and Inconsistent Capitalization
UNBALANCED PUNCTUATION finds where there are not the same number of left and right parentheses, not the same number of opening and ending single quotation marks, and not the same number of opening and ending double quotation marks and prints the number of times each of those punctuation elements is used in the document. It directs the writer to find any unbalanced or misplaced punctuation. After going to the document, <Ctrl-F> will find them.

MISPLACED PUNCTUATION finds where authors didn't capitalize the beginning of sentences or, at the end of sentence quotations, misplaced their period, question, or exclamation marks.

INCONSISTANT CAPITALIZATION lists words that are capitalized inconsistently in the document. It looks for words that have two or more consecutive capital letters and, then, looks for and prints out other words where those words are not capitalized consistently. As in all analyses, the writer must decide whether to make revisions.