

## GRAMMAR 101: Focusing on clarity vs. ~~correctness~~ & educating vs. ~~editing~~.

| 10 most common grammatical issues                      | Examples  | How concerned should you be?<br>What can/should you do?  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Verb tense/form (incorrect or shifting)</i>         | When interest rates <b>expecting</b> to fall, three reasons <b>would cause</b> to raise in stock prices.<br><b>Is she speak</b> Japanese?                       | Can seriously interfere. Ask students to explain what they wish to say orally. It may also help to ask about “who does what” (agent, verb, object).  |
| <i>Word form</i>                                       | It is <b>importance</b> to <b>investment</b> money for the future.  | Often interferes. Offer another word form, telling them which part-of-speech they need (n, v, or adj, in most cases)   |
| <i>Subject/verb agreement</i>                          | Investors search ...to protect their <b>wealth</b> which <b>are</b> deposited in banks  | Often interferes.<br>Worth pointing out and asking for clarification..   |
| <i>Plurals (count/non-count)</i>                       | We have ordered new office <b>equipments</b> .<br>My favorite animals are <b>sheeps</b> .   | Sometimes interferes.<br>Worth pointing out but maybe not correcting.  |
| <i>Syntax (sentence structure / word order)</i>        | I asked my instructor what <b>would be</b> the due date for the <b>written second</b> assignment.   | Sometimes interferes.<br>Worth pointing out and asking for clarification.  |
| <i>General ‘awkwardness’ or incorrect expressions.</i> | <i>[numerous examples abound]</i><br>(My favorite):<br>“On the <b>third</b> hand...”<br>I <b>wish</b> that we <b>will</b> have more time to work on this paper. | Seriousness depends on severity. You can start by telling the student whether it’s a content issue (i.e. “I don’t understand this part”) or simply a style issue (i.e. “This just seems strange”). If the latter, you might ignore it. Expect some ‘written accent.’ |
| <i>‘Marked’ errors (non-standard English)</i>          | He <b>don’t</b> know ...<br>I’m <b>gonna</b> ...  | What do you think? (depends on course, genre, student goals, etc)  |
| <i>Punctuation</i>                                     | [ : . ? ’ “ ! - ☺ ]   | Rarely interferes. Do what you would with your other students.   |
| <i>Incorrect/missing article (a, an, the)</i>          | <b>The</b> individuality is [ ] important aspect of American culture.   | Almost never interferes. Many tutors correct these directly or ignore them.  |
| <i>Wrong preposition (to, from, about, by, etc)</i>    | The essay <b>from</b> Foucault is <b>for</b> many important issues.   | Almost never interferes. Many tutors correct these directly or ignore them.  |