

Edit your Writing Using Error Logs

Do you find yourself making the same mistakes in your writing over and over? Error logs are a tool that can help you overcome frequent errors by developing a strategy for catching and correcting these mistakes *before* you hand in your assignment.

What is an error log?

An error log is a personalized document that lists your common mistakes and how to correct them. When you receive feedback about a mistake in your writing, you create an entry in your error log that includes the error and how to correct it.

How can an error log help me edit?

Most people tend to repeat the same errors. As you add entries to your log, you will likely see a pattern emerge. You will be able to identify 2-3 errors that you most commonly make. Then, as you edit your work, you can focus especially on checking and correcting these errors. By concentrating on a smaller number of repeated errors, you will reduce the overall number of mistakes in your writing as you master the areas that are most challenging to you.

How do I make and use an error log?

1. Create a chart or find a notebook to keep with you each time you write.
2. When you discover you have made an error, add it to your chart, along with the correct way to write the sentence.
3. When your error log has several entries, look for patterns. Choose 2-3 errors that you make most frequently. These will become your focus areas.
4. Find resources that will help you correct these frequent errors. Possible resources include English grammars, dictionaries, writing guides, and handouts. You will refer to these materials when you edit.

Example Error Log

Sentence with error	What kind of error is this?	Corrected sentence	Notes and Resources
The government has passed two new pieces of legislation, which <u>is</u> related to public safety.	Subject-verb agreement error	The government has passed two new pieces of legislation, which <u>are</u> related to public safety.	The quantity (two pieces) is specified, so the subject is plural *See class handout on subject-verb agreement
It is important for schools to effectively provide <u>to</u> the needs of their students.	Preposition error – provided takes the preposition “for”	It is important for schools to effectively provide <u>for</u> the needs of their students.	*See <i>Advanced Learner’s Grammar</i> , p. 30

Reference: Cogie, J., Strain, K., & Lorinskas, S. (1999). Avoiding the proofreading trap: The value of the error correction process. *Writing Center Journal*, 19(2), 7-32

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Get Started: Error Log Template

Sentence with error	What kind of error is this?	Corrected sentence	Notes and Resources