Common Comments

Comma Splice

I notice that you have a lot of comma splices. These occur where you join two phrases using just a comma, which technically makes the sentence a run-on. Here is an example of another run-on with a comma splice: "I read *Harry Potter*, I loved it!" To correctly use a comma here, you need to use a **comma and a conjunction**, for example: "I read *Harry Potter*, **and** I loved it!" You can also break it into two sentences. The best way to test for comma splices is whenever you come to a comma, look to the right and left of it. If each side of the comma (like "I read *Harry Potter*" and "I loved it!") could be a complete sentence, then you want to use a comma **and** a conjunction (such as *and/but/or*) to connect the two parts. Here is a link to a sheet that has some examples, if you need further guidance.

Issues With Sentence Length Variation

I notice your sentence lengths are _____. In most situations it is best to have varied sentence lengths because that variation gives writing the smoothest possible feel. A piece with all long sentences can feel dense and confusing, while all medium sentences can feel dull, and all short sentences can feel choppy or rushed. One of my goals for you is to have more variation in sentence length by _____.

Overuse of Linking Verbs, and Specifically *to be*

The term *to be* is the most common verb in the English language. As a verb, it takes different forms, depending on how it is used. Some common forms of *to be* include *was, were, is, am, are, be, I'm*, and *it's*. These are all actually the same word! I notice that you use *to be* _____ times throughout your essay, which is probably too many, as using it too much can make writing feel less active. To limit the *to be*s, look for places where you can be more active (*I am sad* becomes *sadness rained down on me*), eliminate passive voice (*I was listening* becomes *I listened*), or just cut it out (*it is interesting to me* becomes *it interests me*).

Run-Ons and Fragments

A sentence is a group of words that complete a thought. It has a subject and an action. When you have two or more sentences, they need to be connected with conjunctions and punctuation in the right spot. I've noticed that some of your sentences are missing _____, which makes them technically run-ons. To fix this, you need to add _____.

Paraphrasing

I've noticed that a lot of your paraphrasing is a little too similar to the original research. My rule for paraphrasing is to try to change it up so much that a Google search would not find the original. This usually involves changing

the wording, organization, and sentence structure. Also, since you are still using someone else's words, don't forget to give the original source credit through a citation, especially because that citation helps protect you against plagiarism.

Transition Issues

In these two sentences, you go from _____ to _____. The transition between them is a bit sudden, because those two topics are really different. A good rule of thumb for transitions is that each sentence should end where the last sentence left off or have something to let us know in some way (starting a new paragraph or having a transition) that the topic is shifting. I'd like to see you go through and look for areas with sudden topic jumps.

Dull Word Choice

The words _____ and _____ are broad and common words. While using broad and common words isn't always a bad thing, looking for ways to make your word choice stronger might help this paper get even better. Some questions to think about with word choice are:

- Is it personal?
- Is it specific?
- Is it unique?
- Do the words have weight?