

## Why Your Grades Go Down

1. mistakes in grammar and mechanics, especially if we've discussed them in class  
Indicated in the margin by various code symbols:
  - cs = comma splice
  - fs = fused sentence
  - agr = agreement, either subject/verb or pronoun
  - // = parallelism
  - w = wordy
  - tr = transition needed
2. lack of focus (thesis is vague, nonexistent, or doesn't address the assigned topic—i.e., you missed the whole point)
  - T* = lack of focus/poor thesis
3. lack of connecting, transitional elements; these are mostly necessary from paragraph to paragraph, but may also be needed to indicate logical relationships between sentences (Marked *TR*)
4. clumsy, awkward, repetitious phrasing; unclear phrasing (unc., or P for “phrasing”)
5. inadequate development: you didn't support your point, let general assertions hang (*D* in the margin)
6. poor introduction, poor conclusion (*D* for development)
7. misreading the original text, getting a writer's argument wrong (*No* in the margin), making up an argument the writer doesn't make
8. padding: where it's obvious that you're going the long way around to make statements, and there's no other reason than to fill up the assigned number of pages; instead of padding, put more effort into thinking; avoid wordiness
9. statements that reflect lack of critical consideration—i.e., a sentence that you would have seen the necessity of revising if you'd reread it or thought about it
10. carelessness about proofreading, dumb, clunky mistakes (ex., wrong words due to incorrect choices from the Spellcheck options; e.g. “coach photo” instead of “couch potato”)
11. Grammar Hit List mistakes