

## Online Writing Lab Response Format

The format below will help students learn to look at their own papers from a global and local perspective, and will help tutors establish a hierarchy of concerns, so that a discussion of the thesis/focus will precede a discussion of punctuation issues.

Tutors should name the strategies they are using. In this way tutors are not just giving the students a fish, but rather teaching them to fish by providing the tools that students can use in future essays, thus making them better writers, rather than just fixing the paper.

It is critical that you do not follow a "correct as you go" process when responding. As with a face-to-face session, you must establish a focus and move from higher level/global to lower level/local concerns.

A good response is composed of four components **which you must label in your response**, as modeled below:

### **GREETINGS**

**This is a place for Greetings and Praise.**

Example:

Hello. My name is Joan and I am a Liberal Studies minor working on a minor in psychology. I am interested in your topic because I have never thought much about why reality tv is popular. I especially like how you bring in the fact that televisions outnumber bathrooms in American households. That's a strange fact to consider!

First I will address the big picture-- the "global" issues such as thesis and development. Then I will address your question about tenses that you ask—these are "local" issues. Look for my comments at the beginning, at those interspersed with asterisks\*\*\*, and at my end comments.

### **GLOBAL COMMENTS:**

**Here the tutor addresses the issues of thesis, organization, and/or development as they apply to the draft. It is also helpful to divide this section into subheadings or strategies.**

**Example subheadings:**

Analyzing the Assignment

Nutshelling for a good title and thesis

Gisting

Documentation or Back-up Singers

## Using a Function Outline

Developing by showing as well as telling

(Refer to your course texts and notes to remind yourself of all of the tools and strategies available.)

### **LOCAL COMMENTS:**

**Here the tutor addresses the sentence level by pointing out specific examples of error patterns and showing the writer how to correct the examples.**

It is best to copy and paste examples and model corrections.

Example:

Run-Ons--I notice a sentence boundary error pattern. In other words, you tend to run the stop sign at the end of a sentence, using a comma when you need a period.

For example, you write, "The producers of reality shows play a role in keeping us on our toes, a show will always end with a conflict waiting to be resolved."

These are two complete sentences. You can solve the problem by using a period, or adding a conjunction such as "and" to connect them. See a handbook on run-ons, and then look for this error throughout your draft. Reading aloud is a good strategy to help a writer see errors.

### **IN CLOSING:**

**Here the tutor provides closing comments.**

Example:

I enjoyed reading this essay because I learned a lot about Mexico. The opening is a great hook to get me interested in the essay. You might revise your title to match your focus. The overall structure of your essay is good, and the part about the beach incident is especially effective because of the detail. Try to add this kind of detail in the other parts. Also, in any handbook (I use Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*), look up the section on comma splices to help you see and correct this kind of error, and I have shown in three examples. Be sure to use your spell check tool, but remember that the computer will not catch homonyms (ex. there, their, they're). A great strategy for proofreading is to read your essay aloud to yourself.

By S. Whitelock/rev. by D. Evans 9/23/12