

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS FOR COMMENTS ON WRITING

✓	good; nice point
?	word choice?
ref?	bad or weak referent makes passage confusing or misreadable
pv	passive voice; can this be made active?
awk	awkward; try rephrasing to make clearer or more elegant
misreadable	passage is ambiguous because of bad syntax; revise for clarity
rep	repetition: some word or phrase has been repeated inelegantly
adj hyphen	adjectival hyphens require hyphens: e.g., the nineteenth century is not hyphenated, but nineteenth-century attitudes is
¶	new paragraph
no ¶	no new paragraph
~	transpose letters or words
⊙	insert period
[]	phrase might be suitable for deletion?
ism	parallelism: try to express like ideas with like syntax
sp?	check spelling
^	insert
wordy	OMIT NEEDLESS WORDS
nouny	prose would probably be improved by replacing nouns with verbs to make more active
disembodied	events are happening, feelings are being felt, ideas are being thought, with no human beings around to do the happening, feeling, and thinking
abstract	watch out for excessively abstract language: a common problem in academic prose; try to exemplify complex, abstract ideas in simple, concrete prose and images
vague	your language is imprecise and excessively general; try to be more exact
transition?	try to build a better bridge from one sentence, paragraph, or section to the next; making prose <u>flow</u> is among the most important challenges that any writer faces
elaborate	tell us more about this idea
explain	you need to explain this idea better, or go another layer down in the ideas that lie behind it

- agreement? nouns, verbs, pronouns aren't agreeing properly
- not a full ¶ not a full paragraph; paragraph is either too brief or too weakly developed to form a coherent unit of argument or narration
- signpost try to do a better job of pointing forward or backward so that the reader can see where you've been or where you're going: summarize and introduce your transitions more effectively
- # insert space
- an ellipsis at the end of a sentence still requires a period; that's why there are four dots
- who's speaking? identify the source of every quotation; don't make the reader go to the footnotes to figure out the source
- sic? misquote? are you sure you copied this quotation EXACTLY? or have you misquoted the author?
- too much quoting beware of quoting too much; remember, the purpose of quotations is to illustrate YOUR argument, not make it for you; block quotes are particularly dangerous, since few people bother to read them
- block quote quote should be a block quote
- ⊂ join together into one word
- split inf split infinitive: increasingly common in English prose, but still offensive to many readers and frequently a source of confusion; they're worth avoiding when the alternative is not too inelegant