

How to Tutor Writing

Tips of Essay/Paragraph Correction

As an English tutor, correcting students' essays and paragraphs is a major and important skill. There are several rules we must pay attention to while proofreading the essays.

1. The tutor should encourage the student to write essays **in blue or black ink instead of pencils**. This way, you can more easily find the errors in the essays. It is also better for you to correct essays in **red ink**. To show your profession, **you should never use pencils to correct them**.
2. While correcting the essays, you should keep the mistakes. Please cross them out rather than erasing them. They are very helpful for the student because only then can he/she compare the corrected essay with the original one.
3. **If a student makes serious and apparent mistakes in an essay, you may underline them and have him/her correct them on his/her own. For example, "SP" means spelling mistakes, "T" means tense errors.** Afterwards, you should check how the student did with the correction.
4. While correcting the essays, please make note of the mistakes of grammar and word usage as well as correct the structure and content of the essay. Some structural mistakes are: the content is unrelated to the topic; there are no thesis statement, or general sentence in the essays; there are no topic sentence in the body; the content of the body paragraph is not focused on the topic sentence, etc. If you find poor structure or content, you should ask the student to correct or re-write them. If necessary, you should write a sample to show your student. **Also the tutor can show students the model essay after correcting students' essay, compare the model essay with students' essay.**
5. Sometimes there are awkward or "Chinese-translated" sentences in the essay, you should change all or part of them in order to guide the students to write better. For example,
 - A. Original sentence
We can find much examples about humors coming from successful men.
 - B. General correction
We can find many examples about humor coming from successful men.
 - C. Qualified correction
We can find many examples of successful men who also have a good sense of humor.
6. While correcting the essays, sometimes you may show two or more solutions instead of one. That would guide the students to learn more writing skills.
7. **You should correct the essays very carefully. Try not to miss any mistakes. If the students find obvious mistakes uncorrected, they would lose**

confidence in you. Furthermore, the parents may stop the tutoring sessions because they feel that you are not qualified and the students can not learn writing from the tutors. Try to correct the sentence seriously. Don't be easy-going. Even if the sentence is correct, you could change some words or structure to make the sentence much better. This way can guide the student to learn more. In general, at least 10 words per page must be modified.

8. If your student makes content and structural mistakes, you should guide them to write essay and paragraph general outlines. They would help them to organize the structure.
9. There are several ways to tutor.
 - a. You could assign several useful sentence structure or conjunctions for the student to use in their essays.
 - b. After correcting the essay, sometimes you could ask the students to re-write it in the correct way, particularly the elementary students.
 - c. If you find grammar mistakes in the essays, you could teach the student related grammar rules according to grammar books.
 - d. If you find spelling mistakes, you could test the student in the next session to see if he/she has memorized the correct spellings.
10. You should always ask the student to write essays in double space; that way you will have more space for correction. Also, encouraging them to keep the essays in a binder is a good way to teach them organizational and filing skills.
11. After correcting the essays, you could indicate the key points and weaknesses you found in short comments.
12. Please be aware of the different writing skill of each student. Grade 3 and grade 4 students should write 150 words single or multi paragraphs. Grade 5 to Grade 8 students should write 250 words essays. Students over grade 9 should write 350-450 words essays. If the student has only stayed in Canada for less than one year, his/her writing skill may be lower than the normal standard.
13. While correcting essays, you always use the three-grade higher- level way to guide the students, which would encourage them to learn more. For example, the student's sentence "**British Columbia is a very good province because it has very good view.**" You must change one "good" to "beautiful" or "fantastic".
14. There are three- levels for tutoring essay writing.
 - a. The lower level: Only correct grammar and spelling roughly. Be not able to explain the grammar rules.
 - b. The middle level: Besides correcting grammar and spelling, the tutor can explain the grammar rules and find the rules evidence for the student in grammar books. The tutors can introduce more advanced or better sentences and words even if the students' sentences are correct. The students can learn more through this

way.

- c. The advanced level: Besides the middle-level skills, the tutors can teach how to write essay structure and a good-content essay. Sometimes, the tutors can write an essay sample, comparing the students' essay. Before assigning the essay topic, the tutor can introduce the background about topic. For example, before assigning the topic " The importance of Environment Protection", the tutor can assign the student to read several non-fiction books about environments. The student will get more idea to write a good-content essay.
 14. It is strongly recommended that all tutors read the two books below. They are very helpful for writing tutoring.
 - a. "Introduction to Academic Writing" (intermediate level)
by Ann Hogue, Longman
 - b. "Writing Academic English" (advanced level)
by Longman
 15. Always ask the student to write down the **essay topic and date** while completing the essay, encourage the student to keep those corrected essays forever (file in the binder). The student and tutor can trace the student's writing progress and weakness according to these essays.
 16. While the tutor corrects the student's essay, always asks the student to join. Don't let the student to sit beside you, nothing to do. They would feel bored. The tutor can assign the student to read an article, make several sentences, do a comprehension, do grammar exercise. Anyway, make them busy.
 17. In most situations, ask the students to write expository essay because the essay tests always focus on this type. Sometime ask the students to write narration, description or about people. Make the essay writing more interesting.
 18. Please always choose **higher level essay topics (LPI/TOEFL/Provincial exam)** for the over grade 7 students.
 19. Don't spend whole session on correcting the essay. The students would feel bored. 30 minutes are enough. Generally, ask the student to write 150-200 words for homework after per session. For example, ask the student to write the 200 words essay body after the first session; 150 words introduction and conclusion after the second session.
 20. **Encourage students to check the Thesaurus and use several advanced unfamiliar words in their essays. They could underline these words.**
 21. **The tutor's obligation is not only teaching English, but also guide the student a good learning aptitude and correct methods.**
- *** Please refer to the essay writing materials " KJ-POWER Essay Writing" before tutoring. It is very helpful for essay writing.