

The Green Sheet

Expecting a decent mark? Take note of
Blank's Really Annoying Quirk & Wordiness List
or face the consequences.

The Deadly Sins (marked by a "DS" in your papers):

- 1) comma splices; 2) its/it's/its' confusion; 3) sentence fragments (incomplete sentence);
- 4) verb agreement errors.

The Avoidable Quirks (marked by a "Q" in your papers):

- Q1) Avoid **"there is/are/was/were"** or **"it is/was"** or **"that is/are/were"** or **"which is/are."**
- Q2) Never use **"itself"** or similar forms (himself/herself) in the context of, for example, "the poem itself" or "the president herself" or "nature itself." The poem ~~itself~~ on nature ~~itself~~ was read by the president ~~herself~~.
- Q3) Avoid **"one"** as a pronoun, as in the context "One knows this . . ." (when overused, it can sound pretentious, and it can clog sentence flow, as can "oneself").
- Q4) Avoid **"as"** when you mean "because," "since," "when," or "while."
- Q5) Avoid a **passive voice**. When appropriate, use an active voice. Write "Poets write poems" not "Poems are written by poets." Write "The writer composes" rather than "The poet is composing." (Get rid of as many "—ing" verbs as you can: put emphasis on the doer and not on what is done.)
- Q6) Always introduce, integrate, and **contextualize quotations** within the grammar and structure of your own sentences. .
- Q7) Do not confuse subject/topic with **theme** (e.g., subject = nature; theme = nature is cruel).
- Q8) Avoid a complex word when a simple one will do. Don't become thesaurus obsessed.
- Q9) To avoid the loss of rhetorical power and logic, watch out for overuse of *therefore, however, moreover, nonetheless, hence, furthermore, consequently, conversely, thus, and indeed*.
- Q10) Avoid beginning sentences with **"It."** (What does the "It" refer to?)
- Q11) Avoid **wazzle (waffling/fuzzy) words**: *absolutely, additionally, actually, aspects, basically, certainly, clearly, definitely, essentially (and in essence), fundamentally, generally, overall, quite, really, simply, situation, truly, ultimately, virtually, and very. Could, should, and would* are also conspicuous wazzlers.
- Q12) Use the **serial comma**, also known as the Oxford or Harvard Comma—or else. Leaving out the final comma can suggest a false or ambiguous parallel between the final two elements.
- Q13) Avoid using the phrase **"the reader" or "readers"** (as some kind of imaginary presence) in your analysis of literary texts. You can usually just cut it.
- Q14) **WORDINESS**: When possible and prudent, purge or **prune the following**—and ALL clichés and tired phrases—*when in doubt, cut it out*:

absolutely essential = essential
aforementioned = DELETE
a bigger/greater/higher/larger degree of = more
a considerable amount of = DELETE OR BE SPECIFIC
a decreased number of = fewer
a distance of 28 kilometers = 28 kilometers
a fair amount = TIRED, BE SPECIFIC
a lesser/smaller degree of = less/fewer
a lot of = many, much
a majority of = most, much of, many
a person who is xxxx = a xxxx person

a positive light = TIRED PHRASE
a prime example of = TIRED PHRASE
a thing of the past = DELETE
a total of seven xxxxs = seven xxxxs
absolutely essential = essential
actually = DELETE
added bonus = bonus
advance notice/reservations = notice/reservations
advance warning = warning
advance planning = planning
after all is said and done = DELETE

all across = across
 all the while = while OR while also
 all of a sudden = suddenly
 all of these = these
 all the while = while OR while also
 all-time record = record
 almost never = seldom
 along the lines of = like
 any and all = DELETE
 any basis in reality = TIRED PHRASE
 anyone and everyone = TIRED PHRASE
 appears on the surface to be = is OR appears to be
 are targeted toward = target
 are seen to be = are OR DELETE
 are such that = DELETE
 are/was/were able to = can OR DELETE
 armed gunman = gunman
 assemble/attach together = assemble/attach
 as a matter of fact = in fact OR DELETE
 as a means to = to
 as a whole = DELETE
 as a way to = to
 as being a = as OR DELETE
 as it truly is = DELETE
 as of the moment = DELETE
 as such = DELETE
 as the case may be = DELETE
 as to why = why
 at a later date = later
 at an early time = early
 at the conclusion of = after
 at the end of the day = TIRED PHRASE
 at the time of = when
 at all times = always OR DELETE
 at first glance = DELETE
 at the earliest possible date = soon OR as soon as possible
 at the present time = currently, now
 at the same time that = while
 at this point in time = now OR DELETE
 as the case may be = DELETE
 autobiography of her [or his] life = autobiography
 bald-headed = bald
 based in large part on = based on
 based on the fact that = since
 basic necessity = necessity
 basic fundamentals = basics OR fundamentals
 basically = DELETE
 because of the fact of = because of
 being = DELETE
 being that = because
 best ever = best
 beyond a shadow of a doubt = DELETE
 [the] bigger picture = TIRED PHRASE
 blend together = blend
 [the] bigger picture = TIRED & VAGUE PHRASE
 both of these/them/the = both
 bring to the table = TIRED PHRASE
 brings to light = exposes, points out, etc
 brings to mind = recalls/suggests

brief moment/summary = moment/summary
 but yet = but OR yet
 burning embers = embers
 by and large = DELETE
 by definition = DELETE
 by extension = TIRED; DELETE
 by its very nature = DELETE
 by leaps and bounds = DELETE
 by means of = by
 by the same token = DELETE or likewise
 by the use of = using
 by virtue of [the fact that] = by
 calls into question = be specific or DELETE
 came to a realization = realized/recognized
 came to an abrupt end = end[ed] abruptly
 can be considered as having = DELETE
 can be seen = DELETE [use active voice]
 careful scrutiny = scrutiny
 carefully calculated = calculated
 can be seen as = is OR DELETE
 cause of concern = concern
 classify into groups = classify
 clear and concise = VAGUE
 clearly articulate = articulate
 close proximity = close, nearby, proximity
 close scrutiny = scrutiny
 closely related to one another = closely related
 collaborate together = collaborate
 combine together = combine
 come to the understanding = understand
 comes across as [being] = seems, is OR DELETE
 common similarities = similarities
 comparatively larger/smaller than = larger than/smaller than
 compare and contrast = compare
 compare together = compare
 compete with each other = compete
 complete stranger = stranger
 completely eliminate/destroy/annihilate [etc]= eliminate
 completely filled/finished = filled/finished
 completely separate = separate
 concerning the matter of = about/regarding
 conduct an investigation into = investigate
 connect[ed] together = connect[ed]
 connects them together = connects them
 considered to be = DELETE
 continue into the future = continue
 continue on = continue
 continues through to = continues to
 consensus of opinion = consensus
 core essence = DELETE
 correctional facility = jail
 could be seen as = perhaps
 crisis situation = crisis
 dates back to = dates to
 deep dive into = VAGUE & TIRED PHRASE
 delves deep into = explores
 depreciate in value = depreciate
 derived great pleasure from = enjoyed, appreciated,

etc.
 despite the fact that = although
 did not succeed = failed
 different from = unlike
 disappear from sight = disappear
 does well to = TIRED AND VAGUED PHRASE
 doomed to perish = doomed
 double-edged sword = CLICHÉ and TIRED PHRASE
 drive the point home = TIRED PHRASE
 due to the effects = because
 due to the fact that = because
 due to there being = because
 dull in appearance = dull
 during the course of = during
 each and every [one] = each, every
 each individual = DELETE OR everyone
 each of = each
 early on in the = early in the
 each separate incident = each incident
 economically deprived = poor
 eliminate altogether = eliminate
 emergency situation = emergency
 enclosed herewith = enclosed
 end result = result
 engaged in = DELETE
 enter into = enter OR DELETE
 epic quest = quest OR epic
 equal to one [each] another = equal
 equally as good = equally good OR equal
 erode away = erode
 essentially = DELETE
 every single one = each one, all, each
 everything considered = DELETE
 exactly identical = identical
 exactly the same = the same
 exceptionally accurate = accurate
 face value = TIRED
 fair amount = DELETE [or be specific]
 fall down = fall
 famous celebrity = famous OR celebrity
 few and far between = rare, unusual OR DELETE
 few in number = few
 filled to [full to] capacity = filled [full]
 final demise/destination/outcome = final OR DELETE
 first priority = priority
 first and foremost = first
 fly through the air = fly
 foreign imports = imports
 for all intents and purposes = DELETE
 for all its worth = TIRED
 for generations to come = TIRED
 for that which is = for the
 for the manner in which = the way
 for the purpose of = to, for
 foreseeable future = [when exactly?]
 fountain of knowledge = TIRED PHRASE, BE SPECIFIC
 free gift = gift
 frozen ice = ice
 future plans/prospects = plans OR prospects
 gain entry into = enter

gather together = gather
 general consensus = consensus
 general public = public
 generations to come = TIRED PHRASE
 get the [his, her] point across = TIRED PHRASE
 give an indication of = indicate
 give consideration to = consider
 gives off the impression = suggests
 goes on at length = describes, fully describes
 [he/she/they] goes on to say = adds, suggests, etc
 going forward = TIRED & VAGUE
 grave crisis = crisis
 grow in size = grow
 hand-in-hand = together; TIRED & VAGUE
 harsh reality = TIRED & VAGUE
 has/had/have a tendency to = often OR DELETE
 has/had/have been found to be = is/was/are
 has/had/have the ability to/capacity for = can/could
 has/had/have the effect of = DELETE
 has/had/have the opportunity to = can/could
 has had an effect upon = influenced
 has the ability to = can
 hear the sound of = hear the
 heat up = heat
 here is where = here
 I might add that = DELETE
 I myself = I
 Important essentials = essentials OR important
 [in a] clear and concise way = [concisely] concise
 In a confused state = confused
 In a nutshell = TIRED PHRASE
 in a sea of = TIRED PHRASE
 in a situation in which = in
 in a very real sense = DELETE
 in a way that = DELETE, BE SPECIFIC
 in actuality = DELETE
 in all likelihood/probability = likely/probably
 in and of itself = DELETE
 in close proximity = near
 in connection with = about
 in equal measure = TIRED; BE SPECIFIC
 in essence = DELETE
 in excess of = more than
 in light of the fact that = because
 in keeping with = AVOID
 in line with = FIND EXACT WORDING
 in itself = DELETE
 in nature = DELETE
 in order to = to
 in reality = DELETE
 in reference to = about/regarding
 in the event that = if
 in the grander scheme of things = DELETE
 in the neighborhood of = about
 in the vicinity of = near
 in spite of = despite
 in spite of the fact that = although
 in such a way = in a way
 in this regard = TIRED PHRASE
 in today's society = today

in terms of = DELETE
 in the area of = in
 in the course of = during, while
 in the event that = if
 in the final analysis = finally OR DELETE
 in the light of = considering OR DELETE
 in the majority of instances = usually
 in the midst of = during, amid
 in the modern day = DELETE or BE SPECIFIC
 in the nature of = DELETE
 in the near future = soon OR DELETE
 in the not too distant future = soon OR DELETE
 in the process of = TIRED & VAGUE
 in their own right = DELETE
 in this day and age = currently, now, today
 in today's society = today
 in truth = TIRED PHRASE
 in view of the fact that = because
 in which = DELETE
 inadvertent error = error
 incredibly profound = profound
 inner feelings = feelings
 inner thoughts = thoughts
 integrate/join together = integrate/join
 interestingly enough = DELETE
 intertwine[d] together = intertwine[d]
 invisible to see = invisible
 irregardless = DELETE
 is a great example of = VAGUE & TIRED
 is a reflection of = reflects
 is able to = can OR DELETE
 is an important factor in = DELETE OR in
 is aware of the fact that = knows
 is described as being = is OR is described as
 is done is a way that = DELETE
 is ever so = is
 is found to be = is
 is going to = will
 is helpful in understanding = clarifies
 is in conflict with = conflicts with/is against
 is in contrast to = contrasts with
 is in effect = DELETE
 is of the opinion = believes OR DELETE
 is of significant importance = is significant OR is important
 is reflective of = reflects
 is a reflection of = reflects
 is the essence of = TIRED and VAGUE
 is scared of = fears
 is seen as = is
 is something that is = is
 is well aware that = understands
 is well versed in = TIRED; BE SPECIFIC
 is when = is OR DELETE
 is where = DELETE
 is/was more or less = is/was
 it appears/seems as though = it appears OR DELETE
 it becomes clear = TIRED
 it can be seen that = DELETE
 it could happen that = could/may/might

it goes to show that = DELETE
 it goes without saying = THEN DON'T SAY IT
 it is/was = DELETE
 it is clear/evident/apparent/helpful that = DELETE
 it is crucial/important/essential that = must/should OR DELETE
 it is essential to note = DELETE
 it is fair to say = TIRED
 it is his/her/their belief = he believes, she believes...
 it is important to note that = TIRED & VAGUE
 it is interesting/important to note that = DELETE
 it is necessary that = must/should
 it is not surprising = TIRED; DELETE
 it is not uncommon = often
 it is only a matter of time before = DELETE or eventually
 it is possible that = DELETE
 it is rarely the case that X happens = X rarely happens
 it is safe to say = TIRED & VAGUE [just say it!]
 it is seen being used in = is used in
 it is used as = DELETE AND FIND EXACT VERB
 it must be said = DELETE [huh? Why must it?!]
 it seems to me = REALLY? WHO ARE YOU? DELETE
 it should be pointed out that = DELETE [says who?]
 itself = DELETE
 join/gather together = join/gather
 joint collaboration = collaboration
 joyous celebration = celebration
 kind of = DELETE
 kneel down = kneel
 lag behind = lag
 large in size = large
 last but not least = finally
 later on = later
 [in/by] levelling the playing field = VAGUE, TIRED
 lift up = lift
 literally = DELETE
 local residents = residents
 longer/shorter in length = longer/shorter
 look ahead to the future = look ahead. plan OR DELETE
 made a decision to = decided
 made out of = made from, made of
 mainly focuses on = focuses on
 major breakthrough = breakthrough
 make a decision = decide
 make a determination = determine
 make an assumption = assume
 make contact with = contact
 make reference to = refer to
 manner in which = way
 many different ways = many ways
 meet together = meet
 mental attitude = attitude
 merge together = merge
 mix together = mix
 more or less = DELETE [OR be specific]
 more preferable = preferable
 most likely = likely

moving forward = TIRED
 mutual agreement = agreement
 mutual respect for each other/one another = mutual respect
 nape of the neck = nape
 natural instinct = instinct
 necessary prerequisite = prerequisite
 needless to say = THEN DON'T SAY IT
 never before = never
 new invention/innovation = invention/innovation
 new record = record [as in SET A NEW RECORD]
 new recruit = recruit
 no one but Hamlet = only Hamlet
 nowhere is this more clear = DELETE
 nodded his head = nodded
 none at all = none
 nothing short of = TIRED
 nostalgia for the past = nostalgia
 not the least of them being = AVOID
 of cheap quality = cheap
 of epic proportion = TIRED PHRASE; DELETE
 of great importance = DELETE OR is important
 of which = DELETE WHEN POSSIBLE
 off of = off OR from
 old adage/custom = custom/adage
 on a daily basis = daily
 on account of the fact that = because
 on the basis of = because, based on
 on the grounds that = because
 on the occasion of = on
 on the other hand = TIRED PHRASE
 on the situation of = about
 on the subject of = about OR DELETE
 on the surface level = on the surface
 on the whole = DELETE
 on top of all this = moreover OR DELETE
 one of a kind = unique
 one of the more = DELETE
 one of the most interesting = DELETE
 one sole purpose = one purpose
 only serves to = DELETE
 open up = open
 optimistic hope = hope
 over and over again = repeatedly
 over exaggerate = exaggerate
 overall goal = goal
 overall impression = VAGUE
 overall structure = structure
 owing to the fact that = because
 pales in comparison = VAGUE & TIRED
 particular type of = DELETE
 past experience = experience
 past history = history
 past memories = memories
 pay you the amount of \$30 = pay you \$30
 penetrate into = penetrate
 perfectly encapsulates = encapsulates; BE SPECIFIC
 perhaps this may be = this may be OR perhaps this is
 period of time = period, time, or DELETE
 personal friend = friend

personal opinion = opinion
 personally, I feel/think/believe = I feel/think/believe
 pick and choose = pick OR choose
 plan ahead/in advance = plan
 play[s] an important role = DELETE [be specific]
 polar opposites = opposites
 political landscape = TIRED, VAGUE
 possible courses of action = choices
 previous/prior to = before
 pretty good = TIRED, DELETE
 proceed ahead = proceed
 protest against = protest
 providing that = provided
 put to use = use
 pure essence = essence
 put forth in = in
 puzzling in nature = puzzling
 quite clearly = DELETE
 readily apparent = apparent
 real truth/life = truth/life
 reconsider again = reconsider
 refer/reflect/reply back = refer/reflect/reply
 regardless of the fact that = although
 repeat[ed] over and over again = repeat[ed]
 respective/respectively = DELETE
 right up to the = up to the OR to the
 rise up = rise
 round in shape = round
 safe haven = haven
 says exactly the same thing = repeats
 scratch the surface = TIRED PHRASE
 scrutinize carefully = scrutinize
 seeing that = because
 seems to infer = infers
 seek/prefer to have = seek/prefer
 serious danger = danger
 serve the purpose of = DELETE
 serves as a lesson = VERY TIRED PHRASING
 serves to explain/show = explain/show
 sets [setting] the stage for = TIRED PHRASE
 sets the tone = TIRED and VAGUE
 sheds light on = CLICHÉ, VAGUE
 short in length = short
 shout loudly = shout
 shrugged her shoulders = shrugged
 side of things = DELETE OR perspective
 skirting/shirts the point = BE SPECIFIC
 similar to = like
 small in size = small
 some kind of = DELETE
 somewhere in the neighborhood of = about
 sort of = DELETE
 speaks volumes [about] = BE SPECIFIC OR DELETE
 spell out in detail = spell out, explain OR DELETE
 state of affairs = DELETE [vague]
 still has yet = has yet
 study in depth = study
 subject matter = subject OR subjects
 subsequent to = after

subsequent to the use of = after using
 sudden crisis = crisis
 sudden impulse = impulse
 sum total = total OR sum
 summarize briefly = summarize
 surrounded on all sides = surrounded
 sworn affidavit = affidavit
 symbolically represents = represents OR symbolizes
 take action = act
 take into account = consider
 take ownership of = TIRED
 take the time = DELETE
 tall in height = tall
 terrible/horrible tragedy = tragedy
 that being said = DELETE, or however, but
 that/this being said = DELETE
 that exists = DELETE
 that exists between/with/among =
 between/with/among
 that is seen in = in
 that is/are/were = DELETE when possible
 that is to say = DELETE
 the colour green = green
 the complete opposite of = the opposite of
 the end OR final result = the result
 the extent to which = DELETE
 the human race = humans OR humanity OR people
 the fact that = that OR DELETE
 the fact remains = DELETE
 the final conclusion = the conclusion
 the majority of = most/many
 the manner/means by which = how
 the month of September = September
 The nature of the [NOUN] = The [NOUN]
 the overall plan = the plan
 the possibility exists for = may/might/could
 The purpose of [X] is to illustrate = [X] illustrates
 the realm of reality = reality
 the reason is because = the reason/because
 the reason why = the reason, why, because
 the true nature of = DELETE
 the type OR use of = DELETE
 the vast majority of = most OR many, OR BE SPECIFIC
 the very first = the first
 the way in which = how
 the young boy = the boy
 there is a tendency = DELETE OR BE SPECIFIC
 there is/are/was/were = DELETE
 throughout the course of = throughout
 throughout the entire = throughout OR the entire
 time and time again = constantly/often/repeatedly
 total destruction = destruction
 to a certain extent = DELETE OR BE SPECIFIC
 to make a plan/decision = to plan/decide
 to make an acquisition/arrangement = to
 acquire/arrange
 to make her argument stronger = to strengthen her
 argument
 to this end = DELETE
 trials and tribulations = TIRED PHRASE

true essence = essence
 true fact = fact
 two p.m. in the afternoon = two p.m.
 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon = 2:00 p.m.
 two a.m. in the morning = two a.m.
 under the circumstances = TIRED & VAGUE
 unexpected emergency = emergency
 unexpected surprise = surprise
 unintentional mistake = mistake
 united as one = united
 until such time as = until
 ultimate fate = fate
 ultimate objective OR goal = objective OR goal
 useless in function = useless
 utmost perfection = perfection
 vacillate back and forth = vacillate
 valuable asset = asset
 various differences = differences
 various different = various
 very existence = existence
 very unique = unique
 violent explosion = explosion
 virtually = DELETE
 visible to the eye = visible
 warn in advance = warn
 was a man known = was known
 we are of the opinion that = we believe
 we as individuals = we OR individuals
 we as a society = we OR society
 well aware of = aware
 what is important/apparent is = DELETE, VAGUE
 when all is said and done = DELETE
 when compared to = compared to
 whether or not = whether/if OR DELETE
 which have been found to be = are OR DELETE
 which has/have to do with = are about
 which is/are/were = DELETE
 will be able to = can
 will come in the future = will come
 will have an effect on = will effect
 with regards to = TIRED; DELETE
 with the possible exception of = except for
 with this being said = DELETE
 while it is clear [that] = DELETE
 who are/was/were = GENERALLY DELETE
 why it functions the way it does = how it functions
 with regard to = about/regarding
 with the exception of = except for
 witnessed firsthand = witnessed
 young in age = young