# introduction

Hi **[CLIENT NAME]**!

My name is Maya, and I am the Centre for Scholarly Communication tutor who reviewed your writing for your asynchronous appointment on **[DATE]**. I am also a graduate student here at UBCO, so I know how difficult the writing process can be! This letter will include my feedback on your **[ASSIGNMENT NAME]**. When you made this appointment, you wrote that you were concerned about the grammar used within the assignment. I will address this concern along with one other piece of feedback in this letter and in the comments that I added to your file.

# A Note

Please note that your supervisor’s/instructor’s guidelines and instructions always take precedence over the advice provided by the Centre for Scholarly Communication. For assignment specific concerns, always refer to your assignment description and/or syllabus and clarify all questions with your instructor. For your thesis or dissertation, please be sure to consult with your supervisor and your committee.

# strengths of the writing

First, I would like to address an important strength in your writing. The way you have written your thesis statement is very effective because it provides a strong opening to the paper. Additionally, a strong thesis statement is important because it clearly defines the focus of the paper and your primary argument. It makes the rest of the paper very easy and engaging for the reader to read and understand. I can see the effort you've put into the thesis statement because it is clear and specific to your paper. Good job!

# Area to Consider #1: Structure

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| **Concern** | Structure and organization is one concern within your paper. When we refer to ‘structure’ and/or ‘organization’, we are referring to the order of ideas within your paper as a whole and/or within your paragraphs. |
| **Why It’s Important** | Often, students are concerned with the ‘flow’ of their paper. While ‘flow’ can mean many things, a lack of flow is predominantly an issue with the organization of your ideas. When your ideas are organized, your paper flows, making it easy for your reader to read and quickly understand your ideas. |
| **Explanation** | I would suggest reviewing your paper for the organization of ideas. Specifically, I suggest that you focus on the order of ideas within each paragraph and make sure that the ideas go from more general (at the beginning) to more specific (towards the end of the paragraph).  A typical paragraph structure for an essay would look something like this:   * Introductory sentence (general overview of what the reader should expect to learn from the paragraph). * Main idea of the paragraph * Examples of main ideas (quotations, statistics, etc.) * Concluding/transition sentence   Your paragraphs often have examples towards the beginning of the paragraph and then explain the main idea after explaining the examples. This can make a paper a little bit more difficult to read because the reader starts interpreting the examples before you provide them with the main idea.  For example, here is one paragraph of your paper:  *In 2005, a study by Smith et al. demonstrated that dogs spend over 100 hours per year playing fetch with their owners. In 2006, a study by Jones et al. demonstrated that dogs spent over 80 hours per year playing catch. Dogs make fantastic pets.*  One way to change the structure of this paragraph to make it clearer would be to move the final sentence to the beginning of the paragraph. This way, the paragraph will start with a main idea. You can also add a concluding/transition sentence to help guide the reader to the next main idea.  *Dogs make fantastic pets. In 2005, a study by Smith et al. demonstrated that dogs spend over 100 hours per year playing fetch with their owners. In 2006, a study by Jones et al. demonstrated that dogs spent over 80 hours per year playing catch. However, recent studies have also found that dogs are easy to care for.*  If you struggle with structure, one strategy you can use is to take a few of your paragraphs and fit each sentence into the template above. Then, rewrite the paragraph according to the order of the template. |
| **Additional Examples from Your Paper** | Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE]  Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE]  Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE] |
| **Further Resources** | [Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paragraphs_and_paragraphing/index.html) has a succinct description of elements of strong paragraphs.  The [University of Newcastle LibGuide](https://libguides.newcastle.edu.au/writing-paragraphs/structure) has a good paragraph template you can use. |

# Area to Consider #2: Grammar

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| **Concern** | You noted that grammar was a concern when making your appointment. While I did not notice any issues with verb usage or sentence structure, I did notice some minor comma usage errors. |
| **Why it’s Important** | Commas are fantastic punctuation marks! They allow us to convey different meanings in sentences and cue our readers as to when to take a pause when reading our work. They also help organize lists and quotations. |
| **Suggestion** | I would suggest reviewing your paper for comma use errors. The most common error that I saw within your paper is called a comma splice. What is this?  Well, commas are often used to connect ideas. This is fine when these ideas could be full sentences on their own. For instance, the phrases ‘I went to the store’ and ‘I bought a bag’ could be individual sentences.  *I went to the store. I bought a bag.*  Or, we could use a comma and a connector word (e.g., For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) to join them in one sentence.  *I went to the store, and I bought a bag.*  A comma splice occurs when you use a comma two join two phrases like I did above, but you forget the connector word. For example…  *I went to the store, I bought a bag.*  I noticed this error several times in your paper. The easiest way to solve this issue is simply to re-read your paper with a focus on comma use. When you find a comma splice, pick the connector word that makes the most sense to use within the sentence and add it after the comma.  Here is an example of a comma splice in your paper (pg., para. ):  Dogs make great pets, they are easy to take care of.  As you can see, this sentence is made up of two individual phrases that could function as standalone sentences. To correct this comma splice error, you could use a period to split the phrases, or you could use a connector word. For example:  Dogs make great pets. They are easy to take care of.  Dogs make great pets, and they are easy to take care of. |
| **Additional Examples from Your Paper** | Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE]  Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE]  Page [NUMBER HERE], Paragraph [NUMBER HERE] |
| **Further Resources** | [Grammarly](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/comma-splice/) has a really good description of comma splice errors and some strategies for correcting these errors. While adding a connector word is probably the easiest way to fix comma splices, you can also use a semi-colon or another strategy. |

# next steps

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| **Concern** | **Next Step** |
| **Organization** | * Review the paragraph template within this e-mail * Choose a paragraph from your paper and revise it to fit the paragraph template * Review the remainder of your paper and revise other paragraphs with a focus on putting more general ideas first and more specific ideas later |
| **Comma Splices** | * Review comma splice correction strategies listed in this letter * Re-read your paper with a focus on finding comma splice errors and revising them |

Once you have taken these steps, please don’t hesitate to re-submit your assignment for further feedback!

# closing

Thanks for sharing your work with me! I encourage you to come back for another appointment with me or another consultant once you've worked on organization and comma splices, or if you have any other questions!

Best,

Maya

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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are some general writing resources that other students have found useful. Feel free to take the time to explore these!

* [Manchester Phrasebank:](https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) If you’ve ever struggled with transition words, this is a great tool to use – it has many examples of transition words and phrases that you can use, as well as other useful phrases to use within your writing.
* [Purdue Online Writing Lab:](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) This website is a fantastic resource on tons of writing-related topics. For instance, it has good descriptions of common grammatical errors and their corrections, sample papers, information about some citation styles, and much more.