**Grammar Codes**

**1.** Misspelled word. Spelling errors include incorrect capitalization and missing hyphens.

**2.** Comma error – You have either left out a needed comma or added one where it doesn’t belong.

**2a.** Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. (FANBOYS)

**2b.** Use commas to separate items in a series (Ex: I like pears, apples, and oranges.)

**2c.** Use a comma between two adjectives of a similar meaning or tone used to describe the same noun.

Ex: The yard was full of romping, running children.

**2d.** Use a comma to set off introductory elements and interrupting phrases.

Ex: Screaming for help, the girl wrestled the raging bear.

Ex: The theme of the story, mankind’s inhumanity to mankind, was easy to locate.

**2e.** Use commas to set off the explainers of the direct quotation.

Ex: The girl sighed, “Just go without me.”

**2f.** Use a comma to prevent misreading.

Ex: Ever since, Frank has been a better boy. vs. Ever since Frank has been a little boy (fragment)

**2g.** Do not use unnecessary commas.

**2h.** Semicolons are fancy periods, not fancy commas. Do not use them in place of a comma.

**3.** Sentence fragment. A sentence must have a subject and a predicate. Your sentence is missing a vital element.

**4.** Comma-splice and/or Run-on. You’ve joined two or more independent clauses without proper punctuation.

Incorrect: I got up late this morning, I didn’t have time for breakfast.

Correct: I got up late this morning. I didn’t have time for breakfast

**5.** An apostrophe is in the wrong place and/or missing.

**5a.** Use an apostrophe to form the possessive of nouns and indefinite pronouns.

**5b**. “It’s” only ever means “it is.” The possessive form of “it” is “its.”

**5c.** Use an apostrophe to form the possessive of plural noun ending in “s.”

Ex: It was my parents’ decision.

**6.** Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks (tuck it in!).

**7.** Avoid needless shifts in verb tense. Verb tense shifting confuses your reader and is an unpleasant distraction. Use present tense when discussing literature.

**8.** Pronoun or verb agreement error.

**8a**. Pronoun-antecedent agreement error. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender, person, and number.

**8b**. Verb agreement error. Verbs must agree with the subject of the sentence in number (plural or singular).

**9.** Use parallel construction to create a smooth flow.

**10.** Title was mishandled. Titles of major works (novels, plays, long poems, etc.) are underlined in handwritten essays and italicized in typed essays. Titles of minor works (short stories, poems, songs, magazine articles, etc.) are placed within quotation marks on both handwritten and typed essays. The title of your own original essay is only capitalized.

**11.** Hyphens/Dash confusion. A hyphen joins two or more words together while a dash separates words into parenthetical statements.

**12**. A colon means "that is to say" or "here's what I mean." Use only after a complete sentence.

Ex: Remember the old saying: Be careful what you wish for.