Exercises
ProWritingAid

We have compiled these exercises and classroom activities to encourage students to become more self-reflective, confident, and critical writers when using grammar- and style-checking tools.

Some exercises have been designed with a specific tool in mind, while others are more generic. Most can be adapted for use with any other writing tool, as long as the two tools fulfil similar functions. Some activities may work better as individual student tasks; others as small group exercises, or even class-wide discussions. Again, feel free to adapt the format to match your needs.

NB! Before you use any of these activities in your class, make sure to introduce your students to ProWritingAid's complex functionality and reports, explaining exactly how each function works and why it may, or may not, be useful to a writer.

Noting repetition in one's writing

individual 👤 group 👥 classroom 👥

Instruct your students to run a substantial piece of their writing (e.g., a draft essay) through ProWritingAid's text editor. Click on "summary" to view a comprehensive report. Aside from statistical data and other metrics on the text, the report provides grammatical and stylistic suggestions for improving readability and argumentative strength. Have your students carefully read the report and figure out what new insights emerge. Students can work first individually at first and then in pairs, swapping and discussing their pieces of writing and the summary reports generated by the tool.

Evaluating one's writing with Summary Report and peer review

individual 👤 group 👥

Use Ginger's Paraphrase and Thesaurus functions as conversation starters for how to reword one's ideas in writing. Working with a piece of text individually or in pairs, ask you students to explore the tool's suggestions for paraphrasing their sentences or substituting words with synonyms. The aim is to get students to pay attention to the semantical, rhetorical and stylistic nuances of each chosen word or phrase, and to warn them against blindly choosing unfamiliar words with unknown connotations. The students should be able to explain their rephrasing choices. If the students have worked individually, they can then swap their revisions with a peer to get feedback on the changes they have made. This small activity can be used as a springboard to launch a class-wide discussion about discipline-specific vocabulary, clichés, and overused words, as well as one on the dangers of trying to sound "smart" by using jargon and less-known words. It can also be used to address the stylistic aspects of one's writing, such as the effect of repetitive phrases or sentence structures on the overall readability and flow of writing.