Comments on a graded paper are one of the best ways to improve writing skills. The instructor uses comments to explain why a student received a certain grade, and more importantly to suggest how to improve. It is important to read these comments, try to understand and learn from them, and then apply them to the old paper and future ones. Answer the questions below to help you through this process. You may also want to look at The Writing Center’s *Understanding Graded Paper Comments* handout.

1. Describe the process you went through to write your paper. Did you brainstorm, plan, do research, draft, revise, edit, etc? How much time did you spend on each stage?

2. Did you feel confident when you turned the paper in? Why or why not?

3. Why do you think teachers write comments on papers? What are they trying to do?

4. What did you do well on? Make a list.

5. Below, write all of the comments that you do not understand.
Thinking About Graded Paper Comments
Blinn College – Bryan Writing Center – Online Worksheet

6. Many comments will be directed toward some of the areas below. If you are weak in a certain area, you can use the questions below to help you decide what you need to do better. Circle the sections you feel you need to work on.

**Content:** Were the directions followed? Is there adequate, reputable evidence? Is that evidence explained? Are the ideas fully developed?

**Organization:** Is the thesis and organization identifiable? Are the paragraphs structured? Are there transitions? Are the introduction and conclusion effective?

**Style/Tone:** Are the tone, word choice, and style appropriate for the paper and the audience? Is the sentence structure interesting? How effectively are style and tone used?

**Mechanics:** Are there many grammar, sentence, spelling, or other surface errors?

**Format:** Is the heading correct? Are there page numbers; is there an appropriate title? Are the citations and works cited page done accurately?

7. Now that you have thought about the different areas, do you understand more of the comments? If necessary, ask for help with the items from #5. You can ask a friend, a tutor, the teacher, or look in the Handbook. Make some notes about what you find out.

8. Now make a list of the mistakes you made and how to fix them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mistakes made</th>
<th>How to fix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comma splice</td>
<td>Semicolon, comma + FANBOY, period</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

9. Go through the paper and practice correcting the mistakes above. This will help you learn how to fix these items, so they do not happen next time you write. Feel free to use resources and books to help you.

10. Set some goals for the next paper. What do you specifically want to do better? Do you want to spend more time on a particular part of the writing process? Do you want to work harder on a certain essay area? Write some specific goals below.