

Exercises

Ginger

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 asking your students to engage with the download-only Ginger Software, consider the Ethical Issues involved.

Checking grammar with Ginger

individual  group  classroom 

A Ginger-edited text can be a great conversation-starter in the classroom. For this activity, the students should bring along a short piece of their writing and run it through Ginger editor. They can work in pairs or small groups to discuss and explain the tool's suggested revisions. Students should discuss both the alleged error and the suggested correction(s). Encourage you students to view the tool's suggestions "as focused invitations to consider revising their writing" because "within such a framework, tools like Ginger may be effective at increasing motivation and promoting learner autonomy..." (Swier).

Allot some time towards the end of the lesson for students to share the results with the class. Make sure you have the technical equipment that enables that activity (e.g., a document camera, a big screen, a way to connect student laptops to the system).

Learning to paraphrase

individual  group  classroom 

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.