

Symbol	What it means...
😊	This part is well-written. It was a delight to read. Thanks!
✓	This is right! Well done.
+	Partially correct. Missing key parts.
≈	Not quite, but sort of. Either you're misunderstanding this or you understand it, but you're not writing clearly enough. Protip: test out your understanding of the material in class or office hours (when your grade isn't on the line). E.g., "Does so-and-so's argument for _____ rely on the claim that _____?"
X	This is not correct.
≠	(Disconnect). It seems like you think these things are related in a way that they are not. If I am wrong, then this means that you need to make your point more clearly (see also "?").
∞	It's not clear how these thoughts are related, so this hard to follow. Explain the connection between each point you make.
?	Confusing or Awkward. I've read this multiple times in order to try to figure out what you mean and I still don't know. It should be difficult for me to misunderstand you. Proofreading test: Have someone read your paper and then tell you what they think you're saying. If they misunderstand you at all, then look for ways to be more clear.
→←	This claim contradicts a claim you made earlier. That means either this claim or the earlier claim must be false. So you will have to figure out which claim is false, remove it from your argument, and then figure out whether and how you can make the argument work without that claim.
^	Add text here. If I wrote something above the ^, that's my suggested text.
!	This claim (or its implication) is too strong. Strong claims do not always make for strong arguments. The stronger a claim (or its implication), the <i>harder</i> it is to defend. So don't make a claim so strong that you cannot defend it.
↑	(upshot). You've starting making a point, but you haven't finished. What's the upshot? Once you figure it out, signpost the upshot: "This means that ..."
—	(as in "subtract") Try being more concise. If it's (1) a <u>quotation</u> : use verbatim quotes only if you need to draw attention to the original wording. Most of the time, you do not need a direct quote. Rather, you should summarize the author in your own words (and then cite it, of course). If it's (2) <u>your own writing</u> : this could be said with fewer words. See also "F" (for Fluff).
⊗	Don't do this. Common issues: "In my opinion...", "The dictionary defines X as...", "Science proves/disproves...", "Since the beginning of...", "[So-and-so] was born in such-and-such..." etc.

Symbol	What it means...
Arg	(Problem with <u>argument</u> ). This error was discussed in the reading or in class.
C	( <u>C</u> ite) This needs to be cited. Use in-text parenthetical citations or footnoted citations. Accompany these with a works cited list. Use one format throughout.
Calc	(Calculation) Show the calculation for this or change to non-quantitative claim.
D	( <u>D</u> evelop). Ooo! This might have potential! Alas, not enough is said about it. Provide more detail, offer more support, consider objections, etc.
df	(Definition). Given the nature of this assignment, you should define this. Don't appeal to a dictionary. Define it based on how the word is used in our class.
E	(Error) writing error. Common errors: missing word, repeated word, spelling, grammar, run-on sentence, incomplete sentence, gratuitous punctuation, etc.
F	(Fluff). If you're not (1) describing a premise/conclusion, (2) explaining how premises lead to a conclusion, (3) supporting a premise, (4) objecting to a premise/conclusion, (5) explaining the upshot of your objection, or (6) responding to an objection, then you're adding fluff. Please (please!): no fluff.
HW	( <u>H</u> and <u>w</u> riting). I can't read this. If I can't read it, I can't give credit for it.
I/E	(Implicit vs. Explicit). This merely implies a point. It is better to make the point explicitly. Examples: "How could we know?!" vs. "We cannot know." "There is something to be said for X." vs. "Here is what we should say about X."
L	List. This might be easier for the reader to digest in list form.
¶	New paragraph here. Including multiple conclusions in a paragraph makes for gratuitously difficult reading. Paragraph breaks (and signposts, transitions, etc.) help your reader transition between each part of your thought process.
S	( <u>S</u> upport) This claim is not well-supported. Try showing (1) how the opposite of your claim is impossible or implausible, (2) how your claim is supported by the preponderance of evidence, (3) how the claim follows from some intuitively plausible (e.g., uncontroversial) principle(s), and/or (4) how your claim best jibes with the accepted meaning of the relevant concept(s). Note: if your interlocutor objected to this claim, then you need to respond to their objection.
T	(Thesis) This seems to be your thesis. The thesis should be the conclusion of your argument(s). Every part of your paper should be dedicated to presenting and supporting the premises of this argument, explaining how your conclusion follows from those premises, and responding to objections to the premises and/or thesis. Tip: limit yourself to one thesis and make sure you articulate it clearly in (at least) the introduction and conclusion of your paper.
WC	( <u>W</u> ord <u>C</u> hoice). That probably isn't the best word or phrase for this.

Clarification: (1) I always write in capital letters for clarity sake, not because I'm yelling, angry, etc. Also, (2) I write on your assignment because I care. (3) My goal in writing on the assignment is to help you understand the grade and how to improve. (4) If you find that philosophy is hard, then you're not alone. Thinking and writing clearly and cogently is unnatural. It takes lots of practice and teamwork. We're in this together. (5) Still have questions? No problem. We can talk about it at least 48 hours after you get the assignment back. Just email me to let me know when you plan to stop by office hours. [www.byrdnick.com](http://www.byrdnick.com)

