

# Odysseyware®

## Odysseyware®

v2.29

**Writer User Guide**

Released 10/2016

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Odysseyware®

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### Technical Support

**Phone** - Toll Free: 877.251.6662

**Days/Time** - Monday - Friday 7 am - 11 pm (CT) and Saturday - Sunday 1 pm - 7pm (CT)

**Go to:** <http://www.odysseyware.com/support>

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## Introduction

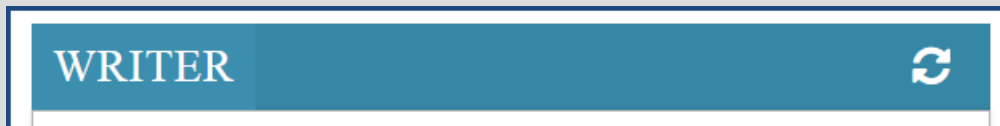
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Writer is a powerful tool to use for improving student writing of paragraph and essay assignments. Writer provides targeted feedback, in the form of colored-coded graphics and progress meters, for key factors in the writing process. This feedback encourages student practice and revision to achieve writing success. The data provided by Writer also gives teachers better insight into students' strengths, as well as areas for improvement.

It is important to note that Writer IS a writing process tool designed as an instructional aid for teachers and students to create focused, differentiated instruction. It is NOT designed as an essay grader and does NOT take the place of the valuable interaction and assessment given by the teacher to the student. Think of Writer as your "assistant coach".

### Notes

- Uploaded assignment files will not be scored by Writer. However, if the student has an external file that contains the paragraph or essay, the student can copy the text and paste it into the Writer text box. Writer will then score the assignment.
- Writer Overall Score elements are automatically disabled for those assignments not having a Target Word Count and/or Target Grade Level even if the Writer Scoring setting is enabled for the school, student, and enrollment. For students, the Writer text box and Refresh tool appear as shown in this example, but only the spelling and grammar features are available.




## Writer settings

Writer has two settings: **Spelling and Grammar** and **Scoring**.

### Spelling and Grammar

The Spelling and Grammar functionality of Writer can be used for almost all written assignments, the exceptions being assignments in Odysseyware Elective courses for foreign languages, such as Spanish I, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. The Spelling and Grammar feature can be used independently of the Scoring feature.

Once a student submits a paragraph or essay for the assignment or clicks the Writer **Refresh** (  ) tool, the spelling and grammar suggestions appear in-line in the text of the essay as shown in this example.

The screenshot shows the 'WRITER' interface with a 'Word Count: 102 of 125' and an 'OVERALL SCORE' bar. A student's essay is displayed with blue text indicating possible grammatical errors and red text indicating spelling errors. A red circle highlights a refresh icon in the top right corner. Below the essay, two red boxes provide explanations: 'Blue text indicates possible grammatical errors.' and 'Red text indicates spelling errors.'

**WRITER** Word Count: 102 of 125 OVERALL SCORE: ■■■■■

This is my observations of the peanuts in the bowl:  
 I made and recorded my visual observations that will help me to identify the peanut after it is returned to the bowl. I did not make any markings on the peanut. I observed that the peanut I choosed had a darker color than the other peanuts in the jar. The peanut was smaller in size, approximately 45 centimeters long and about 2 centimeters wide. The peanut had several unique markings, such as tear in the side of the peanut and several threads of the peanut shell were hanging on one side.

Blue text indicates possible grammatical errors.

Red text indicates spelling errors.

Like a word processing tool, the student can right-click the word or phrase to show the possible suggestions. See ["How To Use The Spelling Errors Options And Grammar Suggestions" on page 7](#). As with any spelling and grammar correction tool, the suggestions must be weighed against the context. The student and teacher can work together to decide if any of the suggestions should be ignored.

## Scoring

The Scoring functionality can apply to many of the paragraph and essay assignments for grades 4-12.


<b>Note</b>	If an essay or paragraph assignment DOES NOT have a Target Word Count and/or Target Grade Level, Writer Scoring is automatically disabled even if the Writer Scoring setting is enabled for the school, student, and enrollment.
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Scoring involves supplying the **Word Count** and **Overall Score** for the paragraph or essay.

- **Word Count:** Counts the number of words submitted by the student against the expected word count.
- **Overall Score:** A holistic score drawn from the additional, active scoring elements. See ["What The Overall Score Elements Mean" on page 11](#).

This example shows the Word Count and Overall Score with the additional scoring indicators displayed for the student.

The screenshot shows the Writer interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the word "WRITER" on the left. To its right, a box displays "Word Count: 102 of 125". Further right, the "OVERALL SCORE:" is shown with a green progress bar and a dropdown arrow. Below the header, a text area contains a student's essay about peanuts. To the right of the text area, a scoring matrix is visible, showing metrics like "Grade Level:", "Readability:", and "Writing:" with corresponding progress bars and a red downward arrow next to "Grade Level:". A red box highlights the word count and the scoring matrix.

After making changes, the student can click the Writer **Refresh** (  ) tool and the essay and the scoring matrix evaluates the new material and adjusts the score accordingly. If the student would like feedback from the teacher, the student clicks the **Submit Answer** button, but does not agree to turn the assignment in, and then clicks the **Ask for Help** button to send a message asking the teacher to read their work and make suggestions prior to submitting it for grading.

This revision-based feedback, both from the scoring matrix and the teacher, is a key factor to successfully using Writer.

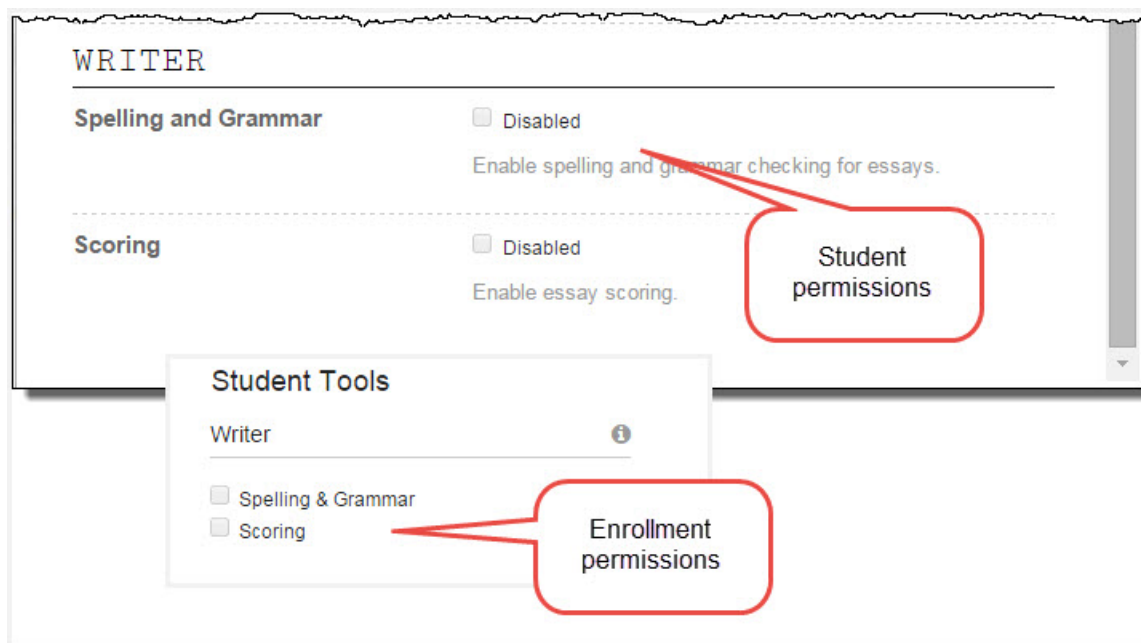
## Enable and disable Writer permissions

Writer permissions must be enabled at the school level to enable student-level and enrollment-level Writer permissions. Permissions at the school level are disabled by default. Your school's admin enables the school-level permissions for Writer on the **School Settings > Permissions** tab.

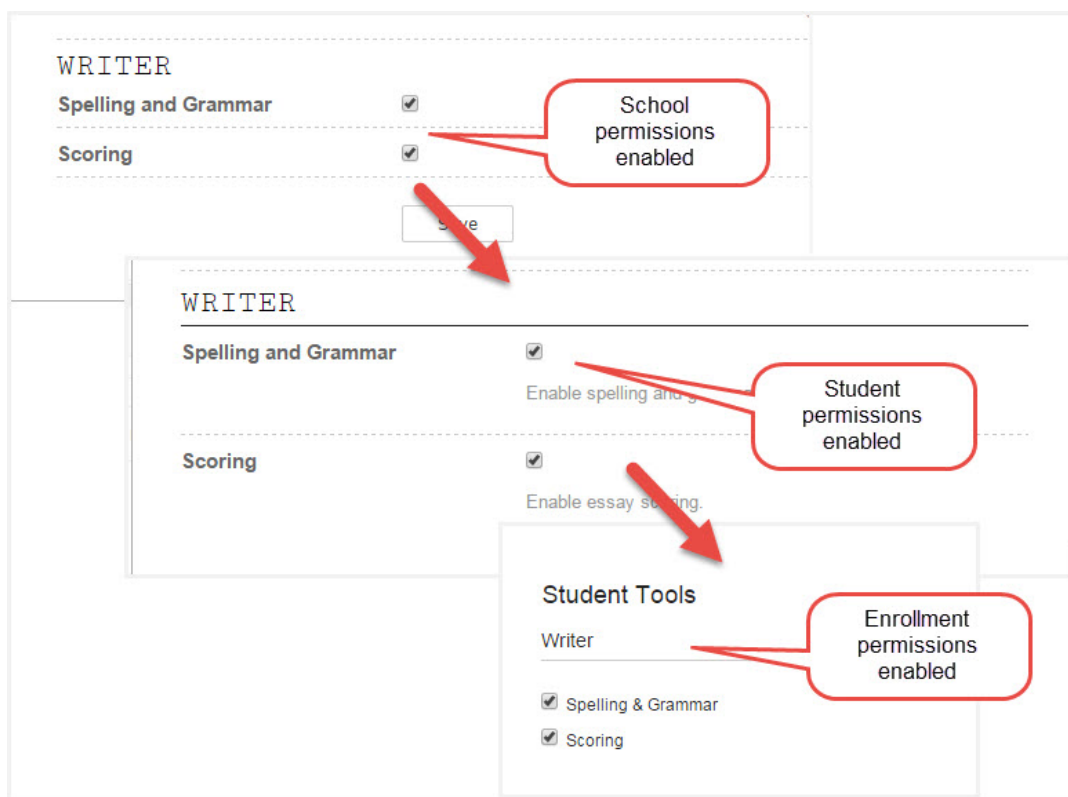
The screenshot shows the "WRITER" section of the "School Settings > Permissions" tab. It lists two permissions: "Spelling and Grammar" and "Scoring", each with an unchecked checkbox. A red box highlights these checkboxes, and a red callout bubble points to them with the text: "Writer permissions are disabled by default at the school level. Select one or both check boxes to enable the permissions for students and enrollments." Below the checkboxes is a "Save" button.

Once enabled at the school level, these permissions *cascade down* to the individual student profile and course enrollment permissions. This means the school permission *determines* what you can do with the student profile and course enrollment Writer permissions:

- If both Writer permissions remain *disabled* at the school level, then the two permissions are automatically disabled for an individual student profile and course enrollment and cannot be enabled as shown in these examples.



- If both Writer permissions are *enabled* at the school level, you can then enable or disable one or both Writer permissions for a student or enrollment as shown in this example.



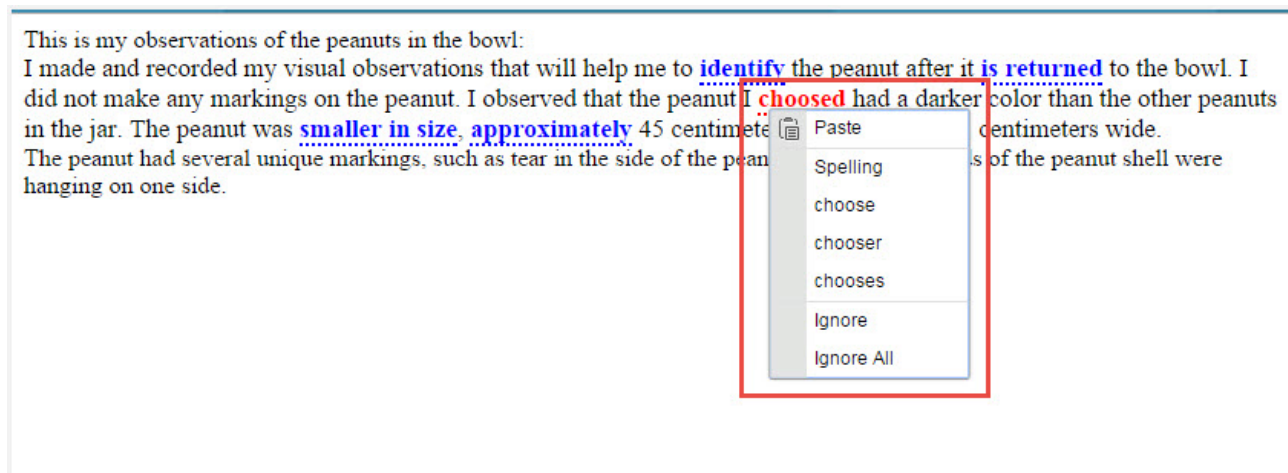


# How To Use The Spelling Errors Options And Grammar Suggestions

Students are presented with several options for both spelling errors and grammar suggestions. Students should address all of the spelling errors and grammar suggestions before submitting the assignment for grading by the teacher.

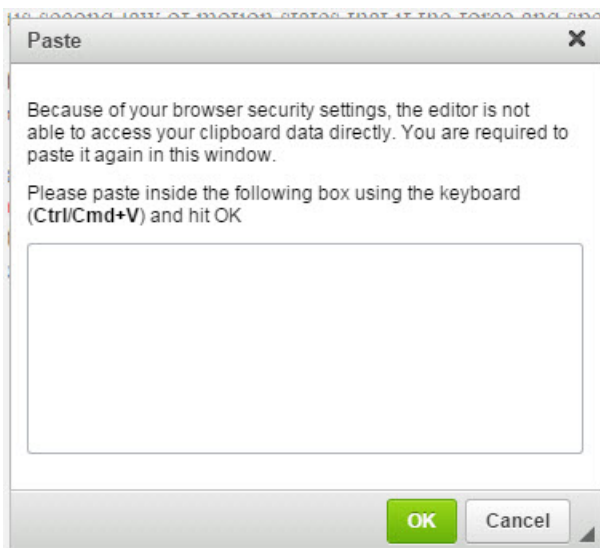
## Spelling errors options

Spelling errors appear in-line as red text. The student right-clicks the red text to see a list of suggested alternatives, such as suggested spellings of the word, and the option to ignore the suggestion as shown in this example.



Spelling options are:

- **Paste** - Pastes text you enter or have copied to your clipboard in the text box to replace the word.



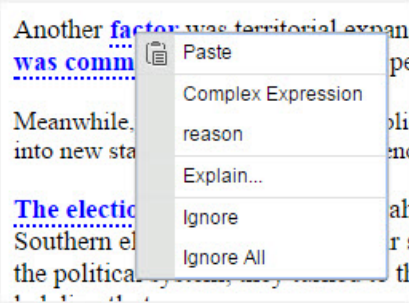
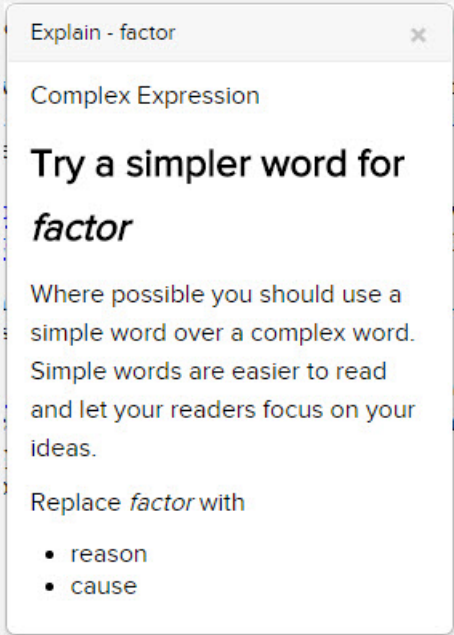
- **Spelling** - provides suggested words to replace the misspelled word. Select the word from the suggested list.
- **Ignore** and **Ignore All** - Keeps the word as spelled, removes the red in-line from the text, and does not check the word

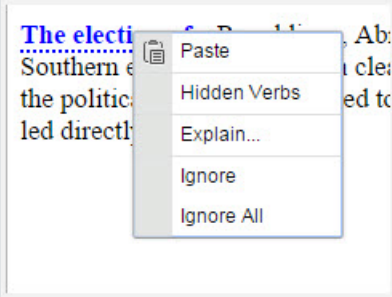
again when the **Refresh** (  ) tool, is clicked *unless* another misspelled word is found.

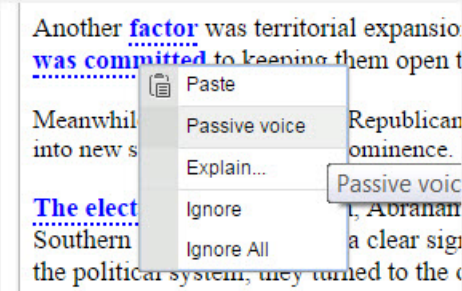
To close the list, the student selects an option from the list.

## Grammar suggestions

Several grammar suggestions are available based on rules of complexity, hidden verbs, and passive voice. Grammar suggestions appear in-line as blue text. The student right-clicks a blue grammar suggestion to display the grammar rule. When the student selects the **Explain** option for the rule, an explanation of the rule and an example of a correction appears as shown in the following table.

Rule	What the student sees...	Explanation and example
Complex expression		

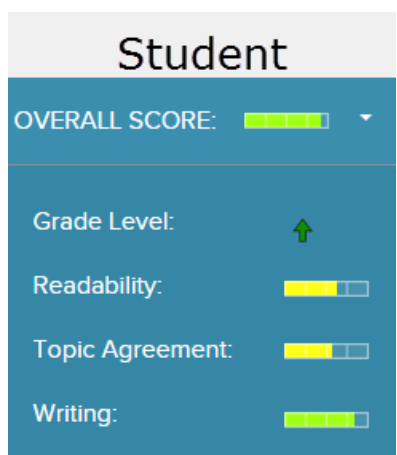
Rule	What the student sees...	Explanation and example
Hidden verbs		<div data-bbox="980 279 1370 1108"> <p>Explain - The election of</p> <p>Hidden Verbs</p> <p><b>Use a strong verb for <i>election</i></b></p> <p>A hidden verb (aka nominalization) is a verb made into a noun. They often need extra words to make sense. Strong verbs are easier to read and use less words.</p> <p>Try to revise <b>The election of</b> with <b>elect</b>.</p> <p><b>Revision Examples</b></p> <p>Before: Bonuses are based on the <u>performance</u> of the company.</p> <p>After: Bonuses are based on how the company <u>performs</u>.</p> <p>Before: An <u>Explanation</u> of Hidden Verbs.</p> <p>After: Hidden Verbs <u>Explained</u>.</p> </div>





Rule	What the student sees...	Explanation and example
Passive voice		<div>Explain - was committed</div> <p>Passive voice</p> <p><b>Revise <i>was committed</i> with active voice</b></p> <p>Active voice makes it clear who is doing what. In an active sentence, the person that is acting is the subject. Passive sentences obscure or omit the sentence subject.</p> <p>Use passive voice when the sentence object is more important than the subject. The active voice is generally easier to read.</p> <p><b>Examples (<i>subject</i>, <i>object</i>)</b></p> <p>Before: <u>Our results</u> will be discussed.</p> <p>After: <b>We</b> will discuss <u>our results</u>.</p> <p>Before: <b>Wolverine</b> was made to be a <u>weapon</u>.</p> <p>After: <b>The government</b> made <u>Wolverine</u>. <b>Wolverine</b> is a <u>weapon</u>.</p>

The **Paste**, **Ignore**, and **Ignore All** options work the same way as the Spelling options as described in "Spelling errors options" on page 7. To close the list, the student selects an option from the list.

## What The Overall Score Elements Mean

Several scoring elements are used in calculating the Overall Score: **Grade Level**, **Readability**, **Topic Agreement**, and **Writing**. These scoring elements are represented as graphical, colored indicators to the student and teacher.



Element	Description
<b>Grade Level</b>	<p>For the student, the Actual grade level is calculated by measuring average sentence length (number of words in the sentence) and average number of syllables per word to produce a score that roughly equates to a US grade level. The Target Grade Level is defined in the assignment.</p> <p>The color and position of the Grade Level arrow indicates the difference of the Actual Grade Level to the Target Grade Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Super green</b> arrow [  ] pointing upwards means the Actual Grade Level is at least Two grade levels above the Target Grade Level.</li> <li>• <b>Green</b> arrow [  ] pointing upwards means the Actual Grade Level is above the Target Grade Level.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow</b> arrow [  ] pointing upwards means the Actual Grade Level is at the Target Grade Level.</li> <li>• <b>Red</b> arrow [  ] pointing downwards means the Actual Grade Level is below the Target Grade Level.</li> </ul>
<b>Readability</b>	<p>Calculated by measuring how easy a text is to read using factors such as sentence length and number of syllables per word and assigning numbers to the factors.</p> <p>Colors in a progress bar meter are used to indicate the readability of the assignment based on the Readability score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green</b> indicates the score is between 65 to 100. This means the content is very easy to read and understand, average sentence &lt; 15 words long, and the average word is two syllables or less.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow</b> indicates the score is between 30 to 64. This means the content is a little hard to read and understand, average sentence = 25 words long, and the average word is two syllables or more.</li> <li>• <b>Red</b> indicates the score is below 30. This means the content is very hard to read and understand, average sentence is &gt; 30 words long, and the average word has more than two syllables.</li> </ul>


Element	Description
<b>Topic Agreement</b>	<p>Checks the student's writing assignment against the Topic Word List to compare words, word stems, and word synonyms used in the essay. As each word, stem, and synonym is found, it is "checked off" the Topic Word list as found.</p> <p>The color and progress bar meter indicate the score level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green</b> indicates the score is between 75 and 100.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow</b> indicates the score is between 50 to 74.</li> <li>• <b>Orange</b> indicates the score is between 25 to 49.</li> <li>• <b>Red</b> indicates the score is between 0 to 24.</li> </ul>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>Based on the Readability metric and the Actual Grade Level metric.</p> <p>The color and progress bar meter indicate the score level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green</b> indicates the score is between 75 and 100.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow</b> indicates the score is between 50 to 74.</li> <li>• <b>Orange</b> indicates the score is between 25 to 49.</li> <li>• <b>Red</b> indicates the score is between 0 to 24.</li> </ul>
<b>Overall Score</b>	<p>Computed as the average of the Writing Score plus a Spelling score that is not displayed to the user. If the student corrects all perceived spelling errors (those indicated by the red text), typically the Spelling score would be 100. If the student does not correct perceived spelling errors, the Spelling score drops in value from 100.</p> <p>The color and progress bar meter indicate the score level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green</b> indicates the Overall score is 75 to 100.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow</b> indicates the Overall score is 50 to 74.</li> <li>• <b>Orange</b> indicates the Overall score is 25 to 49.</li> <li>• <b>Red</b> indicates the Overall score is 0 to 24.</li> </ul>

# How Students And Teachers Use Writer

This section explains how Writer is used by students and teachers.

## How the student uses the Writer tools

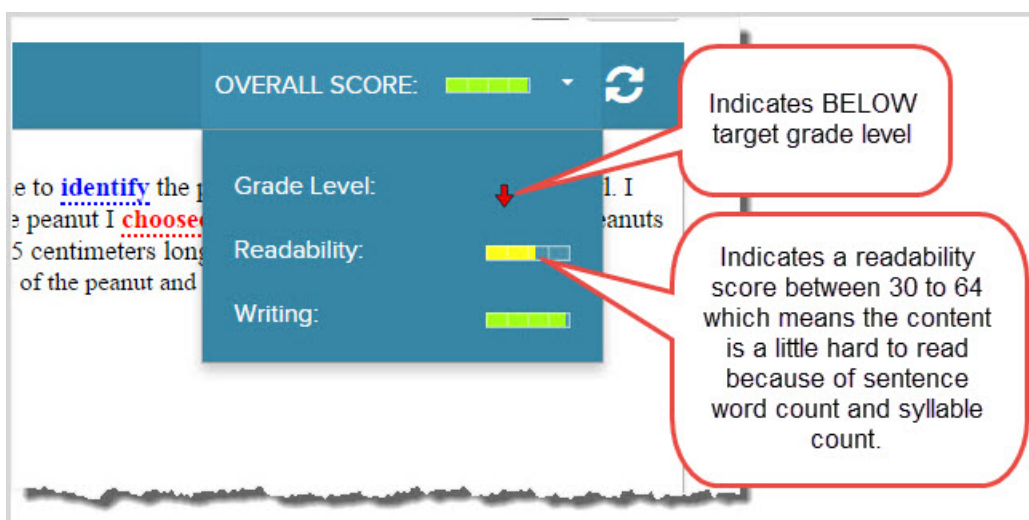
For the student, using the Writer tools works like this:

1. The student types their essay or project in the text area, just below the **Writer** toolbar. Or, if the student has an external file that contains the essay or project text, the student can open that file, copy the text to the clipboard, and paste it (using CTRL + v) into the text area.
2. The student clicks the **Refresh** (  ) tool to retain their work and display the word count and the Overall Score indicator.



Refreshing does NOT submit the assignment for grading, but it does display spelling errors (in red text) and grammar suggestions (in blue text).


3. If spelling and grammar suggestions appear, to see the available options, the student right-clicks the red or blue text. See ["How To Use The Spelling Errors Options And Grammar Suggestions" on page 7](#).
4. To see the additional Overall Score color-coded indicators for Grade Level, Readability, Topic Agreement, and Writing, the student clicks the small arrow to the right of Overall Score indicator bar as shown in this example. Only the available indicators appear. See ["What The Overall Score Elements Mean" on page 11](#).



The color-coded, graphical indicators let the student know if they are writing to grade level and if the essay is readable. They can also see if what has been written is in agreement with the topic assigned and if the overall writing structure is appropriate to their grade level. In the example above, the red arrow pointing downward lets the student know that the grade level of their content is BELOW the target (expected) grade level for the assignment.

5. The student can edit their work and click the **Refresh** (  ) tool again as often as needed.



Each time the student clicks the **Refresh** (  ) tool, they can see if there has been any improvement in their scores based on their edits. They can do this as many times as necessary.

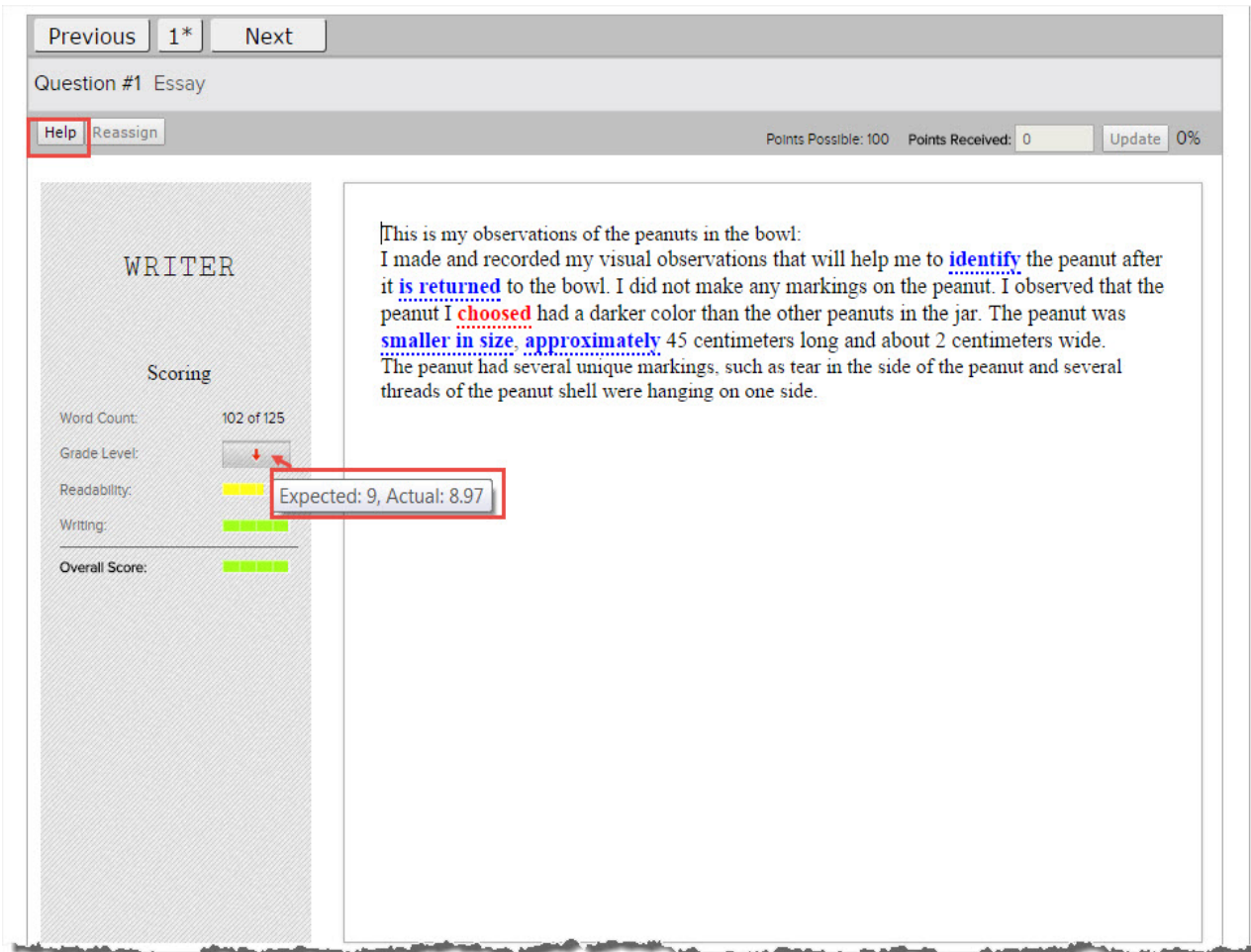
**Tip** To get feedback from the teacher while the assignment is in progress, the student can also click **Submit Answer** button (but not turn the assignment in just yet), and then click the **Ask For Help** button to ask the teacher to review what they have written before submitting it for a final score.

6. When the assignment is finished and ready to be graded by the teacher, the student clicks the **Turn It In** button.

## How the teacher uses the Writer tools

At any point after the first submission of the assignment, teachers can open the assignment and see the student's progress. Possibly the student has sent a Help Request message to the teacher to indicate that the assignment is in progress.

1. The teacher goes to the Gradebook and opens the assignment in the Teacher Assignment view.
2. The teacher can evaluate the writing sample using the Writer tools. Several indicators have tool tips that display the scoring elements' actual scores.
3. The teacher can click the **Help** button to offer suggestions and provide feedback.



The screenshot displays the 'Writer' tool interface. At the top, there are navigation buttons: 'Previous', '1\*', and 'Next'. Below this is a header for 'Question #1 Essay'. A 'Help' button is highlighted with a red box. To the right of the 'Help' button are 'Reassign', 'Points Possible: 100', 'Points Received: 0', 'Update', and '0%'. The main area is divided into two sections. On the left, under the heading 'WRITER', is a 'Scoring' section with the following metrics: 'Word Count: 102 of 125', 'Grade Level: [dropdown menu]', 'Readability: [yellow bar]', 'Writing: [green bar]', and 'Overall Score: [green bar]'. A red box highlights a tooltip that says 'Expected: 9, Actual: 8.97'. On the right, the student's essay is displayed, starting with 'This is my observations of the peanuts in the bowl:'. The text includes several words and phrases highlighted in blue and red, such as 'identify', 'is returned', 'choosed', 'smaller in size', and 'approximately'.

When the final submission has occurred and the student has turned the assignment in for grading, the teacher is notified.



4. The teacher clicks Grade Assignment request to open the assignment.
5. The teacher reviews the final effort, viewing the Writer information provided, and then enters the grade in the **Points Received** box, and clicks **Update**.

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