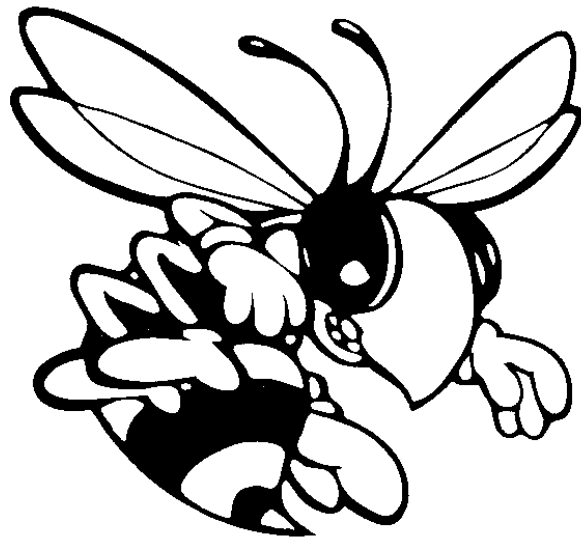# Freeport High School

Writing Guidebook

IMPORTANT
Each student at Freeport High School will receive one free copy of <u>the Freeport High School Writing Guidebook</u>. It is the student's responsibility to keep this handbook throughout his or her high school years. There is a fee for a replacement copy.

Compiled by FHS English Department
2012

Table of Contents

Introduction

Freeport High School is committed to helping students become effective writers. Across the curriculum, teachers encourage students to express themselves through the written word. Although inspiration, creativity, and personal style affect writing in profound ways, effective writing also requires thoughtful deliberation and knowledge: knowledge of the writing process, effective organizational patterns, standard conventions related to grammar and usage, and appropriate use of source material. Students need to learn that which brings substance and clarity to writing. Students and teachers need to speak a common language as they discuss the dynamic process known as writing.

This guidebook introduces, reviews, and clarifies aspects of effective writing to help Freeport students improve and enhance their ability to express themselves in their writing. The following pages present information taken in part from the follow sources which students may want to consult for additional information:

Beers, Kylene, et. al. *Elements of Literature: Fourth Course*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2009. Print.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 3rd ed. New York: Bedford, 2000. Print.

---. *A Writer's Reference*. 4th ed. New York: Bedford, 1999. Print.

Homan, C. Hugh and Harmon, William. *A Handbook of Literature*. 6th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1992. Print.

"Keystone Exams: English Composition." *SAS: Standards Aligned System*. April 2011. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Web. August 2012.

"Keystone Exams: Literature." *SAS: Standards Aligned System*. April 2011. Pennsylvania Department of Education. Web. August 2012.

Luke, Laura. "Transitional Terms." SCSD: Summer Central School District. 2012. Summers Central School District. Web. August 2012.

Measuring Up to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. New York: People's Publishing Group, 2007. Print.

Rossiter, Jill. *MLA Rules for Format and Documentation: A Pocket Guide.* Port Saint Lucie, FL: DW Publishing, 2012. Print.

Sebranek, Patrick, Dave Kemper, and Verne Meyer. *Writers INC. A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning*. Wilmington: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Print.

Additional Resources

http://www.mla.org/style

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resources/557/01/

Our gratitude to Upper St. Clair High School, Hampton High School, and Deer Lakes High School for guidance on the compilation of this guidebook.

Good Writing

Stimulating Ideas

Effective writing presents information that is interesting, relevant, and pertains to a specific subject. It should provide a clear focus and ideas that are thoroughly explained. Good writing should not leave the reader wondering why? how? where? when? Careful preparation and consideration of content can help address this.

- Understand exactly what you are writing about.
- Know your audience and purpose.
- Make sure you have prepared by doing any required reading.
- Consider the best ideas, not just ones that fit the purpose.

Logical Organization

Writing achieves its purpose if ideas are presented in a fluent, logical manner. This means the writing should have a clear beginning, middle and ending. Main ideas should be broken down into clear, well-develop paragraphs with specific examples.

- Decide which organization technique will best serve your topic and your purpose.
- Use transitions in and between paragraphs.
- Have a clear introduction and conclusion.

Engaging Voice

Writing is a creative form of expression and should be unique to the author. It should also have steady tone that shows the writer cares about the subject that he or she is writing about. Voice should also be appropriate to the type (academic, personal) and purpose of writing.

- Read your writing out loud. Does it sound like you? Is it interesting to listen to?
- Keep tone consistent throughout.

Original Word Choice

Good writing uses specific nouns, verbs and modifiers that help a reader see what the writer sees. This does not mean use big, elaborate words, but carefully choose the most appropriate words to convey meaning.

- Use a thesaurus to find new words (but don't overuse).
- Use a dictionary to check specific meanings.
- Use descriptive, powerful adjectives and adverbs (but don't overuse them ☺).

Effective Sentence Style

Sentences should vary in length and structure to keep the writing flowing and fresh. This lets the writer express a personal style and keeps the reader interested by giving fluency to the writing.

- Pay close attention to the beginning of each sentence when revising.
- Avoid using either too many short and choppy or long and complicated sentences.

Correct, Accurate Copy

Quality writing is free from errors in conventions (mechanics, usage, grammar and spelling) errors that can make it hard to read.

- Proofread several times.
- Have someone else read your paper.
- Read your paper out loud to yourself or a friend.

Adapted from *Writers Inc.: A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning* published by Great Source Education Group. Introduction to MLA Style

What Is MLA?

Modern **L**anguage **A**ssociation created MLA style to provide guidelines for writing, formatting and documenting academic research papers in English, history and art courses. There are other styles (APA and Chicago for example) that are used in other fields, but MLA is the most common style used in high schools and colleges.

General Guidelines

1. **Be consistent**. A person reading your essay will be less likely to see errors if your work is consistent.
2. When providing a citation for a source, **find the model** ('Work with Two Authors,' 'Encyclopedia,' 'Web Site,' 'Personal Interview') **that most closely resembles your source.**
3. **Be wary of internet sites and software that format sources for you.**   While these can sometimes be helpful, they can also produce Works Cited pages that are riddled with errors.

Modifications for Word 7 for Consistency with MLA Guidelines

1. Under Paragraph, go into Indent and Spacing. You will need to check the box under Spacing, which reads "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style."
2. Change Line spacing to "Double."
3. Chose a simple, readable font style. Preferably use Times New Roman 12. Word 7's default is Calibri 11, which is also acceptable.

Basic MLA Guidelines for Formatting a Formal Essay or Research Paper

- Use one side of each sheet of 8 ½ X 11 inch white paper.
- Use 12 point, Times New Roman font (or similar).
- Use double spacing throughout--including after your heading and title.
- Use one inch margins at the top, bottom and sides of your paper.
- Use a right justified header on each page which should consist of your last name and the page number of your paper.
- The first page of your paper has a four-line heading placed one inch from the top of the page, aligned with the left-hand margin and above the title. It lists:
  - ➢ Your name
  - ➢ Your teacher's name
  - ➢ The course title
  - ➢ The paper's due date
- Center the title above the text. Do not underline the title or put it in quotation marks or type it in all capital letters. Follow the rules for capitalization.
- Each paragraph is indented ½ inch (5 spaces from the left margin.)
- Long quotations set off as blocks are indented one full inch (10 spaces or two tabs).

See next page for a sample.

A header is right aligned at the top of each page and consists of the student's last name, a space and the page number. No comma needed.

Name of Student

Name of Teacher

Mary Smith

Use Times New Roman 12 font or similar

Mrs. Wilson

Applied English 11, Pd. 3

Title of Class (and Class Period if there is one)

28 August 2012

Date Submitted in MLA Date Format which is day month (spelled out) and year with no punctuation

A paper title is not underlined, bolded or italicized. It is double spaced from the date above and from the 1st sentence of the paper below. It is centered on the page.

Critical Essay for *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

This essay will discuss the literary elements of the book *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. It will talk about plot, setting and some of the characters. It will also explain the conflict of the story, the theme and the point of view from which it is told. Finally, it will give examples of some figurative language, imagery and symbols that are used throughout the book. A well-constructed piece of literature incorporates these and other literary elements to create a strong and memorable story.

Double space entire paper. Remember that in Word 7 you must go into paragraph, then spacing and check the box that says "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style."

Indent each new paragraph five spaces

The plot, setting and characters are crucial elements in any story. The plot deals with a family of five marriage-age daughters from a middle class family living in a small town in England in the late 1700s. The family does not have a lot of money, so it is very important that the daughters are married off to wealthy men who can take good care of them. Because the setting is in the 1700s, the lifestyle and the behavior of the people are very different from what we are used to today. Women usually had no money and no power of their own, so they were very dependent on their fathers and brothers and husbands. The most important characters are ……….etc!!!!

In order for a story to truly capture a reader's attention, it must have an interesting conflict, a thought-provoking theme and a believable point of view. The main conflict of this novel is summed up in Austen's opening words.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of

Making a Bibliography Card

For a book:

Author's Name (Last, First). *Title*. (In italics if typed. Underlined if handwritten). City of publication:
      Publisher, Date of Publication. Publication Medium.

Notice the punctuation in the above. After the author's name you need a period. After the title you need a period. After the City of publication you need a colon (:), after the Publisher you need a comma, and after the Date of Publication you need a period. After the Publication Medium you need a final period.

For example:

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.
Or
Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Girroux, 1998. Print.

*   You must indent the second and all subsequent lines of a bibliography card. It is the exact opposite of a regular paragraph, such as this one, which indents the first line and leaves all of the other lines all the way to the left margin.*

On the card it would looks as follows:

Kundera, Milan. <u>The Unbearable Lightness of</u>
      <u>Being.</u> New York: Farrar, Straus and Girroux,
      1998. Print.

Making a Bibliography Card

For most websites:

Author's Name. "Article Name." *Title of the Website*. Date of the Website or the latest update of the
      Website. Name of the institution or organization that sponsors the Website. Editor's name.
      Medium of Publication. Date you accessed the Website.

For example:
Smith, John. "The Life of Mark Twain." <u>American Authors</u>. 8 May 2008. Mark Twain History Center. Ed.
      Alan Hughes. Web. 16 Dec. 2008.

On your bib card it would look as follows:

> Smith, John. "The Life of Mark Twain."
>   <u>American Authors</u>. 8 May 2008. Mark
>   Twain History Center. Ed. Alan
>   Hughes. Web. 16 Dec. 2008.

Authors are listed Last Name, First Name.
If you have an Author **and** an Editor or Translator, that name is listed after the book title or website
name with their name listed as: Ed. (short for editor) or Trans. (short for Translator) then First Name Last
name (no comma between first and last names).

If you do not have an Author and only have an Editor or Translator, list him or her at the beginning of
the entry where the Author's name would have been, adding ed. or trans. after the name. In this case
the name is listed Last Name, First Name and the first letter of that title is lowercase.

Examples:

Ellman, Richard. "A Portrait of the Artist as Friend." *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young
      Man.* Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1988. Print.

Sorrentino, Paul, ed. "Stephen Crane Studies." *Stephen Crane's World*. The Stephen Crane Society. 26
      Feb. 2002. Web. 25 July 2012.

Works Cited

Guidelines for the Works Cited Page
- The first page of your Works Cited should be a separate piece of paper after the last page of your text.
- Begin with your last name and page number in the upper right-hand corner.
- Center the words Works Cited one inch from the top of the first page. **Do not italicize, quote, embolden, underline, or change the font size** of the words Works Cited.
- **Double space** and begin listing your sources. Double space the entire Works Cited page, both within and between entries.
- List your sources **alphabetically** by the author's last name. Indent all lines of each entry except the first line (known as a "hanging indent"**).
- If there is no author, alphabetize by the title of the article.
- If you have more than one work by exactly the same author, give the full name in the first entry only. In subsequent entries, use three hyphens (---) to replace the name and follow with a period.

Example:

Rossiter, Jill. *The College Guide to Essay Writing*. Mulberry: DW Publishing, 2009. Print.

---. *The APA Pocket Handbook*. Mulberry: DW Publishing, 2007. Print.

- Do not number your sources.
- Your Works Cited page(s) must include all sources mentioned in your paper. Do not include sources not utilized in the paper.
- List all types of sources together. In other words, do not organize them by print vs. web sites. Combine all.
- Omit titles and degrees (Dr., Sir, PA, etc.) when giving an author's full name. Never abbreviate the author's name if the full name is available. Include suffixes that are part of the name like Jr., II, III.
- If the title of a work has two parts, use a colon to separate the title from the subtitle.

  Example:

  Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama.

- Do not split entries from one page to the next.
- Abbreviate publishers' names if possible. For example, you can always abbreviate University at U and Press as P.
- If multiple cities of publication are listed, give only the first.
- If multiple publication dates are listed, give only the most recent.

**To create a hanging indent in Word 7: Home; Paragraph; Indent; Special; Hanging

The first page of your Works Cited should look the model on the following page.

Works Cited

"Blueprint Lays Out Clear Path for Climate Action." *Environmental Defense Fund*. Environmental Defense

Fund, 8 May 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.

Clinton, Bill. Interview by Andrew C. Revkin. "Clinton on Climate Change." *New York Times*. New York Times,

May 2007. Web. 25 May 2009.

Dean, Cornelia. "Executive on a Mission: Saving the Planet." *New York Times*. New York Times, 22 May 2007.

Web. 25 May 2009.

Ebert, Roger. "An Inconvenient Truth." Rev. of *An Inconvenient Truth*, dir. Davis Guggenheim.

rogerebert.com. Sun-Times News Group, 2 June 2006. Web. 24 May 2009.

GlobalWarming.org. Cooler Heads Coalition, 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.

Gowdy, John. "Avoiding Self-organized Extinction: Toward a Co-evolutionary Economics of Sustainability."

International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology 14.1Print.

An Inconvenient Truth. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Perf. Al Gore, Billy West. Paramount, 2006. DVD.

Leroux, Marcel. *Global Warming: Myth Or Reality?: The Erring Ways of Climatology*. New York: Springer,

2005. Print.

Milken, Michael, Gary Becker, Myron Scholes, and Daniel Kahneman. "On Global Warming and Financial

Imbalances." *New Perspectives Quarterly* 23.4 (2006): 63. Print.

Nordhaus, William D. "After Kyoto: Alternative Mechanisms to Control Global Warming." *American

Economic Review* 96.2 (2006): 31-34. Print.

---. "Global Warming Economics." *Science* 9 Nov. 2001: 1283-84. *Science Online*. Web. 24 May 2009.

Reed, Ishmael. Personal Interview. 22 July 2009.

Shulte, Bret. "Putting a Price on Pollution." *Usnews.com*. *US News & World Rept*., 6 May 2007. Web. 24 May

2009.

Basic In-Text Documentation

In-text citations must include the **author's last name and the page number(s)** for all information. The information included in parentheses is the same for both borrowed information and direct quotations.

Examples:
(Brown 42)
(Jones 12-14)
Notice there is **no punctuation** between the author's last name and the page number. Do not use p. or pp. before the page number.

Placement of In-Text Documentation

If you include the author's last name in the text of the paper, you do not need it in the parentheses; conversely, if you do not include the author's name in the text, you must use it in the parentheses.

1. Place the parenthetical documentation as close to the borrowed information as possible (normally at the end of the sentence).
    *   Jane Austen had a romantic interest in Tom Lefroy (Honan 107-110).
    *   Austen's "flirting had been guided by her squeezing a situation for possibilities never in it" (Honan 110).

2. An alternative is to mention the author's name in the sentence and remove the name from the parenthetical reference.
    *   According to Park Honan, Jane Austen had a romantic interest in Tom Lefroy (110).
    *   Honan refers to Austen's relationship with Lefroy as an "obsession" (107); Lefroy, Honan adds, "slid down love's slope" (108).

Documenting Paragraphs

1. Documentation does not need to be repeated for every idea within a single paragraph. For example, if you retrieved information for three consecutive sentences from the same source, you can put the information after the third sentence.
    *   Jane Austen may have met Tom Lefroy at Ashe or at the Harwood's ball. She was twenty at the time. Austen admired Lefroy's conservative nature and decided to fall in love with him (Honan 107-108).

2. If you mention a source, and later in the paragraph use information from the same source, you can just add the page number, and that indicates to the reader that you are referencing the preceding source.
    *   According to Honan, Austen's "pride had kept her from seeing him as a baffling person with plans uninvolved with her imaginings" (110). Two years later, when Lefroy's aunt spoke about him, Austen was obstinate and proud. She did not ask about him at all (111).

3. When you move from one paragraph to the next, you must repeat source information, even if you are using the same source.

4. **If a quotation is longer than four lines** of your paper, start the quote on a new line, indenting the entire quote one inch or ten spaces on the left margin. Do not indent the first line more than the rest

and do not justify the right margin. Do not use quotation marks. Double space all. Close the quote with a period and give the documentation in parenthesis.

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I

had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would

be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it

crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber.

Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in

recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte

78)

Analyzing a Website

With the vast array of resources available on the internet, the researcher must be especially careful about evaluating the reliability of the information published. Remember, you should not assume that something is truthful or trustworthy just because it is in print. Some material may be based on incorrect or outdated information, on poor logic, or on the author's own narrow opinions. Weigh what you read against your own knowledge and intelligence as well as other sources on the subject. Consider each website with a critical eye.

- **URL** –What type of site is it? What bias might the publisher have about the subject?

    .com—commercial site   .mil—military site
    .org—a group or organization   .net—a network
    .gov—a government site   .k12—school
    .edu—educational site

- **Author of the site**—What are the writer's credentials? Is the website affiliated with any institution? What is the expertise of the individual or group that has created the site? Does the affiliation of the author or group appear to bias the information?

- **Purpose**—How objective is the information? Is the purpose clearly stated? Is the writer attempting to inform you, to convince you of a point of view, to sell you a product or service, to amuse or entertain you?

- **Content**—How much information is given? How in-depth is the information? Does the content appear to be fact or opinion? Does it contain primary source material? Does the writer provide evidence or examples to support the main points? Is it accurate? Is it current? How does the information compare with other sources?

- **Presentation**—Is the information clearly presented? Is it well organized? Are the spelling and grammar correct? Does the placement of ads detract from the seriousness of the information given?

- **Recommendation**—Have people whom you respect (teachers, librarians, or parents) recommended this site as a reliable source of information?

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's words or ideas without giving the author or creator credit. Intentional plagiarism occurs when you deliberately copy something from a source and incorporate it into your writing without using quotation marks and providing a source citation. Unintentional plagiarism occurs through carelessness in omitting quotation marks or through failure to provide a source for paraphrased information. You must be a responsible writer, giving credit to the source for thoughts, ideas and words that are not your own.

Plagiarism often carries severe penalties, depending on the teacher for whom, or institution at which, the plagiarism occurs. These penalties may range from failure of an assignment, to failure in a course, to expulsion from a school.

You are plagiarizing if. . .
1. You do not document your source.
   Plagiarism:
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel depicts the long journey into Holocaust darkness. (No quotation marks or parenthetical documentation)
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel "depicts the long journey into Holocaust darkness." (no parenthetical documentation)
2. You do not document your source correctly. (Be sure to cite the author, page number, and information accurately from the original source.)
   Plagiarism:
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel "depicts the long journey into Holocaust darkness" (47). (missing author)
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel "depicts the long journey into Holocaust darkness" (Fine 37). (wrong page)
3. You are not accurate in indicating direct quotations.
   Plagiarism:
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel depicts the "long journey into Holocaust darkness" (Fine 47). (wrong placement of quotation marks)
   - In retelling the story of his childhood, Elie Wiesel "depicted a long journey into Holocaust darkness" (Fine 47). (wrong verb tense)
4. You do not completely reword when you paraphrase.
   Plagiarism:
   - *Night* is considered a temoignage, a first-hand account of the concentration camp experience, as described by the narrator, Elie Wiesel. (Student uses key words of the passage as his or her own)

The best way to combat plagiarism is to be vigilant, diligent, and organized in your note-taking. Then you will be less likely to make mistakes.

Turnitin.com
One helpful tool for combatting plagiarism will be your teacher's use of Turnitin.com. This site is able to check papers against more than 20 billion web pages, 220 million student papers and 90 thousand publications. Your teacher will provide you with a class ID and enrollment password and instruct you in how to submit your written work to Turnitin's "originality check" feature.

Paragraph Writing

Being able to express an idea in a clear, organized and well-supported paragraph is essential to writing in any subject area. Essay tests often ask for paragraph responses.

- Topic Sentence
- Transition + Point 1 + explanation and/or supporting details
- Transition + Point 2 + explanation and/or supporting details
- Transition + Point 3 (your strongest point) + explanation and/or supporting details.
- Concluding Sentence

Topic Sentence
Identifies the subject or main idea of a paragraph. It should clearly preview what the paragraph is about. Often times an essay question can be turned into a topic sentence but a topic sentence should never be worded as a question!

Body
The body of a paragraph is where you present reasons and examples that support your topic sentence. Each reason or example should be clearly explained with specific details. Usually, a strong paragraph has at least three reasons or examples with the most important point being last.

Transitions
Use transitions like next, in addition to, most importantly, similarly, etc. to help your ideas flow together.

Concluding Sentence
This is the final sentence of your paragraph and should clearly reflect your topic sentence (but not repeat it world-for-word). Think of this as a "so what" statement because it restates your main point and reminds the reader why you have just presented these reasons or examples.

Multi-Paragraph Essay Writing

This is a standard essay format that can be adapted for use in almost any informative or persuasive writing. This example includes a five-paragraph essay, but this format can be used with more or fewer than five.

> ### A Word on: Essay Prompts
> *If you have been provided with a prompt for the essay or paper you will be writing, be sure to read it carefully.*
> - *Always look for the "prompt" words: compare and contrast, evaluate, discuss, list, etc. These prompt words tell you what exactly is required.*
> - *Make sure you are correctly responding to the question. If the question requires you to compare and contrast two items, you must both compare and contrast. If you simply compare, you have not correctly responded to the question.*
> - *Make sure you are incorporating the information you have been asked to incorporate. If you are asked to compare the culture and economy and Canada and the United States, do not discuss their governments. Also, do not just discuss their culture and neglect to discuss their economies. Do not bring up examples of Mexican culture or economy. The prompt is your road map. Follow it carefully.*

Introduction
Think of your introduction as funnel. It resembles a funnel because it should begin with very general information and conclude with a very specific statement. It should start by introducing the reader to your subject and end with a thesis or specific point you want to make about your subject. Beginning with a **Grabber,** or attention-getting opening, is an excellent technique. A quote, anecdote, fascinating fact or a question can serve to catch a reader's interest and draw the reader into your essay.

Thesis
Think of the thesis as your focus statement. The rest of your paper will be focused on proving, supporting or explaining this thesis. A thesis statement is never a question but very well may ANSWER a question (like an essay question prompt, for example). The thesis controls the direction of your paper in the same way that topic sentence controls the direction of a paragraph by limiting the information contained within it.

There are two parts to a thesis statement:
- Subject: The main subject you will be discussing in your essay including the points you will present in the order they will be present.
- Attitude: The stance or position you are taking on your subject
  Sample Theses:
  - To be successful, a career musician not only needs to have musical ability but also a good business sense and perseverance.
  - While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.
  - Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society and go back to nature.

Note:
- *A thesis is one complete declarative sentence. It is neither questions, nor just a title.*
- *A thesis tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper.*

- *A thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper, and should be supported with specific evidence.*
- *A thesis statement usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.*
- *A thesis is **arguable**: you are proving your point.*

Body Paragraphs
It is in each of these paragraphs that you will provide support for your thesis statement. Each body paragraph should include a topic sentence, supporting details, reasons, or examples and a concluding sentence. The details should be specific and discrete and follow a definite organization pattern such as cause and effect or comparison and contrast.

The topic sentence of each body paragraphs also needs to include a transition to make your writing flow from the previous paragraph into your new one.
> Ex: The first and most obvious requirement for anyone considering a music career is musical ability and talent.

Transitions should also be used within each body paragraph to connect supporting details.

Each consecutive body paragraph will explain the other points mentioned in your thesis. In this case, the next paragraph will explain the importance of good business sense and the last body paragraph will explain the important of perseverance.

Conclusion
This is the last paragraph of your essay and should not introduce any new ideas. The purpose of the conclusion is to do the following in this order:
- Re-emphasize your thesis
- Summarize your key points in a sentence or two
- Leave the reader thinking about your specific purpose with a clincher final sentence.

Think of the conclusion paragraph as a reverse funnel because it should mirror, but not repeat, your introduction. This is also an excellent moment to bring your paper full circle by referring to your attention getting grabber from your introductory paragraph.

The Five-Paragraph Essay

This is a graphic representation of one approach to essay writing. Body paragraphs may sometimes be more or fewer than three, depending on the number of points being discussed.

General

Specific

Introduction of topic,
general definition and importance.
End with a specific focused thesis statement

Introduction

Thesis point #1 topic sentence
+ details, examples and explanation of
thesis point #1

Thesis point #2 topic sentence
+ details, examples and explanation of
thesis point #2

Thesis point #3 topic sentence
+ details, examples and explanation of
thesis point #3

Body

Specific

General

Restate thesis,
summarize points 1,2 & 3, re-emphasize their
significance and end with a clincher to leave
reader thinking

Conclusion

EDITOR'S MARKS

Mark	Meaning	Use
1. ◡	Delete (Take it out)	My dog is like my friend
2. ∧	Add a word.	my Pizza is ∧ favorite food.
3. ═	Capitalize this letter.	I live in portland.
4. /	Make this a lowercase letter.	My sister is Older than I am.
5. ⊙	Add a period.	I am leaving on Tuesday⊙
6. ∧ꟸ	Add a comma.	I ate juice ∧ toast ∧ and cereal.
7. ∨	Add an apostrophe.	The neighbors ∨ dog bit me.
8. ⋁ ⋁	Add quotation marks.	⋁ I'm having a blast ⋁ he shouted.
9. ¶	Start a new paragraph	"Wild dogs!" yelled Joe. ¶ "Should we run?" Jacob asked.
10. (Run in)	No new paragraph; sentences should run together.	Skateboarding is more fun (Run in) than walking. It's even more fun than flying
11. ∧	Change a letter or word.	I'm done with the yard
12. ⊓	Transpose the order of letters or words.	It was a dark night.
13. ∧ꟸ	Add a question mark.	Do you want to go ∧
14. ‿	Close up.	Pa per or plastic?
15. ⟨	Insert space.	Here comes Jane

Some tips for editing:

• Read your paper aloud to yourself. By actually hearing what you wrote instead of just listening silently in your head, you can catch mistakes you might otherwise pass over. Your brain hears what you *mean* to say. . .your ears hear what is *actually* written.

• Have someone read your paper *to you*. Make note of places where they stumble or seem confused and adjust as necessary.

Transitional and Linking Words
Used in Multiple Paragraph Essays

Add Information:

again besides moreover another for insurance together with	and likewise as well furthermore additionally	along with also for example equally important further

Conclude or Summarize:

in short finally in summary in conclusion	consequently due to all in all as a result	accordingly to sum up thus therefore

Contrast two things or show a difference:

but otherwise even though conversely even so	yet however counter to on the other hand as opposed to	in the meantime on the contrary nevertheless still

Emphasize a point:

again namely to repeat	truly in fact to emphasize	for this reason with this in mind markedly

Show similarities:

in the same manner comparatively also	likewise like both	correspondingly as similarly equally important

Clarify:

that is in other words	put another way stated differently	to clarify

Show location:

above across against along alongside amid in front of	near among around away from back of behind below	inside off beneath beside between beyond by down	into onto on top of throughout outside to the right over under

Show time:

about after at first second third	prior to subsequently until meanwhile today tomorrow	before soon later afterward immediately finally	during in conclusion next in the meantime as soon as then

Commonly Confused Words

Words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings often cause writers trouble. Here are a few of the most common pairs with correct definitions and examples:

ACCEPT-to receive
ex: He accepts defeat well.
EXCEPT-to take or leave out
ex: Please take all the books off the shelf except for the red one.

AFFECT-to influence
ex: Lack of sleep affects the quality of your work.
EFFECT-n., result, v., to accomplish
ex: The subtle effect of the lighting made the room look ominous.
ex: Can the university effect such a change without disrupting classes?

A LOT (two words)-many.
ALOT (one word)-Not the correct form.

ALLUSION-an indirect reference
ex:The professor made an allusion to Virginia Woolf's work.
ILLUSION-a false perception of reality
ex: They saw a mirage: that is a type of illusion one sees in the desert.

ALL READY-prepared
ex: Dinner was all ready when the guests arrived.
ALREADY-by this time
ex: The turkey was already burned when the guests arrived.

ALTOGETHER-entirely
ex: Altogether, I thought that the student's presentation was well planned.
ALL TOGETHER-gathered, with everything in one place
ex: We were all together at the family reunion last spring.

APART-to be separated
ex: The chain-link fence kept the angry dogs apart. OR My old car fell apart before we reached California.
A PART-to be joined with
ex: The new course was a part of the new field of study at the university. OR A part of this plan involves getting started at dawn.

ASCENT- climb
ex: The plane's ascent made my ears pop.
ASSENT-agreement
ex: The Martian assented to undergo experiments.

BREATH-noun, air inhaled or exhaled
ex: You could see his breath in the cold air.

BREATHE-verb, to inhale or exhale
ex: If you don't breathe, then you are dead.

CAPITAL-seat of government. Also financial resources.
ex: The capital of Virginia is Richmond.
ex: The firm had enough capital to build the new plant.
CAPITOL-the actual building in which the legislative body meets
ex: The governor announced his resignation in a speech given at the capitol today.

CITE-to quote or document
ex: I cited ten quotes from the same author in my paper.
SIGHT-vision
ex: The sight of the American flag arouses different emotions in different parts of the world.
SITE-position or place
ex: The new office building was built on the site of a cemetery.

COMPLEMENT-noun, something that completes; verb, to complete
ex: A nice dry white wine complements a seafood entree.
COMPLIMENT-noun, praise; verb, to praise
ex: The professor complimented Betty on her proper use of a comma.

CONSCIENCE-sense of right and wrong
ex: The student's conscience kept him from cheating on the exam.
CONSCIOUS-awake
ex: I was conscious when the burglar entered the house.

COUNCIL-a group that consults or advises
ex: The men and women on the council voted in favor of an outdoor concert in their town.
COUNSEL-to advise
ex: The parole officer counseled the convict before he was released.

ELICIT-to draw or bring out
ex: The teacher elicited the correct response from the student.
ILLICIT-illegal
ex: The Columbian drug lord was arrested for his illicit activities.

EMINENT-famous, respected
ex: The eminent podiatrist won the Physician of the Year award.
IMMANENT-inherent or intrinsic
ex: The meaning of the poem was immanent, and not easily recognized.
IMMINENT-ready to take place
ex: A fight between my sister and me is imminent from the moment I enter my house.

ITS-of or belonging to it
ex: The baby will scream as soon as its mother walks out of the room.
IT'S-contraction for it is
ex: It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood.

LEAD-noun, a type of metal
ex: Is that pipe made of lead?

LED-verb, past tense of the verb "to lead"
ex: She led the campers on an over-night hike.

LIE-to lie down (a person or animal. hint: people can tell lies)
ex: I have a headache, so I'm going to lie down for a while.
(also lying, lay, has/have lain--The dog has lain in the shade all day; yesterday, the dog lay there for twelve hours).
LAY-to lay an object down.
ex: "Lay down that shotgun, Pappy!" The sheriff demanded of the crazed moonshiner.
ex: The town lay at the foot of the mountain.
(also laying, laid, has/have laid--At that point, Pappy laid the shotgun on the ground).

LOSE--verb, to misplace or not win
ex: Mom glared at Mikey. "If you lose that new lunchbox, don't even think of coming home!"
LOOSE--adjective, to not be tight; verb (rarely used)--to release
ex: The burglar's pants were so loose that he was sure to lose the race with the cop chasing him.
ex: While awaiting trial, he was never set loose from jail because no one would post his bail.

PASSED-verb, past tense of "to pass," to have moved
ex: The tornado passed through the city quickly, but it caused great damage.
PAST-belonging to a former time or place
ex: Who was the past president of Microsquish Computers?
ex: Go past the fire station and turn right.

PRECEDE-to come before
ex: Pre-writing precedes the rough draft of good papers.
PROCEED-to go forward
ex: He proceeded to pass back the failing grades on the exam.

PRINCIPAL-adjective, most important; noun, a person who has authority
ex: The principal ingredient in chocolate chip cookies is chocolate chips.
ex: The principal of the school does the announcements each morning.
PRINCIPLE-a general or fundamental truth
ex: The study was based on the principle of gravity.

RELUCTANT-to hesitate or feel unwilling
ex: We became reluctant to drive further and eventually turned back when the road became icy.
RETICENT-to be reluctant to speak; to be reserved in manner. Note that *The American Heritage Dictionary* lists "reluctant" as a synonym for "reticent," as the third definition. For nuance and variety, we recommend "reticent" for reluctance when speaking or showing emotion (after all, even extroverts can become reluctant).
ex: They called him reticent, because he rarely spoke. But he listened carefully and only spoke when he had something important to say.

STATIONARY-standing still
ex: The accident was my fault because I ran into a stationary object.
STATIONERY-writing paper
ex: My mother bought me stationery that was on recycled paper..

THAN-use with comparisons

ex: I would rather go out to eat than eat at the dining hall.

THEN-at that time, or next

ex: I studied for my exam for seven hours, and then I went to bed.

THEIR-possessive form of they

ex: Their house is at the end of the block.

THERE-indicates location (hint: think of "here and there")

ex: There goes my chance of winning the lottery!

THEY'RE-contraction for "they are"

ex: They're in Europe for the summer--again!

THROUGH-by means of; finished; into or out of

ex: He plowed right through the other team's defensive line.

THREW-past tense of throw

ex: She threw away his love letters.

THOROUGH-careful or complete

ex: John thoroughly cleaned his room; there was not even a speck of dust when he finished.

THOUGH-however; nevertheless

ex: He's really a sweetheart though he looks tough on the outside.

THRU-abbreviated slang for through; not appropriate in standard writing

ex: We're thru for the day!

TO-toward

ex: I went to the University of Richmond.

TOO-also, or excessively

ex: He drank too many screwdrivers and was unable to drive home.

TWO-a number

ex: Only two students did not turn in the assignment.

WHO-used as a subject or as a subject complement (see above)

ex: John is the man who can get the job done.

WHOM-used as an object

ex: Whom did Sarah choose as her replacement?

Frequently Misspelled Words

(There are a lot of tricky spelling rules in the English language.)

- absence
- acquire
- acquit
- address
- advice
- all right
- arctic
- beautiful
- beginning
- believe
- bicycle
- broccoli
- bureau
- calendar
- camaraderie
- ceiling
- cemetery
- changeable
- column
- conscientious
- conscious
- decease
- deceive
- definite
- definitely
- descent
- desperate
- device
- disastrous
- ecstasy
- embarrass
- equipment
- exercise
- exhilarate
- fascinate
- February
- fiery
- fluorescent
- foreign
- government
- grateful
- guarantee
- harass
- height
- humorous
- independent
- inoculate
- jealous
- jewelry
- judgment
- knowledge
- leisure
- liaison
- library
- license
- maintenance
- maneuver
- mathematics
- medieval
- mediocre
- millennium
- miniature
- miscellaneous
- mischievous
- misspell
- mysterious
- necessary
- neighbor
- nuclear
- occasion
- occasionally
- occurrence
- odyssey
- pastime
- perseverance
- piece
- pigeon
- playwright
- possession
- precede
- prejudice
- privilege
- pumpkin
- raspberry
- receive
- relevant
- rhythm
- sacrilegious
- science
- scissors
- separate
- sergeant
- sincerely
- special
- thorough
- through
- truly
- until
- vacuum
- Wednesday
- weird

Text Organization

Effective writers have a plan in mind when they begin to write. If they are developing a story, they know they need to organize content in a different way than they would if they were writing a persuasive article or an analytical piece. The way the text is organized reflects the writer's purpose for writing.

Chronological

> In both fiction and nonfiction, the author may want you to understand a series of events that lead up to another event. In this case chronological order, or time order, is the appropriate method. Writers of informational text such as biographies, history texts, newspaper articles, instruction manuals and often fiction narratives use this sort of text organization.

Spatial Order

> Spatial order is most often found in descriptions. The writer organizes details in such a way that you can easily visualize what someone or something looks like. Descriptions often follow a logical order—left to right or top to bottom--but sometimes writers point out the most significant detail first and then fill in the remaining details.

Cause/Effect

> Cause and effect is a method or organization that explains why things happen and what effects they will have. When a writer wants to explain a process or phenomenon, or wants to discuss the reasons why an event takes place, he or she will often choose this method. Cause and effect is mostly used by writers of math and science textbooks, medical papers, editorials, and persuasive essays. If a writer wants to explain how a series of events is related, he or she might choose cause/effect order and show which events took place as a result of other events.

Compare/Contrast

> Writers use order of comparison/contrast to explore similarities and differences between two things.

Problem/Solution

> In this method, the writer will describe a conflict or obstacle and how it has been or could be overcome. You often see this method used to discuss important social, political, and environmental issues.

Order of Importance (Most to Least or Least to Most)

> An author may want to rank the reasons why you should prefer one car over another, or travel by airplane rather than by car. The author might start with the most important idea and end with the least important. Or he or she might start with the least important and lead up to the most.

from *Measuring Up to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards*, People's Publishing Group: New York, 2007.

Handbook of Terms

Active Voice vs. Passive Voice Stronger writers use active voice, rather than passive voice. A sentence is in the active voice when the subject of the sentence does the action:
>The early *bird catches* the worm. (NOT—The *worm is caught* by the early bird.)

Allegory A form of extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning may have moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas such as charity, greed, or envy.

Analysis The process or result of identifying the parts of a whole and their relationships to one another.

Antonym A word that is the opposite in meaning to another word.

Argument/Position The position or claim the author establishes. Arguments should be supported with valid evidence and reasoning and balanced by the inclusion of counterarguments that illustrate opposing viewpoints.

Audience The people who read or hear what you have written.

Author's Purpose The author's intent either to inform or teach someone about something, to entertain people or to persuade or convince
his/her audience to do or not do something.

Bias The subtle presence of a positive or negative approach toward a topic.

Biography A written account of another person's life.

Character A person, animal or inanimate object portrayed in a literary work.

Characterization The method an author uses to reveal characters and their various traits and personalities (e.g., direct, indirect).

Climax The turning point in a narrative; the moment when the conflict is at its most intense. Typically, the structure of stories, novels, and plays is one of rising action, in which tension builds to the climax.

Compare/Contrast Place together characters, situations, or ideas to show common and/or differing features in literary selections.

Connotation The range of associations that a word or phrase suggests in addition to its dictionary meaning.

Context Clues Words and phrases in a sentence, paragraph, and/or whole text, which help reason out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Conventions Grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation**.**

Cultural Significance The generally accepted importance of a work representing a given culture.

Dialect A variety of a language distinct from the standard variety in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary.

Evaluate Examine and judge carefully. To judge or determine the significance, worth or quality of something; to assess.

Explicit Clearly expressed or fully stated in the actual text.

Fact (vs. Opinion) A piece of information provided objectively, presented as true.

Fiction Any story that is the product of imagination rather than a documentation of fact. Characters and events in such narratives may be based in real life but their ultimate form and configuration is a creation of the author.

Figurative Language Language that cannot be taken literally since it was written to create a special effect or feeling.

First Person The "first person" or "personal" point of view relates events as they are perceived by a single character. The narrating character may offer opinions about the action and characters that differ from those of the author.

Flashback An organizational device used in literature to present action that occurred before current (present) time of the story. Flashbacks are often introduced as the dreams or recollections of one or more characters.

Focus The Center of Interest or attention. Generally used to emphasize writing in which all main ideas, details and examples support and unify the topic.

Foreshadowing An organizational device used in literature to create expectation or to set up an explanation of later developments.

Formal Language vs. Informal Language Unless otherwise directed, any paper written for a serious purpose (for example, a school assignment) should be written in formal language. This means that no slang, contractions or text speak should be used and all MLA conventions should be followed. Some tasks do allow for a more informal approach—journals, for example—but always check with your instructor.

Generalization A conclusion drawn from specific information that is used to make a broad statement about a topic or person.

Hyperbole An exaggeration or overstatement (e.g., *I had to wait forever.*)

Imagery A word or phrase in a literary text that appeals directly to the reader's taste, touch, hearing, sight, or smell. An image is thus any vivid or picturesque phrase that evokes a particular sensation in the reader's mind. (e.g., *"I have eaten the plums. . . .they were delicious. So sweet and so cold"* (William Carlos Williams, "This is Just to Say").

Implicit Though unexpressed in the actual text, meaning that may be understood by the reader; implied.

Inference A judgment based on reasoning rather than on a direct or explicit statement. A conclusion based on facts or circumstances; understanding gained by "reading between the lines."

Interpret To give reasons through an explanation to convey and represent the meaning or understanding of a text.

Irony The use of a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or usual meaning; incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the expected result.

Key/Supporting Details Points of information in a text that strongly support the meaning or tell the story. Statements that define, describe, or otherwise provide information about the topic, theme, or main idea.

Main Idea The author's central thought; the chief topic of a text expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph.

Metaphor The comparison of two unlike things in which no words of comparison (*like* or *as*) are used (e.g., *The speech gave me food for thought.)*

Mood The prevailing emotions or atmosphere of a work derived from literary devices such as dialogue and literary elements such as setting. The mood of a work is not always what might be expected based on its subject matter.

Narrator A person, animal, or thing telling the story or giving an account of something.

Nonfiction Text that is not fictional; designed primarily to explain, argue, instruct or describe rather than entertain. For the most part, its emphasis is factual.

Objective (vs. Subjective) Writing that gives factual information without adding feelings or opinions.

Opinion (vs. Fact) A personal view, attitude, or appraisal.

Organization (as in Text Organization) Methods of organization n(e.g., chronological, compare/contrast, problem/solution, order of magnitude) that establish topic and purpose, provide support for topic and purpose, address counterclaims, or reiterate main points.

Passive (See Active) A type of writing in which the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb. (e.g., The man was struck by lightning.) Overuse of passive voice results in writing that is lacking in focus and energy.

Personification An object or abstract idea given human qualities or human form (e.g., *Flowers danced about the lawn.)*

Plagiarism Using someone else's words or ideas without acknowledging the original source.

Point of View The position of the narrator in relation to the story, as indicated by the narrator's outlook from which the events are depicted (e.g., first person, third person limited, third person omniscient, etc.). The perspective from which a speaker or author recounts a narrative or presents information. The author's manner in revealing characters, events, and ideas; the vantage point from which a story is told.

Propaganda Information aimed at positively or negatively influencing the opinions or behaviors of large numbers of people.

Propaganda Techniques Propaganda techniques and persuasive tactics are used to influence people to believe, buy or do something. Students should be able to identify and comprehend the propaganda techniques and persuasive tactics listed below.
1. **Name - calling** is an attack on a person instead of an issue.
2. **Bandwagon** tries to persuade the reader to do, think or buy something because it is popular or because "everyone" is doing it.
3. **Red herring** is an attempt to distract the reader with details not relevant to the argument.
4. **Emotional appeal** tries to persuade the reader by using words that appeal to the reader's emotions instead of to logic or reason.
5. **Testimonial** attempts to persuade the reader by using a famous person to endorse a product or idea (for instance, the celebrity endorsement).
6. **Repetition** attempts to persuade the reader by repeating a message over and over again.
7. **Sweeping generalization (stereotyping**) makes an oversimplified statement about a group based on limited information.
8. **Circular argument** states a conclusion as part of the proof of the argument.
9. **Appeal to numbers, facts, or statistics** attempts to persuade the reader by showing how many people think something is true.

Rubric This is a grading system used by many teachers—often for writing related assignments. It is a chart composed of criteria for evaluation and levels of fulfillment of those criteria. A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making grading simpler and clearer.

Satire A kind of humor that ridicules or examines human vice or weakness in order to change the world for the better.

Simile A comparison of two unlike things in which a word of comparison (*like* or *as)* is used (e.g., *The ant scurried as fast as a cheetah.)*

Style The author's choices regarding language, sentence structure, voice, and tone in order to communicate with the reader.

Subjective (vs. Objective) Thinking or writing that includes personal feelings, attitudes, and opinions.

Summarize To capture all of the most important parts of the original text (paragraph, story, poem), but express them in a much shorter space, and as much as possible in the reader's own words.

Symbolism A device in literature where an object represents an idea**.**

Synonym A word that is similar in meaning to another word (e.g., sorrow, grief, sadness).

Text The object being studied, whether it is a novel, a poem, a film, an advertisement, a chapter from a history book or anything else made up of words.

Theme A topic of discussion or work; a major idea broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work. A theme may be stated or implied. Clues to the theme may be found in the prominent and/or reoccurring ideas in a work.

Third Person A perspective in literature, the "third person" point of view presents the events of the story from outside of any single character's perception, much like the omniscient point of view, but the reader must understand the action as it takes place and without any special insight into characters' minds or motivations.

Transition Words or phrases that connect or tie ideas together. Transitions provide cues by indicating the various relationships between sentences and between paragraphs (see section on Transitional Words and Phrases).

Tone The attitude of the author toward the audience, characters, subject or the work itself (e.g., serious, humorous).

Universal Significance The generally accepted importance or value of a work to represent human experience regardless of culture or time period.

Voice The fluency, rhythm, and liveliness in a text that make it unique to the author.