

Top 10 Issues

What Prevents an 'A' Paper

1. Lack of synthesis within paper



Synthesis is vital for academic writing. These papers combine three elements in a fashion which defends **students'** main observations. As a result, all paragraphs must show **how** your connections work and how they compare with one another. In other words, you must **demonstrate** how the evidence works.

- Stronger transitions help guide readers through the analysis process
- Keeping a sense of balanced discussions strengthens theories

2. Use of questions

Make firm declarative statements instead of asking questions. The overuse of hypothetical questions results in obvious **formulaic** or **predictable** writing patterns.

3. Use of FANBOYS

When beginning a sentence, avoid words such as:
for, and, no/nor, but, or, yet/yes
These words are intended to connect other words, phrases, and clauses.

4. Contractions

Avoid the use of any **contracted word**; these are informal shortcuts:
don't, can't, won't, I'd, I'll, I'm, shouldn't, couldn't, we'll, she'll, she'd, he'd, hasn't, isn't, etc.

5. Use of colloquial phrases or clichés

Specifically, avoid using the phrase **"a lot,"** which can be replaced with one of the following words:
many, most, much, extreme, upmost, ultimate, supreme, maximum, paramount

6. Presentation of proper nouns and all titles of literary works:

Italicize	"Quotation Marks"
• stand-alone projects comprised of many components	• parts of a larger work
novels, anthologies, manuscripts	short stories
collections of poetry	poems
newspapers, magazines, journals	articles
web sites	web pages
epics	sonnets, haiku, ballads, riddle poems
operas, plays, movie scripts	songs, one-act plays, movie scenes
television programs (<i>Twilight Zone</i>)	television episodes ("Pilot")
paintings, sculptures	photographs

7. Lack of structure within paragraphs

All academic paragraphs must follow the provided formula:

1. Topic Sentence
2. Confirmation of Topic (SES)
3. Analysis of Topic
4. Quotation / Specific Evidence
5. Review of Evidence
6. Deductive Conclusion

8. Overuse of pronouns

In academic papers, writers must show very specific evidence and **avoid vague language**. Remember, pronouns are shortcuts which can be misleading.

- Academic writing does not reflect personal stories
- To maintain a strong, formal tone research papers **avoid personalized pronouns** such as:
I, me, myself, we, our, ourselves, us
- Never talk directly to the audience.
Avoid second person pronouns:
you, yours, yourself
- Likewise, **avoid vague use of demonstrative pronouns and adjectives** such as:
this, that, those, these, it

you
that
me
us

9. Ending sentences with prepositions

"Where are you **at**?"
"What are you looking **at**?"
"These types of grammatical mistakes I cannot help you **with**."

10. Improper use of in-text citations

Review MLA expectations to properly **indicate resources**, and as well, document **signal phrases** correctly.