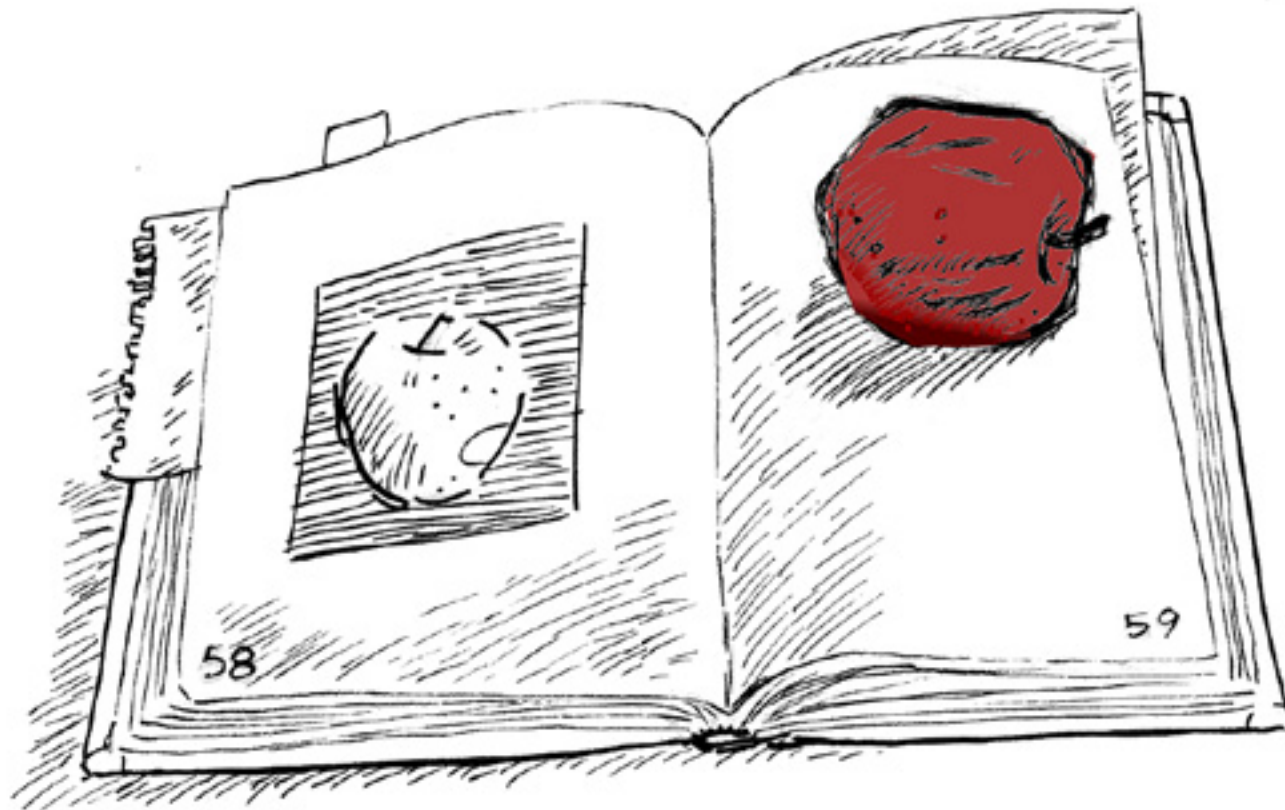


General Guidelines



introduction

Writing matters even with today's technological advances—effective communication is still essential for our society to function.

General Essay Guidelines

As we progress towards formal essay forms, the following 10 guidelines establish items of importance.

1. Typically, academic writing does not reflect personal stories nor overt editorials. Your research paper will not contain collections of personal memories or random opinions.
2. Avoid colloquial phrases and cliches. (see *Bedford* p 221-222)
Specifically do not use the phrase “a lot,” which can be replaced with one of the following words: *many, most, much, extreme*.
3. Avoid questions in your writing. Make statements instead.

General Essay Guidelines

4. A typical paragraph contains five sentences or more.

5. Avoid opening sentences with words such as: well, sure, now, yes, no.

Do not begin sentences with conjunctions: but, and, or, nor, for, so, yet.

6. Do not end your sentences with a preposition.

7. Do not use contractions. (don't, can't, won't, he's, I'll, we'll, *etc.*)

8. Remember **it's** is a contraction for **it is**: "It's going to rain today." Avoid it.

On the other hand, **its** is a possessive:

"Despite its name, the Smoggy-iris exhibits strong colors."

General Essay Guidelines

9. Avoid using passive (or linking verbs) which use forms of “to be”

(is, was, were, am, are, has been, etc.)

no: He was going to the store in a hurry to get a newspaper.

yes: He hurried to the store and purchased a newspaper.

10. Proof your work.

- Double check verb tense and noun/verb agreement.
- Double check punctuation.
- Remember spell check is not perfect.

Ode to My Spell Checker || by Jerrold H. Zar

Eye halve a spelling checker

It came with my pea sea.

It plainly marks four my revue miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a quay and type a word and weight for it to say

Weather eye yam wrong oar write.

It shows me strait a weigh as soon as a mist ache is maid.

It nose bee fore two long and eye can put the error rite.

Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it,

I am shore your pleased to no.

Its letter perfect awl the way.

My checker told me sew.

Essay Format

- All assignments will be turned in utilizing 12 pt. Times New Roman.
- Double space papers, with 1” margins on all four sides.
- Indent opening paragraphs with the standard 1/2 inch.

On page 583 of the *Bedford* a MLA standard template is available for you to follow. Be sure to keep your papers consistent with these requirements.

A full grade point will be deducted if any of these requirements are not met.