General Essay Guidelines

As we progress towards formal essay forms, the following 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.

2. Avoid colloquial phrases and cliches.
   Specifically do not use the phrase "a lot," which can usually be replaced with one of the following words: *many, most, much, extreme.*

3. Avoid questions in your writing. Make statements instead.

4. A typical paragraph contains <u>five sentences or more</u>.

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 Smokey-sky iris exhibits strong colors."

9. Proof your work.
   - Double check verb tense and noun/verb agreement.
   - Double check punctuation.
   - Remember spell check is not perfect:
   <u>Threw</u> his use of color and texture, Van Gogh established a rebel reputation.
   His genius <u>lyes</u> in the fact <u>head</u> never <u>accepted</u> conventional painting methods.

10. Avoid using passive (or linking verbs) which use forms of "to be"
    (is, was, were, am, are, has been, etc.)
    no: He <u>was going</u> to the store in a hurry <u>to get</u> a newspaper.
    yes: He hurried to the store and purchased a newspaper.

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Essay Format

• Required software is MS Word.

• 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.

Headers:

1. Click on the "Insert" tab.

2. Click on "Header."

3. Choose "Blank."

4. A text box will open.

5. Ignore the box that says "Type text here," and instead hit your Tab key twice, which will put the flashing cursor almost all the way to the right of the page.

6. Type in your full name.

7. Hit the space bar once, which will create one blank space after your name.

8. Click on "Page number," then highlight "Current position," then click on "Plain number."

9. Click on "Close header and footer."

Now you will see that your last name and the page number appear in a rather gray color in the upper right hand corner of your paper.

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