

The Ten Rules of Writing

- 1) **Plan your Essay!** Set aside 2-10 minutes to organize your thoughts. Note: For an hour-long in-class essay, allocate: Planning for 8 minutes; Writing for 45 minutes and 7 minutes for Revision.
- 2) **Write a Well-structured Essay!** Write a five-paragraph essay that includes all four components of an essay (Introduction, Body Paragraphs, Conclusion and Citations).
- 3) **Use Good Sentence Structure!** Avoid using simple sentences (one clause, with a single subject and predicate). Too many simple sentences can make an essay sound informal and comes across as patronizing.
- 4) **Use Complex Language!** Take risks with word choice - saying something is “good”, “bad”, “sad”, etc., can affect your mark. Do **NOT** use slang, abbreviations (TV, App), acronyms (without introducing them first) or contractions (can’t, isn’t, shouldn’t, they’re).
- 5) **Make a Clear Argument!** Make a statement that is logically debatable, showing intelligence and insight, rather than simply providing facts.
- 6) **Make Connections!** You must make connections between your thesis statement/argument and the literature you have read.
- 7) **Consider your Audience!** Remember: Use more nouns, fewer pronouns. Avoid using first person pronouns (I, me, my, we, us) and second person pronouns (you, your). Avoid saying “In my opinion” or “I think” because if it was not your opinion/thought, you would use a citation. Consider your audience ignorant of what you are saying - BE SPECIFIC!
- 8) **Provide Evidence!** Provide specific examples from the text(s) and use citations (even if it is an in-class essay!). Remember: poem/short-story titles are placed in “quotation marks” and book titles are *Italicized*.
- 9) **Avoid Plot Summaries!** Remember to always tie your evidence into your argument by providing analysis and explaining why the evidence used is important.
- 10) **Proofread!** Give yourself at least an hour - ideally 24 hours - before proofreading an assignment. Print out your assignment and read it



out loud. Consider printing the essay in a different typeface than the one you used on screen - that will make it seem less familiar, so you can proofread more effectively.