10 Writing Tips for Freshmen

**Before**

1. **Pre-write** by thinking about what you are going to write before you actually begin writing. Start by brainstorming and creating a graphic organizer or outline to identify where the essay will begin and what you will accomplish before it ends.
2. Compose your essay in **multiple paragraphs**. You should always have a minimum of **four** paragraphs: an introduction, at least two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The quality of your paragraphs is *always* more important than the quantity of paragraphs.
3. Follow all **MLA guidelines**. MLA guidelines require the following:

* an MLA formatted cover page (when required by the teacher)
* double space the ENTIRE document (including the cover page)
* include a proper heading on the left side of page 1
* include a proper header in the top right corner of each page of the essay (your last name and the page number)
* type in 12 point Times New Roman font
* ensure that the document has 1 inch margins on all four sides

**During**

1. Write in a **formal tone**. This means that you will write in *present tense for English essays and past tense for Global Studies essays*, in *third person*, and *without contractions or slang (no text speak, either!)*.

1. Your introduction should begin with an **attention getter**. Grab the reader’s attention with an interesting quote, fact, tidbit or other piece of relevant information. Do NOT use a question as an attention getter!
2. Include a **thesis** in your introductory paragraph. The thesis should include how you plan to answer the essay prompt, and it should be written *near the end* of the introduction.
3. Begin each body paragraph with a **topic sentence**. A topic sentence guides a body paragraph and gives it direction. A topic sentence is essentially a one-sentence summary of a body paragraph.
4. Each body paragraph should include a substantial amount of supporting information, such as **events or quotes that support** **your thesis**. After providing your support, be sure to EXPLAIN how that support proves your thesis.

1. All essays should end with a **conclusion** that summarizes the key points of your essay and restates your thesis. Leave your readers with a final thought regarding the importance of the information discussed in your essay.

**After**

1. ALWAYS **proofread**! Use the spellcheck feature on the computer, read your essay aloud to catch obvious missing words and confusing sentences, and/or have someone else read your essay, too.