

Typical Essay Problems

- Dead Words – Many, various, several, a lot, very
- Boring verbs/language – use active verbs and descriptive language; replace forms of “to be” and “to go”
- could of; should of – should be should have or could have
- “this essay,” “I would like to conclude,” “my thesis,” “this quote,” “my essay will be about,” “my first reason,” “you ...”
- Contractions – can’t, won’t, haven’t, shouldn’t – eliminate in formal writing
- Using quotations for works – plays, novels, and movies use *italics* or underline, but not both; also, tell who the author is in the intro
- I think, I believe – do not use except when writing an opinion paper
- Quotes without lead-ins or context – Explain who said the quote or introduce it with a colon; try to match it to your own words; use a variety of quote lead-ins
- Inconsistent tenses – past mixed with present; choose one
- Looser/loser; loose/lose – lose=opposite of win; loose=opposite of tight
- Then/than – then=next; than=comparison
- No title – include a title related to the theme
- Big font or margins – 12 point font, make it a normal one; one-inch margins
- Single spacing – double space unless told otherwise
- Their (possessive), there (location), they’re (they are)
- Two (number), too (also), to
- That for which and who – who = people, which = things, that = either, but don’t use it always