

Essay Self-Assessment

You will need your rough-draft and a highlighter to complete the following instructions:

FIRST READING:

- Highlight the first sentence of your essay.
 - Does it compel a reader's attention?
 - Does it include the hackneyed phrase "this story is about"? Make a note in the margin to return to this important sentence.

- Highlight the last sentence of your introductory paragraph and the first sentence of your initial supporting paragraph.
 - Is there a transition? If not, write: "Needs a transition word or phrase" in the margin. (Look up transitional expressions if needed)

- Draw a line at the end of every sentence.
 - Are most of your sentences three to four lines long?
 - Are most of your sentences three to four words long?
 - Is there variety in your sentence structures?

- Scan your essay for RIP (rest in peace) words: different, really, a lot, get, awesome, very, get, amazing, incredible. CROSS OUT EVERY ONE OF THEM (Look up alternative words in the Thesaurus).

- Check sentence openings. Circle any sentence that begins with "There is/are/were". Scan to see if you have a series of sentences that begin with "He" or "She" or "I". Make a note in the margin to rewrite these sentences.

- Circle all contractions. Spell them out. (Contractions lend a conversational tone to writing. Eliminating contractions is a way to help you develop a more formal tone for broader audiences).

- Examine your conclusion. Don't begin with "Finally," "In conclusion," or "Thus."
 - Does your conclusion explore the significance of your thesis?
 - Ask yourself, "Why does what I have written matter?"

SECOND READING:

*****Read through your rough draft again (either silently or aloud). After each paragraph, **write one question in the margin that you would like answered**, for instance:

- Is my first paragraph irredeemably boring?
- Can you tell what this paper is going to be about?
- Is this example appropriate?
- Does this sentence make sense to you?
- Do you understand this point?
- What should I do to connect these ideas?
- Is this irrelevant?