

## **What does it mean to write formally?**

- Use primarily third person point of view
  - You will pretty much never use second person point of view in a formal essay. This includes imperative sentences.
- No contractions
- Write out numbers that are two words or less
- No slang
  - Wanna and kinda are not words and ain't is not to be used in any formal writing (in fact, don't use it in writing at all unless there is a specific purpose behind it)
  - "cause" is a thing that gives rise to an action or phenomenon. "Because" is a conjunction that leads to a reason for an action. They are different words and are not interchangeable.
- Avoid overly emotional and strongly one-sided tones
  - Don't use all caps unless it is part of a name or an acronym or something
- Be careful about using idioms, clichés, and other colloquially phrases
  - Only use these if it is appropriate in your essay

## **Other Good Essay Tips:**

- Avoid using words like "very" or "a lot"
  - There are so many amazing words in the English language. Use a thesaurus and find other, more advanced words that mean the same thing. If done correctly, it will bring your essay to a new level.
  - The same goes for a large variety of words (for example: instead of saying "a bit," say "somewhat." This will also help make your essay sound more formal.
- Avoid abstract examples and ambiguous references
  - Examples, proof, and explanations should be as concrete as possible.

Hypothetical situations won't help you prove your point.

- Ambiguous references like "this" or "these" tend to be weak, so you should avoid making these terms the subjects of your sentences. Instead of saying "This is proof that aliens do exist," add in a subject after this to make it more clear and improve your writing. For example, "This phenomenon proves that aliens do exist."
- Make sure your verb tense is consistent.
- Make sure your pronouns agree with their antecedent (the noun they are referring to).
  - The following sentence is incorrect: "Everyone should focus on their own work."
  - Because "everyone" is singular, it should actually read "Everyone should focus on his or her own work." This is proper English because the pronoun agrees with its antecedent.