

General Tips and Advice

1. Brainstorming
 - Take some time to think about the topic before you begin writing.
 - Consider the given writing prompt to make sure you are responding to the question.
 - Use this time to create a clear focus for your essay
2. Create your thesis statement.
 - A thesis statement is one or two sentences that sum up your entire essay; it provides a road map for the rest of your essay.
 - If you're given a writing prompt or question to address, create the thesis statement by clearly addressing the prompt or answering the question.
 - Your thesis statement should appear somewhere in the introduction of your essay.
3. Create a writing plan: outline or graphic organizer. To create an outline:
 - Introduction:
 - i. Introduce the reader to the essay topic
 - ii. Use a catchy hook to get the reader interested in your topic
 - iii. Briefly mention/summarize what you will discuss in the essay
 - iv. Be sure to clearly state the topic sentence, which should include the claim and the reasons of the claim.
 - Body Paragraphs:
 - i. Add details and support for your topic in the body.
 - ii. Create a new paragraph for each new example or idea.
 - iii. Be sure each paragraph contains all the components of an effective paragraph: a topic sentence, plenty of details, and a closing or transition sentence.
 - Conclusion:
 - i. Sum up your essay in the conclusion.
 - ii. Rephrase what you mentioned in your intro.
 - iii. Don't add new information.
 - iv. End with an inspiring thought.

Writing Tips:

1. Check all the sentences to make sure they are complete. Does each sentence:
 - Have a subject?
 - Have a predicate?
 - Express a complete thought?
2. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It does not express a complete thought.
3. A dependent, or subordinate, clause not attached to an independent clause is a fragment.
4. A fragment leaves the reader wondering, “who,” “what,” “what happened,” or “what about it.”
5. A run-on sentence is two or more sentences written as one. A sentence can include more than one thought as long as the sentence is punctuated correctly; a run-on sentence occurs when ideas are joined together incorrectly.
6. To fix a run-on sentence, use one of the three methods:
 - Create two separate sentences.
 - Use a semicolon to divide the thoughts.
 - Separate the thoughts with both a comma and a coordinating conjunction. The seven coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet*.
7. At the beginning of the sentence, the subordinate clause will be separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma. At the end of a sentence, the subordinate clause does not use a comma.

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