

College-Level Writing:

Make sure you:

- Carefully read the prompt and requirements. Make sure you understand what is being asked.
- Create an Outline: Plan your structure before you start writing. An outline helps you organize your thoughts logically. (At home you can do this digitally or on scrap paper. During an in-class essay you can do this in the back of your blue book)
- Craft a Strong Thesis: Develop a clear, concise thesis statement that reflects the main argument of your paper. This should be the last sentence of your introduction and will tell the reader what each body paragraph will be about. Do not say: “I will write in this essay, and ...” This is elementary writing instead look at this example I give. If I was writing an essay about the Industrial Revolution my thesis might sound like this:

"The Industrial Revolution fundamentally transformed American society by **shifting the economy from agrarian to industrial, resulting in significant social changes, including urbanization** and the **rise of labor movements.**"

1. My first body paragraph would be: **shifting the economy from agrarian to industrial**
2. My second body paragraph would be: **resulting in significant social changes, including urbanization**
3. My third body paragraph would be: **rise of labor movements.**

I told my reader exactly what my essay would be about and what order I would write it without having to write the literal words like “ I will” or “First this, second this” or “This paper will be”

- Use Formal Language: Avoid slang and overly casual language. Aim for clarity and precision. For example, Do not write “&” for “and” or write like you are texting someone. A good rule of thumb is reading your writing aloud typically you will pick up on informality when you hear it.
- Cite Sources Properly: If this writing is requiring citations make sure you use the appropriate citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) and give credit to original authors. When citing for essays that you are writing at home a great website to use is: [Citation Machine®: Format & Generate - APA, MLA, & Chicago](#)

- Proofread and Edit: Always review your work for grammar, punctuation, and clarity. If time permits, always go back and reread your writing especially when you are writing in a blue book for an exam that requires you to be precise and to the point under a time constraint.
- Use transition words: Using transition words can help clarify relationships between ideas, guiding your reader through your arguments and enhancing the overall coherence of your essay.

Addition

- Furthermore
- Moreover
- In addition
- Additionally
- Also
- Not only... but also

Contrast

- However
- On the other hand
- Conversely
- Although
- Nevertheless
- Nonetheless

Comparison

- Similarly
- Likewise
- In the same vein
- Just as
- Correspondingly

Cause and Effect

- Therefore
- Consequently
- As a result
- Thus
- Hence
- For this reason

Example

- For example
- For instance
- Specifically
- To illustrate
- Such as

Emphasis

- Indeed
- In fact
- Certainly
- Undoubtedly
- Obviously

Conclusion

- In conclusion
- Ultimately
- To summarize
- In summary
- Finally
- Overall

Sequence/Order

- Subsequently
- Afterward
- Prior to
- Before
- In the first place

- Initially
 - Following that
 - Meanwhile
 - Later
 - Ultimately
 - First of all
 - In addition
 - Lastly
 - Notably
 - Specifically
- Do not use Informal Contractions: In formal writing, avoid contractions (e.g., use “do not” instead of “don’t”).
 - Avoid Overly Complex Sentences: Clarity is key. Don’t make sentences too long or convoluted.
 - Don’t Neglect the Conclusion: A strong conclusion summarizes your main points and reinforces your thesis.
 - Do not Use First Person (Unless Allowed): Many academic papers require an objective tone. Avoid personal pronouns (You, I, Me, We, etc.) unless the assignment allows them.
 - Write paragraphs that are at the college level: 3 sentences for a paragraph is **not** college level. In lower division it is 5-8 sentences and in 400 level classes and up like graduate level classes it is more like 8-10 sentences.
 - Indent: Indenting signifies a new paragraph to the reader. If you are typing the essay/writing assignment then you press the “tab” key once. If you are writing it on paper such as a blue book then you can lay two fingers or a thumb on the paper to measure the space for your indent.
 - Remember to use the correct terminology: If you are referring to something that was written (journal, textbook, newspaper article, etc.) then you need to say “.... writes, or As stated,” Do not say “in the newspaper the author speaks, ...” The author is not speaking unless it is a speech or video. The source you are referring to is written then it is the author writes or as the author stated in the book

There are many more strategies, tips, and tricks to remember when writing college level essays, but hopefully this can help some of you with your writing skills in your academic career!