

WRITING STRATEGIES:

After reviewing countless essays, I have compiled this list of writing do's and don'ts:

Outline before you write: Especially during timed writing tasks, creating an outline may seem like a waste of time. However, spending just 1-2 minutes jotting down ideas under "Yes" versus "No" headings or bullets points with your topic sentences helps you to better develop your thesis, to formulate counterarguments, and to ensure your essay has a logical flow.

Stretch your sentences: Vary your sentences to keep the reader from getting bored. One easy way to do this is to keep some sentences short, while making others long. To increase the length of a sentence without being redundant or rambling, try adding information about who, what, when, or how. You can also add descriptive adjectives, verbs, and linking words to make your writing more colorful and enjoyable to read.

Beef up your paragraphs: Make sure that every statement you write has a purpose. It should either directly relate to your thesis or help to explain another statement in the paragraph, thus relating to the thesis indirectly. Follow this formula for M.E.E.A.L. "M" for main idea, AKA your thesis or topic sentence. "E" for an explanation of your main idea statement. "E" for evidence/examples, which can be a direct quotation or a paraphrasing of some evidence. "A" for analysis of the evidence and its connection with the main idea. "L" for linking sentence, which relates to the thesis statement and can connect this argument to the next argument, and thus create a logical flow of information that is easy for the reader to follow.

Avoid weak words: Some words make me cringe when I read them. They are weak and boring. I am often asking students to elevate their vocabulary. Here are some examples:

Weak Word	Alternatives
a lot / much (of)	a great deal, a large/significant/substantial number/amount, an abundance, adequate, ample, considerable, countless, enough, generous, innumerable, many, masses, myriad, plentiful, sufficient
best	chief, finest, foremost, greatest, highest, incomparable, leading, most impressive, optimum, outstanding, paramount, perfect, premium, prime, principal, super, superlative, supreme, terrific, unequalled, unrivaled, unsurpassed
get	achieve, accomplish, acquire, attain, capture, earn, evoke, extract, fetch, gain, inherit, obtain, procure, purchase, reach, realize, receive, recover, score, secure, take

has/have (to)	compel, driven, essential, made, mandatory, must, is necessary, need, obligated, ought, required,
important	chief, critical, crucial, essential, esteemed, exceptional, great, imperative, influential, key, main, meaningful, momentous, necessary, pertinent, relevant, serious, significant, valuable, vital
like (adj. or verb)	(adj.) akin, analogous, approximate, comparable, consistent, corresponding, equal, equivalent, homologous, identical, matching, much the same, near, parallel, related, resembling, similar (v.) admire, adore, approve, care for, cherish, delight in, esteem, fancy, love, rejoice in, relish, revel in, savor, take delight/satisfaction in
said	added, admitted, answered, argued, asked, cautioned, claimed, confessed, declared, demanded, denied, disclosed, enumerated, exclaimed, explained, insisted, informed, murmured, muttered, offered, outlined, questioned, replied, retorted, requested, revealed, speculated, stated, suggested, theorized, whispered
then	accordingly, after that, at that instant/moment/point/time, before long, consequently, from that moment/day on, hence, later, next, suddenly, soon after, therefore,
thing	affair, article, body, business, circumstance, commodity, concept, concern, device, element, entity, fact, figure, form, goods, idea, information, instrument, issue, item, material, matter, means, mechanism, object, occurrence, part, phenomenon, piece, point, portion, problem, situation, subject, substance, tool
think	analyze, anticipate, assume, be convinced, believe, comprehend, conceive, conclude, consider, contemplate, deduce, deem, deliberate, determine, envision, estimate, evaluate, examine, expect, feel, figure out, foresee, gather, guess, imagine, infer, judge, mull over, muse, ponder, presume, rationalize, reason, realize, reckon, reflect, regard, resolve, sense, speculate, suppose, suspect, understand, visualize
too	additionally, also, as well, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, likewise, more, moreover awfully, beyond, exceptionally, excessively, extremely, greatly, highly, immensely, in excess, notably, overly, remarkably, unreasonably
very	amply, certainly, enormously, exceedingly, exceptionally, extraordinary, extremely, greatly, highly, incredibly, particularly, positively, quite, remarkably, significantly, to a great/large extent, vast

Add transitions and conjunctions: Transitions connect one idea with another. They generally fall into 3 categories: agreeing, disagreeing, or putting things in order. Depending on the surrounding information, a transitional phrase can make the reading more interesting and easy to follow.

Agree	Disagree	Order / Time
<p><u>To compare:</u> similarly, likewise, equally, just like/as, in the same way/manner, in comparison</p> <p><u>To give examples:</u> as proof, for example, for instance, in particular, specifically, to illustrate, namely, notably</p> <p><u>To add information:</u> additionally, also, furthermore, in addition, moreover, plus, beyond</p> <p><u>To emphasize:</u> foremost, most importantly, especially, indeed, in fact, truly, surely, certainly, as a matter of fact, above all, without a doubt, most of all, to emphasize, even, of course, truly, keep in mind</p> <p><u>To conclude:</u> to conclude, to sum up, in summary, in brief, in other words, accordingly, clearly, in short, in effect, for that reason, obviously, stated briefly, of course, since, in closing, to reiterate, it has been stated, on the whole, after all, finally</p>	<p><u>To contrast:</u> otherwise, in contrast, on the other hand, instead, still whereas, despite, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, in spite of, yet, even though, although, though, whereas, besides, even so, conversely, neither ... nor, notwithstanding, be that as it may, albeit, admittedly, unlike</p>	<p><u>Order:</u> initially, first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), before, to begin with, at the same time, earlier, immediately, soon, as soon as, so gradually, meanwhile, while, simultaneously, eventually, later, afterward, as a result, subsequently, consequently, therefore, thus, hence, finally, lastly, at last</p> <p><u>Past:</u> up to now, so far, from then on, until then, thus far, in the past, formerly, previously</p> <p><u>Present:</u> now, nowadays, presently, at present, today, currently, recently</p> <p><u>Future:</u> in the future, next</p>