

TIPS TO IMPROVE WRITING

Making a few simple changes improves writing drastically. Find my tips below.

- I. Use mostly short sentences.
 - A. For every long sentence, write two short ones before and after it.
 - B. Shorter sentences make your ideas clearer and more powerful.
 - C. Shorter sentences tend to seem more argumentative in tone as well.
 - D. They make your paper more readable and engaging.

- II. Use active verbs instead of passive verbs.
 - A. Passive verbs include verbs like, but are not limited to these: was, were, be, would have, had been, etc.
 - B. Active verbs give your sentences power.
 - C. They make them clear and engaging. For example, consider these two sentences: America is best defined by opportunity. Vs. Opportunity defines American culture. See the difference?
 - D. Active verbs make your prose argumentative, which is the goal of writing in this class.
 - E. One trick for eliminating passive verbs involves reversing the order of sentences containing them, beginning with the end; this enables you to find a new, active verb more easily. You can see this trick in the example provided above.

- III. Work with the Tutoring Center or Student Success Lab
 - A. Each center provides tutoring for free.
 - B. They both offer verification that you worked with a tutor.
 - C. I award up to a 5% increase on your paper grade if you work with a tutor.
 - D. Your syllabus contains information about the centers' location and phone numbers.

- IV. Read your papers aloud, forward and backward.

- V. Always provide evidence to support your thesis.
 - A. This presupposes the idea that every essay you write for history (and most classes) must contain a thesis, an argument you make to structure your essay.
 - B. The first paragraph must include your thesis.
 - C. Use evidence to "prove" the validity of your thesis/argument.
 - D. "Key Terms" from both your reading study guides and lecture outlines provide excellent evidence to use in your essays.
 - E. So, if each paragraph begins with a small argument that supports your main argument, each paragraph must include evidence that supports your small argument.
 - F. Include analysis as well.
 1. Analysis involves explaining why your evidence/key terms support your argument.
 2. Use language that convinces readers your evidence supports your arguments.