

## FORMAL VS. INFORMAL WRITING

COMMON "STRUGGLES" IN WRITING

### THE TOPIC SENTENCE

- WHEN YOU ARE RESPONDING TO LITERATURE, THE TOPIC SENTENCE NEEDS TO INTRODUCE THE LITERATURE AS WELL AS THE TOPIC YOU ARE DISCUSSING.
  - REMEMBER . . .
 

• TITLE	T
• AUTHOR	A
• SUBJECT	S

### EXAMPLE TOPIC SENTENCE

- IN THE NOVEL, *HUNGER GAMES*, BY SUZANNE COLLINS A YOUNG GIRL IS THRUST INTO THE GAME OF HER LIFE OR RATHER FOR HER LIFE.

### KEEP IT FORMAL

- WHEN WRITING, YOU MUST KEEP IT FORMAL.
- THIS MEANS THAT YOU CANNOT USE THE WORD "I" OR THE PHRASE "IN MY OPINION." (UNLESS YOU ARE WRITING A PERSONAL WRITE THAT HAS TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE OR SOME ASPET OF IT)
- INSTEAD, WRITE AS THOUGH YOU ARE THE AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT.

### AVOID CONTRACTIONS

- IN FORMAL WRITING, YOU SHOULD NOT USE CONTRACTIONS.
- THEREFORE, AVOID WORDS SUCH AS DIDN'T, CAN'T, DON'T, ETC.
- INSTEAD, USE THE ENTIRE WORD. FOR EXAMPLE, DID NOT, CANNOT, DO NOT, ETC.

### SPELL OUT NUMBERS

- SPELL OUT NUMBERS IN FORMAL WRITING.
- THEREFORE, INSTEAD OF 7, WRITE "SEVEN".

## USE FORMAL LANGUAGE

- DO NOT TALK TO THE READER.
- AVOID COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS.
  - COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS ARE WORDS AND PHRASES COMMON TO SPOKEN, INFORMAL ENGLISH AND CHARACTERIZES IMMATURE WRITING.
  - SLANG, REGIONAL LANGUAGE, PROFANITIES, ETC.

## AVOID USING CLICHÉS

- A CLICHÉ IS AN OVERUSED EXPRESSION AND IT WILL CAUSE YOUR READERS TO GET BOARD INSTANTLY.
- BE ORIGINAL WITH YOUR IDEAS AND WITH THE WAY YOU EXPRESS THEM.
- FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN LOOKING FOR A METAPHOR OR A SIMILE, AVOID COMMON PHRASES SUCH AS "QUICK AS A WINK."

## AVOID SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

- A SENTENCE FRAGMENT IS AN INCOMPLETE THOUGHT.
- MAKE SURE THAT YOUR SENTENCE HAS A SUBJECT AND A PREDICATE.

## AVOID RUN-ON SENTENCES

- THESE OFTEN OCCUR BECAUSE YOU USE COMMAS TOO MANY TIMES IN A SENTENCE.
- EXAMPLE: "MY FRIENDS ARE SO SPECIAL TO ME, AND THEY ARE ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEED THEM AND THEY CAN ALWAYS BE COUNTED UPON!"
- YOU CAN FIX RUN-ON SENTENCES BY CHANGING THEM INTO TWO SHORTER SENTENCES, OR BY USING SEMI-COLONS.

## BE CAREFUL WITH SEMI-COLONS

- SEMI-COLONS (;) MAY BE USED ONLY AFTER A COMPLETE THOUGHT OR SENTENCE.
- EXAMPLE: THE PLAYERS DID THEIR BEST TO WIN THE GAME; IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THEY SUCCEEDED IN THEIR OBJECTIVE.

## AVOID COMMA SPLICE'S

- A COMMA SPLICE ERROR OCCURS WHEN A COMMA IS USED TO FIX A RUN-ON SENTENCE.
- EXAMPLE: MY FRIENDS ARE SPECIAL TO ME, THEY ARE ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEED THEM.
- COMMA SPLICES OCCUR WHEN YOU DO NOT CONNECT YOUR QUOTATION TO YOUR SENTENCE EITHER. FOR EXAMPLE: NORMAN WEARS THE PLAID SHIRT AT THE END OF THE STORY, "I FOUND IT AT THE DUMP."(31)

## SPELLING - COMMON ERRORS

- "A LOT" IS TWO WORDS.
- HOMONYMS
  - THERE = PLACE
  - THEIR = POSSESSIVE PRONOUN
  - THEY'RE = THEY ARE
  - THEN = TIME
  - THAN = COMPARISON

## DO NOT START SENTENCES WITH...

- AND
- BUT
- ALSO

## TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

- USE THEM!!
- HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES BUT THERE ARE MANY MORE \*\*ALSO, IN THE SAME WAY, JUST AS...SO TOO, LIKEWISE, SIMILARLY, BUT HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF, ON THE ONE HAND...ON THE OTHER HAND\*\*

## CONCLUDING SENTENCE

- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ONE!!
- IN A ONE TO TWO PARAGRAPH RESPONSE ONE-TO-TWO SENTENCES IS OFTEN ADEQUATE
- IN A 5X5 ESSAY A PARAGRAPH OF 5-7 SENTENCES SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO YOUR CONCLUSION.