

Ten Items to Watch

Five Items in Content and Style

1. Avoid wordy sentences. —

- Passive voice.

- Excessive use of prepositional phrases or dependent clauses.

- If your roommate can't read it aloud without stumbling, change it.

- If you don't know the word, look it up.

S V DO Active.
The ball ^{the} was kicked by him
X was murdered ()

2. Provide sufficient and specific analysis with references to the text.

3. Provide a clear thesis or purpose (limited, arguable, and unified).

4. Avoid the "cosmic opening" and other obvious generalizations.

- Literature has been an important force in human history.

- Many people over the ages have wondered what is meant by the term "classic."

- Since the dawn of time, people have tried to express their thoughts through art and literature.

If you're not sure whether a generalization is obvious, ask yourself this: is this something the reader doesn't already know?

5. Edit carefully to remove basic sentence-level errors: fragments, comma splices, and fused sentences.

- Example: Comma splice. We went to the movies, ^S ^V however, ~~they~~ ^S stayed home.

Five Items in Mechanics

1. Block quotation.

- Introduce with a full sentence that uses a colon before the quotation.
- No quotation marks unless the quotation has dialogue.
- In MLA format, put the citation information (Smith 123) after the period at the end of the quotation.
- Used within paragraphs.
- Most important: use only as much of the quotation as you need. The reader will expect to see an analysis of the passage that is about the same length as the passage itself.

because, since, while but
because

2. Dropped Quotation. Which of these is correct?

- The Swede feared for his life. "You are all out to get me" (578).
- The Swede feared for his life, "You are all out to get me" (578).
- The Swede showed that he feared for his life when he cried, "You are all out to get me" (578). *good*
- The Swede feared for his life: "You are all out to get me" (578). *good*

3. MLA Format and Ellipsis

- In William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," the townspeople view Miss Emily as "a tradition, a duty, and a care, a sort of hereditary obligation on the town" (267).
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Ellipsis. An ellipsis, which is indicated by three spaced dots (. . .), shows that something has been omitted from the middle of a quotation. According to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, an ellipsis is not used at the beginning or end of a quotation (see 11.57 ff) unless the quotation begins "with a capitalized word (such as a proper name) that did not appear at the beginning of a sentence in the original" (11.65).

4. Nonrestrictive clauses and phrases.

- Nonrestrictive: "extra information" set off with commas. Example:
The Magna Carta, which was signed in 1215, is a distant ancestor of our Bill of Rights.
- Restrictive: Restricts the meaning of the sentence.
- Which is correct here?
 - In his story, "~~Araby~~," James Joyce writes of a young boy's initiation. "
 - In his story "Araby," James Joyce writes of a young boy's initiation. "

5. Quotation Marks and Titles

Quick quiz: How would you punctuate the following? _____

1. ^{under} "The Art of Fiction"
2. ^{short story} "Miss Grief"
3. ^{novel} The Damnation of Theron Ware
4. ^{novel} The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man
5. [→] Your own title — *nothing*

Quotation Marks.

Quick quiz: Where would you put the quotation marks?

1. Henry James said, We must grant the artist his donnée.
2. MLA style: Henry James said, We must grant the artist his donnée
The Art of Fiction 523
3. Howells promoted the smiling aspects of life; he also encouraged
writers to look at the real grasshopper.