

# GRAMMAR SKILLZ THAT KILLZ

By: Jordan McCrady

# Thesis Statements

- ▣ Strong thesis statements take some sort of stance.
  - It should also include some sort of statement about about your topic. Your job is to defend this topic.
  - Bad Example:
    - ▣ There are some positive and negative aspects to the Banana Herb Ice Tea.
    - ▣ This is a bad Thesis because it talks about both aspects. You must choose just one.
  - Good Example:
    - ▣ Because Banana Herb Tea promotes rapid weight loss that results in the lost of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.
    - ▣ This is a strong thesis because it picks one side of the topic and makes a specific claim.

# Thesis Statements

- ▣ A strong thesis justifies discussion.
  - Remember that your thesis should justify why the reader should care.
  - In the previous example, the reader should care about the thesis because it poses as a potential threat to customers. Without that justification, it once again becomes a weak thesis.

# Thesis Statements

- ▣ Strong thesis statements express one main idea.
  - ▣ Having one main idea gives the reader a solid idea of what direction the paper will take. Having multiple ideas makes the writer seem scatter brained and unsure of what they want to truly discuss.
  - ▣ Bad Example: Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and Web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.
    - Doesn't this make you think, "Okay, what is this guy talking about here?" Because it should! They need to stick with either Internet as a whole, or Web pages specifically.
  - ▣ Once again, the thesis pertaining to Banana Herb Tea is a strong thesis because it focuses only on the negative effects on customers.

# Thesis Statements

- ▣ Finally, strong thesis statements are specific.
  - A strong thesis needs to be specific because the reader needs to know EXACTLY what the paper will be about, and it will make your paper manageable. A topic that is too broad could ultimately end in a 30 – page paper. I'm sure you don't want to write that.
  - Example of a bad thesis:
    - ▣ World hunger has many causes and effects.
    - ▣ This is a bad thesis because most papers have specific parameters for length, and odds are, it wouldn't fit. Secondly, it's vague.
  - The first thesis that we have constantly reviewed is once again a strong thesis because it picks one side of the topic and makes it specific.

# Six Trait Writing Processes

- ▣ When writing a paper, there are six writing processes to consider. All of these processes combined, when utilized properly, will help make your paper overall more impressive and more enjoyable to write. They are the following.
  - Content/Ideas
  - Organization
  - Voice
  - Word Choice
  - Sentence Fluency
  - Conventions

# Content/Ideas

- ▣ This is the heart of your paper, aka what you have to say.
  - ALWAYS make it a topic that will be important or interesting to you, and it should be small enough to handle in the paper
  - Ideas should be expressed clearly so the reader can understand, and should also provide the reader with interesting insight. Pretend the reader knows absolutely NOTHING about the topic.

# Organization

- ▣ This is the road map that guides your entire paper.
  - It's important to consider the organization of your paper before opening a word document.
  - It should logically flow from one idea to the next.
    - ▣ For example, if you're writing about the negative effects of air pollution in Mexico City, you may consider discussing sources of pollution in one paragraph, and then transition to how it affects citizens' health in the next. As long as there is a logical connection, the transition will be smooth.
  - Organization also guides the reader through each paragraph.
    - ▣ Paragraphs should start with a lead sentence to grab the attention of the reader, followed by supporting details that ultimately lead to a final conclusion.

# Voice

- ▣ Voice brings out the personality in your writing.
  - Never be afraid to use your voice when writing a paper. Your voice is what makes your paper stand out from your classmates' papers.
  - Teachers also gain more enjoyment in papers that use voice and colorful language that they know would be unique to you.
- ▣ PLAGIARISM WARNING
  - Voice can also get you into a lot of trouble if you're not careful.
  - Remember to never cut corners. If a teacher gives you a writing assignment, do it yourself. Teachers gain a feel for your individual writing style, so if you try to have a friend write a paper for you, there is a strong chance they will know. Avoid the hassle and do it yourself!!

# Word Choice

- ▣ It's always important to consider what words to use when writing a paper.
  - This is why it's important to not use a thesaurus when writing. Students try to get fancy and use big words, however sometimes a word may be similar, but carry a whole new meaning to the sentence based on context.
    - ▣ It's better to stick to words that you know. Throw that thesaurus away.
  - Specific word choice can also give you flavor to your paper as well. For example, if you're writing about a track meet, using the word sprinted versus ran would give the reader a better picture of what you're trying to say.

# Sentence Fluency

- ▣ Often times there are multiple ways to write a sentence correctly, it's a matter of knowing which types of sentences work better than others.
  - Sentence fluency helps create a sense of rhythm within your paper.
  - For example, a paper consisting nothing of short, choppy sentences would have little fluidity. On the same note, sentences that drag for days sound long-winded.
  - This is a challenging skill to achieve, but once you understand how to combine longer and shorter sentences together, it becomes natural.

# Conventions

- ▣ Conventions are the basic rule of writing.
  - This includes grammar, spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, and capitalization. These things that all readers expect to see in good writing.
  - By far, this one is the most mechanical of the six traits, and takes the most practice.
  - It's important to master these traits. A paper can be well written and have well thought-out ideas, but if the conventions are poor, a writer takes the risk of losing their credibility.

# Troublesome Twos

- ▣ When writing, the English language encounters a lot different word pairs that are often misused (affect vs. effect). This section will address some of the more common troublesome twos and how to discern the difference.

# Affect vs. Effect

- ▣ Effect: When used without the “s” on the end, the word becomes a noun. So, a plague can have an “effect” on poverty and hunger. In this case, effect is a thing, making it a noun.
- ▣ Affect: When used without the “s” on the end, the word is a verb. So, a speech could have “affected” the way I thought about the topic. As you can see, affected serves as the verb.

# Further vs. Farther

- ▣ Further: is used to express a greater extent or degree. So I would say Northwest is “further” North than Mizzou. It expresses a greater distance.
- ▣ Farther: Describes an actual physical distance. So I could say the store is “farther” down the street.

# Insure v. Assure v. Ensure

- ▣ Ensure: means to make certain. So you would want to “ensure” that your homework was done on time before hanging out with your friends.
- ▣ Assure: means to give confidence. So I would “assure” you that you’re going to pass your test.
- ▣ Insure: means to protect against loss. I just say to think of car insurance.

# I vs. Me

- ▣ The best way to learn this is by looking at a sample sentence.
  - If you have any questions, please call Linda or (I, me).
    - ▣ In this case, take out the first part of the sentence and read it as “please call I” or “please call me”. Pick the one that makes sense.
- ▣ Then know at the beginning of a sentence, if you say “You and I”, that you would not use me. It makes the sentence sound funky.
- ▣ There are a lot of other troublesome twos, but with practice you’ll learn to distinguish from them through context and general knowledge of the English language!

THE END!