



# The Writing Center

## 10 Tips to Improve Your Writing “Right Now”

(...as you wait for a tutor)

### 1. Understand the Prompt

“Prompt” is a fancy word for writing assignment. Be sure you understand what you are being asked to write. If you do not understand, ask your professor.

### 2. Plan Time to Write in “Chunks”

Use your planner or smart phone to schedule 15–20-minute segments of writing on a regular basis so you can work through prewriting, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing in small chunks of time. This way, you will not get overwhelmed by your writing assignments.

### 3. Do A Prewriting Activity

Prewriting activities are useful for coming up with topics, thesis statements, and outlines. Clustering, freewriting, diagramming, brainstorming, outlining, and listing are some prewriting activities you can do. For specific ideas, sign up for the “Prewriting and Outlining” workshop at:

<https://www.mtsac.edu/writingcenter/workshops.html>

### 4. Create a Strong Thesis

The thesis is the main point of your essay. Creating an organized thesis that clearly states your point will help you to focus your writing and stay on topic. Use the yellow “Thesis Generator” handout to get started. Handouts are located next to the lobby in the black literature racks.

### 5. Use Transitions Between Phrases and Paragraphs

Transitions are words, phrases, or even sentences between ideas or paragraphs that connect them. Transitions are the glue that hold your paper together and bridge ideas so your reader knows when you are moving from point to point. Grab the pink sheet “how to put clauses together” handout and consider adding them into your paper while you wait!

## **6. Use Specific Examples and Illustrations**

Specific details are descriptive words, clear examples, and in-depth analysis. For example, instead of mentioning just a truck, you could mention the brown beat-up Tacoma pick-up.

## **7. Vary Your Sentences**

Use short and long sentences as well as simple and complex sentences throughout your essay. Be sure you alternate how you begin your sentences.

## **8. Expand Your Vocabulary**

Become familiar with the multiple tools available in the Longman online dictionary:

<https://www.ldoceonline.com>. Discover important grammatical information such class, phonetic pronunciation, collocations, word family, word lists, etc...

## **9. Don't Stop Before Revision**

Students sometimes get tired of working with their paper and want to “give up” before revising. Be sure to read it over for clarity, organization, and development. Try our brand new “reverse outlining” handout.

## **10. Check Out DLAs Online; a great way to improve your grammar**

DLAs can improve specific areas of your writing. Check out website or the DLA tower for a list of our most popular DLAs.