

## Taboo Words, Constructions, and Forms

(Never use these in formal writing)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thing, things</li> <li>• Stuff</li> <li>• A lot</li> <li>• Okay, ok</li> <li>• Wanna</li> <li>• Gonna</li> <li>• Kid</li> <li>• Guy</li> <li>• Kind of/sort of</li> <li>• Common adjectives - good, bad, happy, sad, mad (use college diction)</li> <li>• Common modifiers - very, extremely, incredibly (chose a precise word)</li> <li>• Could of, would of, should of (use could have, should have)</li> <li>• Contractions (could've = could have, should've = should have)</li> <li>• &amp; instead of and</li> <li>• Text messaging terms: lol = hilarious, 2 = to</li> <li>• First person in academic (formal) writing except personal narratives: I, we, us, our, we</li> <li>• Second person: you</li> <li>• Spell out <b>numbers</b> that can be written in one or two words (three, fifteen, seventy-six, one thousand, twelve billion); use numerals for other <b>numbers</b> (2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>; 584; 1,001; 25,000,000)</li> <li>• Slang (my bad, emo, peeps, rad, cool)</li> <li>• Jargon - specialized language used by a group of like-minded individuals (medical, sports, science, business speak)</li> <li>• Euphemisms - or words that veil meaning (collateral damage, friendly fire)</li> <li>• Colloquialisms or familiar language (y'all, dude)</li> <li>• Slang or informal, newly coined language (bromance, buzz kill, butt hurt)</li> <li>• Biased language – Although she was blonde, Mary was intelligent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First of all = first</li> <li>• The fact that = that</li> <li>• In order to = to</li> <li>• Being that = since</li> <li>• Being and all its forms (is, are, were)</li> <li>• Using “one” when referring to an anonymous person</li> <li>• Personal judgments (I think, I believe, in my opinion)</li> <li>• Vague language (problem, issue, situation)</li> <li>• Passive voice (The review will be performed by Ms. Miller. = Ms. Miller will perform the review.)</li> <li>• Phrasal verbs (“find out” = use single words like “discover”)</li> <li>• Generalizations (everyone, the world, all people)</li> <li>• Relating what something is NOT rather than what it is</li> <li>• “Talks about” when referencing a writer’s statement in a novel</li> <li>• There is/are (There is a woman I know who is insane about her dog = A woman I know is insane about her dog)</li> <li>• Gerunds are verbs created by adding “-ing” and are used with a form of “to be” (Paul is reflecting on the war. = Paul reflects on the war.)</li> <li>• “The author wants to show that” or “The author wants people to know” (assumes)</li> <li>• Do not refer to the reader (“The reader will see that...”)</li> <li>• “What people do not know/realize is...” (assumes)</li> <li>• Rhetorical questions except in introduction or conclusion</li> <li>• Writing “the quote” within the paper</li> </ul> <p><b>Additionally:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you write about fiction, use present tense.</li> <li>• Non-fiction is written in authentic tense (if subject is from past, use past tense; if subject is current, use present tense)</li> <li>• Never critique (“Steinbeck beautifully and accurately portrays the life of disposed migrants.” This is not your job; you are not qualified to judge iconic American literature – simply argue your thesis).</li> <li>• Omit all summary – <b>ARGUE</b> instead</li> </ul>
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE</b> – Your audience is me, your teacher, who has read the works countless times. You do not need to say “Jim, a slave, is set adrift on the vast Mississippi River.” I am well aware Jim is a slave. Nor do you need to relate that “The protagonist in the novel is a boy named Huckleberry Finn, who takes a journey down the river.” Likewise, you should assume I know the name of the protagonist. This type of writing reads as fluff and filler and is a pretty clear indication that you don’t have much to say regarding your argument.</li></ul> |
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