Mrs. Kern’s Writing Do’s and Don’ts

NEVER, EVER, EVER: The DON’Ts of Writing:

1. “In this essay I will...” or “This essay is about...” or “In this paragraph I will...” You shouldn’t have to tell your reader; they should know what your essay is about by reading it!

2. “I” or “me” or “my”—DO NOT REFER TO YOURSELF! The reader doesn’t want to know about you, they want to know about what your essay is about. Any reference to yourself just gets in the way of proving your thesis.

3. “Hello my name is...”—we already know your name!

4. YOU (In any way, shape or form “You may say...You may think...as you can see...Now you know...”). Your reader does not want to be told what to do. Also avoid WE.

5. Don’t ASK QUESTIONS. Your reader does not want to think; you will also weaken your argument.

6. “I am going to tell you later...” or “I’ll explain in the next paragraph...” Then why are you telling me about it now?

7. “I think...” or “Basically, what I am saying...” Of course you think it, it’s your essay!

8. “Like” in any form except “She likes pizza.”

9. Don’t use contractions (They’ll, Don’t, Isn’t, etc). They are less formal than most high school writing should be.

10. Don’t begin a sentence with “And, Because, or Also.”

11. Don’t use slang—this includes crass phrases like “pissed off”, “crap,” and, of course, ANY profanity. (If you question it, Mrs. Kern probably thinks it’s profanity.) This is an essay, not an email.

12. “…but getting back to my topic...” If it doesn’t relate to your topic, then it doesn’t belong in your essay!

13. NEVER use abbreviations. This includes etc.!!!!
ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS: The DOs of Writing

1. Make sure that you have a thesis and that it is the LAST sentence of your introduction paragraph.

2. Make sure that your topic sentences DIRECTLY relate to your thesis. If you are unsure, they are probably not directly related to your thesis.

3. Use EVIDENCE to prove your topic sentences. Evidence can be anything from specific examples to direct quotations from other sources. Remember, the more evidence you have, the better you prove your topic sentences and thesis.

4. Make sure that each paragraph is AT LEAST three sentences long.