

Taboo Words and Forms to Avoid

In high school you must take care to write with academically appropriate language. Therefore, avoid taboo words and conventions. These words not only suck the life out of your work but represent a basic, immature, and unimaginative understanding of language. You as advanced students of English must strive to move beyond these lowly forms and conventions. You are responsible for knowing these words and conventions on all academic writing, including essays, homework packets, and vocabulary sentences.

thing, things

stuff

a lot of

okay, ok

common adjectives (good, bad, happy, sad, mad) choose more precise language

wanna

gonna

kid

guy

kind of/sort of

Nowadays

Common modifiers such as very, extremely, incredibly (choose a precise word)

could of, would of, should of (could have, would have)

& instead of **and**

Contractions (won't = will not)

Text messaging terms: lol = hilarious, 2 = to, 4 = for, GF = death

First person in academic writing except personal narratives: **I, we, us, our, me**

Second person: you

Use of the word Mr. before an author's name

numbers ten and under are spelled out unless part of a date, street numbers or proper names. Numbers over ten are spelled out if they start a sentence.

slang (my bad, emo, fugly, peeps, dawgs, homies, sup, rad)

anything obscene (in direct quotes, use only the first and last letters, replace each missing letter with an asterisk = s**t)

jargon ("technical talk" example: Bilateral probital hematoma (jargon)

for a black eye, or "shiner" (SLANG)

clichés (I got your back 24/7; and I'd go to the moon and back for you)

prove – as it applies to arguing mean and matter (you do the proving)

true or truly – as it applies to the essence of something

The fact that = that

In order to = to

Additionally avoid

Avoid using "one" when referring to an anonymous person – reword the sentence to appear address the people you are actually referencing, like Americans, individuals, women, pioneers, etc.

"Talks about" when referencing a writer's statement in a novel

Being and all its forms and, as much as possible, all its forms

There is (are) (there is a woman I know who is insane about her dog = A woman I know is insane about her dog)

Gerunds are words that take a form of to and add an ing to the verb “ Paul is reflecting on the war” should read “Paul reflects on the war.”

The author wants to show/the author intends (assumes)

Do not refer to the reader (the reader will see that....) elements

Do not refer to the quote (the quote is important because...)

Passive voice. The review will be performed by Ms. Miller = Ms. Miller will perform the review; Ms. Gerber’s food was cheered by all = Everyone cheered Ms. Gerber’s food

Gerber’s food

“What people don’t know/realize is” (assumes)

Rhetorical questions except in intro and conclusion

The author “is able to” – this implies a lack of qualifications.

Generalizations – always be as specific as possible

Syllogistic logic – we aim to prove through explanations and examples

Know your standard heading for class work and the standard heading for MLA. They are different:

MLA Standard Heading	Standard Heading for Gerber Work
place on left side of paper	(place on right side of paper, at the top)
Double space – no more, no less	
Note order and abbreviations	
Joe M. Student	Joe Student
Ms. Gerber	Period 1
English 9 Honors	November 18, 2014
18 Nov. 2014	Ms. Gerber

Additionally:

When you write about fiction, use present tense.

Non-fiction is written in authentic tense

Never critique (“Steinbeck beautifully and accurately portrays the life of dispossessed migrants.” This is not your job nor are you qualified to judge iconic American literature – simply argue your thesis).

Omit all summary – ARGUE instead

Finally: KNOW THY AUDIENCE – 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 a pretty clear indication that you don’t have much to say regarding your argument.

KNOW THY REGISTER – unless specifically stated, assume the register for academic writing is formal – do not adopt a friendly, casual demeanor with your reader, do not invoke second person, and do not **EVER** summon the egregious first person (I, we, us, our). **EVER**.