

## College of Lake County Writing Center

### 10 Things You Can Do to Improve a Written Assignment Before You Turn it in

1. Re-read the **assignment sheet** and/or the **rubric** and ask yourself how well you think you met the assignment criteria in your essay. What could you change in your essay to meet these criteria more effectively?
2. Turn your essay over and ask yourself, “**What am I trying to say in this paper?**” and write down the answer. Then, look at your essay and ask yourself, “**Where do I say this and how do I say it?**”
3. Print out a copy of your essay and use a highlighter to mark the **five (5) most important ideas** in your draft. Then, ask yourself, “**How am I making these five points stand out the reader?**” If you’re not, why not?
4. Create a **functional outline** that describes your draft. For each paragraph, respond to the following questions:
  - ❑ What is the main point of this paragraph?
  - ❑ Why do I say it here?

Use this outline to think about and make changes to the organization of your essay.

5. Let your draft sit for an hour, a day, or longer and come back to it with fresh eyes.
6. Read a printed copy of your essay **out loud** with a pen in your hand and really listen to how it sounds. Make changes based on what your ear tells you.
7. Have a friend read your essay **out loud** while you listen to how it sounds. Make changes based on what your ear tells you.
8. Read your essay **backwards** sentence by sentence to look for problems/mistakes.
9. Run *grammar* and *spell check* on your Microsoft Word document.
10. Do any of the above in **collaboration** with a tutor in the Writing Center.