Writing Guidelines

* Spell check!
* Avoid the second person (“you”) in formal essays
* PEE in your paragraphs
  + Point
  + “Excerpt”/Example
  + Explain
* Read your paper aloud to find awkward and/or wordy sentences
* Make sure each paragraph relates to your thesis or statement of purpose
* Avoid/Eliminate vague words:
  + Very
  + Good
  + Bad
  + Pretty
  + Really
  + Thing
  + Stuff
* Avoid/Eliminate contractions in formal essays
  + E.g. Cannot is stronger than can’t
* Be assertive!
  + ~~I think~~…
  + ~~I believe~~…
* Commas
  + Insert a comma (,) before a conjunction if a complete thought follows:
    - Example: Miss Daigle went to the grocery store, and she bought apples.
  + Insert a comma (,) after an introductory clause:
    - Example: At first, Miss Daigle couldn’t find the produce section.
* Be careful of using extremes:
  + Always
  + Never
  + “I always study in my free time.” OR “I am a conscientious individual who works diligently. I try to complete all my assignments before I visit my friends.”
* Keep your audience in mind
  + If you’re writing a college application essay, do not write your essay as if you were posting information on facebook or myspace.
* Avoid passive voice
  + “Why was the road crossed by the chicken?” OR “Why did the chicken cross the road?”
* Avoid ending sentences with prepositions
* Mind your transitions. Reiterate your thesis and adequately conclude one paragraph before beginning the next.