

# Commonly Used Terms in Essay Writing

## Active/Passive Voice:

**Active:** Subject performs the action

EX: Andrea ate her dinner.

**Passive Voice:** Subject is acted upon by the verb

EX: The dinner was eaten by Andrea

**Analogy:** Comparison of two things in order to explain or clarify

EX: She is as annoying as nails on a chalkboard

**Apply:** To use what you learned in the context of real life or other example.

**Attention grabber:** Appears at the beginning of the introduction. Includes startling information, anecdote, rhetorical questions, or a quote.

**Body paragraphs:** A group of sentences on a particular topic. Body paragraph follows the introduction and the thesis.

**Clarity:** Communicate effectively with intended audience

## Compare/contrast

**Compare:** Looking for similarities between two or more things.

**Contrast:** Looking for differences between two or more things.

**Conclusion:** Last paragraph of an essay. Restates main ideas or these, summarize sub points, and leave reader with positive final impression.

## Edit/Proofread

**Edit:** Generally done after the first draft. Focus on transition, evidence, well organized, content, structure, clarity, etc.

**Proofread:** Final stage of editing. Focus on spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.

## Fragment/Run-on/Comma splice

**Fragment:** Group of words that do not contain an independent clause

EX: Running down the road and into the store

**Run-on:** Two or more independent clauses joined without connecting words or punctuation

EX: I love to go to the movie the popcorn is the best

**Comma splice:** Two or more independent clauses joined by a comma

EX: The students studied together, this helped them do better on the exam

**Freewrite:** Writing down thoughts without worrying about grammar, spelling, content, and other rules.

## Header/Footer:

**Header:** Section that appear in the top margin of an essay. Typically includes page number. Other information dependent on instructor and format.

**Footer:** Section that appears in the bottom margin of an essay. Follow instructions from instructor regarding what is included in the footer.

**Heading:** Located at the top left corner of the page. Includes your name, instructor's name, class, and date. Each appears on a separate line.

**Hook:** Start of an essay. Meant to draw in the reader and make the reader interested in the essay.

EX: interesting facts or statistics, anecdote or story, questions, etc.

**Indent:** Set in from the margin. Usually found at the start of a paragraph or block quote

**Interpret:** Not a summary. Critically analyze aspects of another's creation, writing, etc.

**In text citation:** Allows reader to easily find sources on works cited. Includes author's last name.

May also include year published, page number, or both.

**Introduction:** First paragraph of the essay. Include attention grabber, background information, summary of essay structure, thesis statement, and essay map.

**MLA:** Modern Language Association. Dictates the way an essay is formatted and presented in most English classes.

**Metaphor:** Implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between unrelated things.

EX: Laughter is the best medicine.

**Outline:** Used to organize an essay. Can be alphanumeric, full sentence, or decimal.

**Paraphrase:** Expressing the meaning of what someone else has written using different words.

**Plagiarism:** Using the creative work (writing, speech, etc.) of someone else and claiming it as your own.

**Self-plagiarism:** Using your own work from a previous class without permission.

**Quote:** To copy word for word a portion of writing that you include in your own writing.

**Rhetoric:** Used to persuade or influence an audience.

**Rough draft:** The first version of your writing. Occurs after prewriting and before final essay.

**Simile:** Figure of speech that shows comparison.

EX: The fire fighter was as brave as a lion.

**Style:** The way sentences, paragraphs, and essay is put together.

EX: Wordy, conversational, judgmental, persuasive, etc.

### Summary/analysis

**Summary:** Focus on plot of reading. Retelling the material you read.

**Analysis:** Examine pieces of the essay. Purpose, effect, meaning, etc. How each part contributes to the whole.

**Theme:** Main idea of what is being read. Can be expressed directly or indirectly.

**Thesis:** Makes a claim and tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper.

**Tone:** How the author feels or attitude expressed about the subject or audience.

**Topic sentence:** First sentence in a paragraph that expresses the main idea of that paragraph.

**Unity:** All the sentences in a paragraph are about one top and are unified addressing that topic.

**Voice:** This is what makes your writing sound like you. The personality of the writer.