Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Hopefully helpful) tips to help you become the academic writer you want/need to be: put a star beside the number of the tips that you can improve on, especially based on your returned writing.

1. Don’t say, “On page 21 of *Anthem*….” Rather, put your page number in parentheses at the end of what you are paraphrasing or quoting

Ex: In *Anthem*, Equality and the Golden One are finally able to say “I love you” (98).

1. MLA format stipulates that titles for longer works be italicized (novella, plays, novels, titles of journals, magazines, movies, a title for a book of poems, etc.) Ex. *Anthem*; *Mockingjay*
2. Shorter works, like titles of poems, articles in a magazine or book, etc. are put in quotation marks: Robert Frost’s “Mending Wall” (poem)
3. Rid your work of “I believe”—by the very fact that you are making a claim, one may surmise that you believe what you are saying.
4. Do not underline titles of your papers, make them bold, italicized, larger font, etc. Only capitalize according to protocol (first, last, and important words). The originality and pizazz of your title should draw the reader’s eye, not your font, etc.
5. Watch your pronoun-antecedent agreement, especially with the word “they”—often this is used incorrectly by making it refer to a singular antecedent.

Ex—When someone wants their share of the birthday cake, they take it! (Remember “someone,” “anyone,” “no one,” and many other pronouns that end in “one” are singular; therefore, use “he or she,” “that person,” etc. instead of “they.”)

1. Don’t use “you” in academic writing; rather, use “one,” “a person,” “an individual,” “someone,” etc.
2. Work with one idea per paragraph. Focus on what your main point is, choose the BEST piece (sometimes two) of evidence to support that point, and spend the majority of your time explaining how that evidence matters to your point. Bogging your paragraph down with more than two pieces of textual evidence will begin to take away from YOUR ideas/argument. If you find that you have a lot more evidence that you want to utilize, analyze how that extra evidence adds another layer/dimension/level of support to your argument. If you believe the evidence will strengthen your paper further, then add another paragraph to your paper.
3. After you have mentioned the author’s full name (usually in the introduction or, if working on a single paragraph, then in the topic sentence), continue by only using the author’s last name.
4. Keep your MLA handbook handy—you will never memorize MLA format, nor should you try. Always remember that it’s more important to have the skills to find the answers you seek rather than to have MLA memorized because the format is not only nit-picky but also regularly changed by those weird people who like to sit around and argue about whether it is best to place the period of a sentence inside or outside quotation marks.
5. Remember that direct quote is most often more powerful than paraphrase, but both have their place in your writing when it comes to your evidence. It simply takes time and practice to grow into your “academic voice”—the best way to improve is to be open to feedback and experiment to see how another wording sounds. Remember with both paraphrase and direct quote, however, you use page numbers.
6. When you write about literature, use the present tense. Sometimes this becomes tricky when your text is in the past tense, but practice/ rewording / brackets used with direct quote can always help you figure out how to keep your present tense.

Ex. When Scout realizes that Boo Radley put a blanket over her without her being aware, her “stomach turn[s] to water” (82).