Common Essay Boo-Boos Study your Writer’s Tome

1. **Point of View**-Do not use 1st person when you write formal papers-use 3rd person. (The pronoun “one” can be used instead of “I” or “We,” but ideally, rephrase to avoid a pronoun altogether.)
2. **OREO!**-Stick to the exact OREO formula *(TS, CD, CM, CM repeated thrice with CVs and transitions to help you flow from one idea to another)* until you get at least a score of 7; then you can experiment with adding CDs and CMs and rearranging the order of CDs and CMs. Let’s get the rudiments down first!
3. **Subpar CMs**-Commentary is shallow, obvious, oversimplified, or just a paraphrasing of the evidence-consult, memorize and use the CM Stretchers
4. **Use CVs (Commentary Verbs)** to bridge between CDs and CMs.
5. **Plot summary**-don’t retell the story-select short CDs that best support your thesis, lead into them, quote them, and lead out into analysis which is where you should spend the bulk of your time.
6. **Use transitions** within and between paragraphs.
7. **Opening/Closing**-Remember to use opening and closing strategies, especially on MLA papers where you have more time to develop introduction and conclusion paragraphs.
8. **Pronoun no-no’s**-Do not begin a sentence with demonstrative pronouns *(This, That, These, Those)* or the pronoun “It” **followed by a verb**. Instead, follow pronouns with **specific nouns**. Also, do not begin a sentence with “There is/was” or “There are/were.”
9. **Weak Words**-Do not use the following “weak” generic, 1st grade words unless they are in a direct textual quote: very, thing(s), a lot, stuff, many, cool (as in groovy), sad, nice, bad, good, positive, negative. Also use the word “soul” sparingly! Writers tend to use it with clichéd and cheesy results.
10. **Quote Bombs!** Lead in and lead out of EMBEDDED quotes.
11. **Passive v. Active Voice**-Try to stay in active voice to keep writing energetic and strong. Avoid starting the essay with “In the novel (insert title) written by (insert author), …
12. **Titles**-Skip titles on timed AP essays, put a good title on your MLA essays.
13. **Titles and quotes**-Underline or *italicize* titles of novels and plays; put quotation marks around poems
14. **Subpar Sytax**-Clunky, odd, wordy, ambiguous, redundant and/or awkward wording
15. **No Rah! Rah!** Don’t “cheerlead” the author or the work, using words like “universal masterpiece” or “fabulous,” or “best author in the universe!”
16. **Slang and Cliché**-NO.