

Sample 1:

A paper without thought is useless. We've all tried to desperately cram in as much meaning as possible within a crunched deadline, (dramatically more so during a timed writing) but to no avail. It comes out sounding forced, cliché, and like you are just trying a bit too hard. Writing thoughtfully and insightfully is key, as it enhances all aspects of your writing and actually makes you sound intelligent. How you write is just as important as what you are writing about. A beautifully-written essay on a dull subject, such as the intricacies of knitting technique, is just as engaging as a poorly-written piece on a thought-provoking idea. Choose topics that are interesting for you to write about, and beautiful writing will flow freely. I learned this the hard way during many timed writings, forcing myself to come up with a compelling argument of the top of my head and trying harder still to write something well about it. I had to hone my quick-thinking ability, as well as comprehending and remembering key points for analysis. That is also why a strong thesis or claim should be the priority in everything you write, without them you are left with weak evidence and a poor analysis by default, which leaves you with nothing to work with. Getting stuck in this rut is definitely frustrating, but being able to escape from it and enhance your quotes, analyses, and warrants changes your entire paper for the better. Sometimes this will mean rewriting, revising, and rewriting again. But the feeling of finally getting something down on paper that you are proud of is worth it. At the end of the day, do not write something just for the sake of points or turn something in that does not have any meaning. Writing is still an art form, one that should be respected by commanding language in a way that is insightful and meaningful.

No one becomes a fantastic writer overnight. Sure, writers such as Shakespeare and Hemingway had inherent talent, but they learned how to hone and practice their skills just as

anyone does. I have learned that as a writer not all of these skills come easily, and that not all styles of writing will be enjoyable to write. I learned rather quickly that I enjoy creative writing much more than analytical, and it shows in the quality of the two. Accepting this, I simply recognized that I would have to spend more time focusing on my weakness, despite it being annoying. I have come to learn from this class that writing is a god with many faces. Each "face" represents a different style or type of writing; all different, all equally powerful, and all adding up to a greater whole. Regardless of language or cultural barriers, this many-faced god allows thousands of people to unite, creating a collective and universal being, sharing ideas and emotions across the world. This many-faced god is more powerful and omniscient than any singular human could ever hope to be.

Sample 2:

Throughout this year with Ms. Wilkie, there are 5 key tips that I have learned to be helpful in succeeding in her class or any other writing course.

- Review the expectations of the piece, and if a rubric is given, go over that as well. Checking the expectations/requirements will ensure that you know what her goal of the piece will be. This an important step because it will make you a better writer in the long run no matter what the topic is. Working off of requirements, rubrics, and examples will ensure that your paper will best exemplify what the piece requires.
- Write down or get out all of the ideas for claims or theses in some way, shape, or form. Even if the jumble of ideas doesn't make sense at first, it is a lot easier to have all ideas out before you start writing. This will make it so that you don't have to think about coming up with ideas after you've found your evidence or while you write. Once everything is written out, I also find it very helpful to highlight your strongest ideas to make a concise thesis and overall paper, removing meaningless points that would make your paper redundant.
- Next, you should focus on organization. Reordering ideas so they fit and merge together in the paper can make your writing a lot better than a list of random ideas. Organizing ideas in a comprehensive order will also ensure that the audience will comprehend what you wanted them to understand in your paper. I find it helpful to use Google Docs to reorder sections without actually deleting them until I find a way where each idea can build onto the other.
- After finding ideas, you need to find the strongest evidence to support it. Without evidence to support your ideas, they lose meaning and strength, and the audience will not understand as well. I found as much evidence as I could for each prompt;

after collecting all evidence for each, I decided to write my essay on the topic that had strongest evidence so that my paper could be the best possible.

- Lastly, always overestimate how long assignments will take you. Activities that seem very easy and straightforward may not always be. Now I'm not saying that you should think that a worksheet or a normal essay reflection will take four hours but, I do suggest that you make sure that you put aside adequate time for your English class. The hard work will pay off in the long run and the harder you work on it, the prouder of your work you will feel at the end when you turn in an assignment.