

# Almeida's Annoyances

Academic writing is an art form. The manner in which we speak to express ideas is very different from how we express those ideas in writing. Academic writing is the primary method through which intellectuals (like yourselves) communicate ideas. **The following is a list of things you will never do in your writing:**

1. Use present tense: This is a history class. Everyone you write about is probably dead.

*Lincoln ~~does~~ not want a civil war. **Lincoln did not want a civil war.***

2. Use first person or refer to the reader: Since you are the one writing the paper, you do not need to say "I believe." Do not refer to yourself at all. Do not refer to the reader by using the word "you" or "your" or anything of the like.

*~~I believe~~ **World War II was the most destructive war in the history of warfare.***

3. Use contractions: Don't, Can't, Wouldn't, You're (there is two things wrong this one), etc.

4. Overstate things: Mr. Almeida is the best teacher in the world. Granted, that is an accurate statement but you better have evidence to back that up.

*If Lincoln never freed the slaves then slavery may still exist today. **Really? REALLY?***

5. Drop in quotes: Quotes are meant to support your ideas therefore they should be used in a manner that proves your point. Think of the paragraph as a hamburger. The quote is simply the ketchup. In the grand scheme of things it is insignificant and yet no hamburger is complete without ketchup. Your idea is the meat patty. Do not feed me ketchup with a side of meat.

Additionally, using a quote from some historical figure but not telling the reader anything about that person indicates you have not done your research.

*Lincoln was the best war time president. John McSprite said: "Lincoln's determination to end the war and his clear vision of what the country should look like post-Civil War guaranteed that he would go down in history as one of America's greatest war time presidents." Who is John McSprite? **Why should I, as the reader, believe anything he says about Lincoln? Every time you write like this a puppy dies. Stop killing the puppies.***

6. Use ten words when two would do: Writing, like speeches, should be short and to the point. You are not going to impress teachers by writing overly complex sentences. Writing should be straightforward.

*You can instantly and dramatically improve your blog writing skills and immediately explode your profits and skyrocket your online success by following the spectacular, simple, and practical tips found in this groundbreaking new free blog post.<sup>1</sup>*

7. Leave ideas underdeveloped: Often time students express an interesting idea but then never fully flesh it out.

*You must write clear paragraphs when you are writing an academic essay. Simple as that.<sup>2</sup> **This is not a movie in which you are going to leave a cliffhanger so people will come back to watch the sequels. Use examples, statistics, quotes (sparingly), etc., to fully develop your idea.***

8. Hand in your paper without proofreading it: There is absolutely no reason why any research paper should have grammatical mistakes. Take pride in your work. Do not be lazy. Read your paper out loud before turning it in.

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<sup>1</sup> Example taken from <http://www.copyblogger.com/brilliant-writing-tips/>

<sup>2</sup> Example taken from <http://mycourse.solent.ac.uk/mod/book/tool/print/index.php?id=2736&chapterid=3305>

“QUOTED MATERIAL...

...NEVER STANDS ALONE.” – (as sentences unto themselves, quoted material, distracts the reader as opposed to enhancing their understanding.)

...ALWAYS SUPPORTS.” – (quoted material reinforces and strengthens factual claims or statements that have been or will be made.)

THEREFORE.....

“WORK ON...

...ATTRIBUTING QUOTATIONS.”

...ALTERING QUOTATIONS.”

...MANIPULATING QUOTATIONS.”

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## **ACCEPTABLE TECHNIQUES FOR INCORPORATING QUOTES**

The following quote will be used in all three cases below:

*“...delight in each other, make other’s conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community at the work, as members of the same body.”*

*- John Winthrop to his fellow Puritan Separatists aboard the Arbella*

**CASE #1: ATTRIBUTING Quoted Material:**

**\*\*\*\*\* Always identify the speaker or source of the quoted material.\*\*\*\*\***

- 1) Winthrop was aware of the tremendous challenge that lay ahead for him and his fellow Puritan colonists. Survival was only possible if they pooled their resources together and worked as a tightly-knit, Christian community. **He exhorted them to**, *“delight in each other, make other’s conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community at the work, as members of the same body.”*

**CASE #2: ALTERING Quoted Material:**

**\*\*\*\*\* *Alter quotations to fit tense, gender, subject-verb agreement, etc.* \*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\* *Use brackets [ ] to indicate that you have altered the original word(s).* \*\*\*\*\***

- 1) Winthrop was aware of the tremendous challenge that lay ahead for him and his fellow Puritan colonists. Survival was only possible if they pooled their resources together and ***“delight[ed] in each other, [made] other’s conditions [their] own; rejoic[ed] together, mourn[ed] together, labor[ed] and suffer[ed] together, always having before [their] eyes [their] commission and community at the work, as members of the same body.”***

**CASE #3: MANIPULATING Quoted Material:**

**\*\*\*\*\* *Sometimes, only a part of the quotation is needed to make your point.* \*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\* *Often, using only a part of the quote, makes for more clear, interesting writing.* \*\*\*\*\***

- 1) Winthrop was aware of the tremendous challenge that lay ahead for him and his fellow Puritan colonists. Survival was only possible if they pooled their resources together and worked as a tightly-knit, Christian community. He exhorted them to, ***“delight in each other,”*** as well as, ***“labor and suffer together,”*** convinced that shared celebrating and suffering would forge a resilient and resourceful citizenry.