**Tips for Successful Writing: Errors in Short Writing Assignments**

In some of your classes, you may have to complete reflection essays, journal entries, answers to discussion questions online, lab reports, or short writing assignments that do not require research. When you complete these assignments, you will need to follow the rules of writing in an academic environment in addition to your professor’s guidelines. While these assignments may not seem less important than longer assignments, they are an important part of your learning process and can help you to become a better writing. Applying skills you learned in writing papers in your English composition classes will help you to practice writing and to make a higher grade.

Here are some tips for completing short writing assignments:

1. Approach short writing assignments just as you would any other writing assignment. Write clearly and concisely so that your assignment meets the requirements for the assignment and is well written.
2. First, read the assignment directions carefully and make sure that you understand them. Look for keywords or concepts that will help you to understand what is being asked of you and how to express your thoughts on the topic.
3. Consider doing a little pre-writing. Pre-writing is valuable for all kinds of writing no matter the length. List everything you can think of about the topic you are being asked to write about. Then determine what you should include in the assignment.
4. Write clearly. Make sure that your sentences are easy to read and adequately meet the assignment requirements.
5. Vary sentence structure. Don’t write all long sentences or all short sentences. Use a mixture of short, medium, and long sentences. Don’t try to say too much in one sentence.
6. Be concise. Avoid wordy phrases that add nothing to the meaning of your sentence. Here are two resources that you can use to identify and replace wordy phrases: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/index.html>

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/conciseness/eliminating_words.html>

1. Revise the assignment, even if it is just a paragraph or two. Reading over what you have just read with an eye toward making sure your assignment is well written and fulfills the assignment requirements can lead to a higher grade.