

Basics of Good Writing



*Two Locations: In the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library, First Floor
and Madison 109*

Tel: 757-823-2271

Email: writingcenter@nsu.edu Website: nsu.edu/writing-center

INTRODUCTION

In this workshop, participants will review the qualities of good writing.



ESSAY TYPES



Expository



Argumentative



Analytical

ESSAY TYPES



Expository

Teaches about or illuminates
a point

Hate crimes have increased three years in a row, according to the FBI.

ESSAY TYPES



Argumentative

Makes a claim, supports an opinion, or attempts to persuade an audience

Without the steady hand and specific decisions of Barack Obama, America would never have recovered from the hole it entered in the early 2000's.

ESSAY TYPES



Analytical

Breaks down something to better examine and understand it

The call-out flyer for NSU's cheerleading team uses a mixture of dynamic imagery and tantalizing promises to create interest in potential, new members.

What does my instructor want?

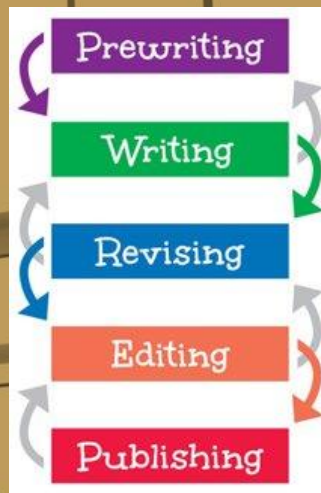
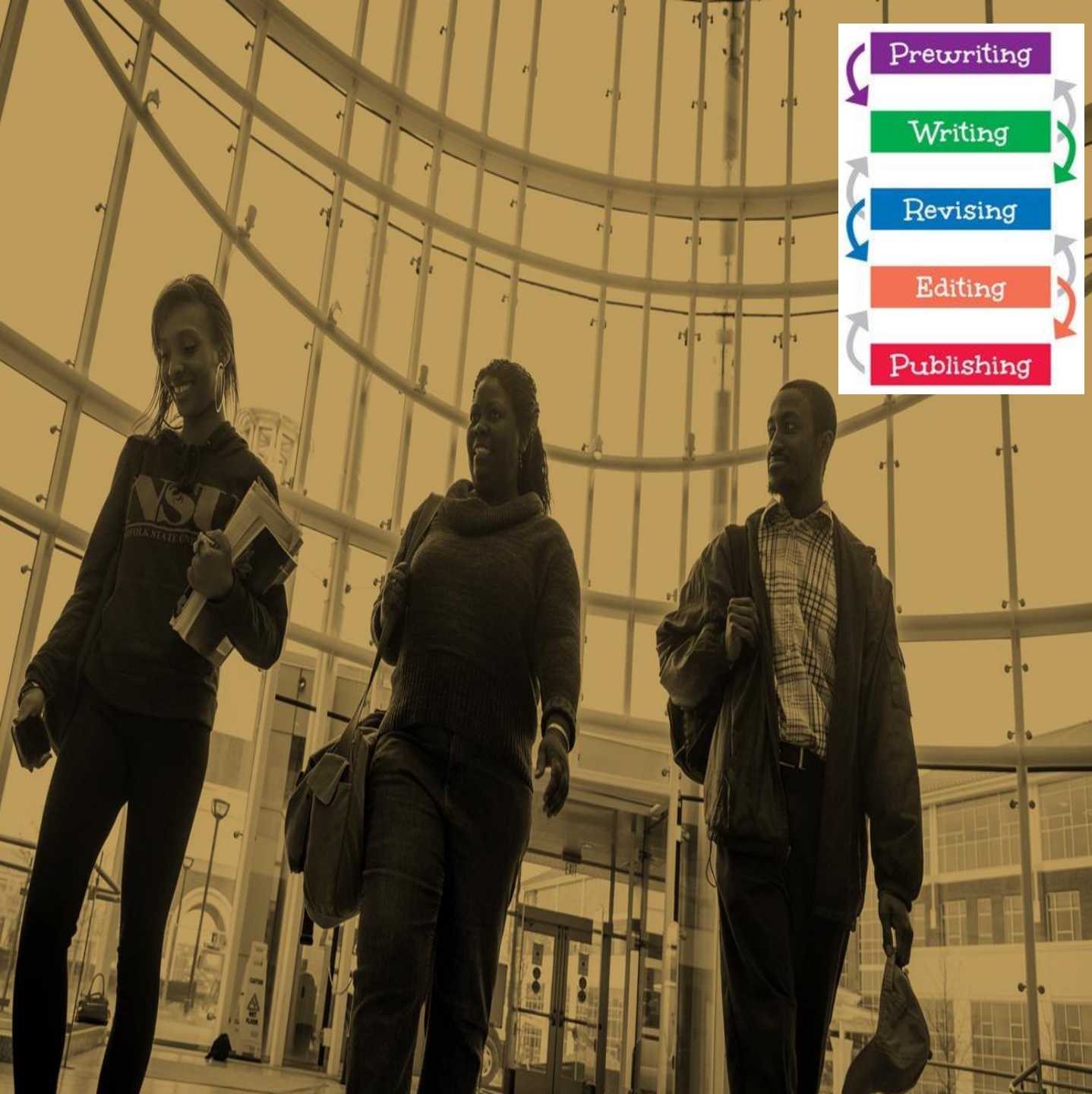
Know what your instructor wants, especially when formatting an essay.

Ask instructor about font, font size, paragraph indentation, etc.

Which documentation style should the essay utilize? MLA, APA, ASA, etc.

Can I use “I” in this essay?

When in doubt, ask your instructor in order to avoid losing points.



Standard Writing Process

1. Brainstorm the topic or for a topic
Reading, listing, webbing, prewriting
2. Develop a thesis (*a working thesis*)
3. Create an outline
4. Begin drafting
Introduction, 3 body paragraphs, conclusion
5. Revising and Editing
Add, change, or delete
6. Another draft w/changes
Read aloud to self or another
Make needed changes
7. Proofreading
8. Publishing
(Turning in to your professor)

Essay Planning Outline Worksheet

Introduction: Gives your reader context of the subject/topic you are writing about and then discusses the purpose of your writing (the point or issue you will ultimately be making). Your thesis statement should be located at the end of this paragraph and describe what your overall purpose or argument will be.

Briefly discuss how you will introduce your subject/topic.

What is your thesis statement?

Body paragraphs: Include *at least* three to four body paragraphs. Each paragraph should only discuss only one topic/issue/idea that connects to your thesis statement. Do not begin or end a paragraph with a quote.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph one and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph two and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph three and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph four and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Conclusion: Your conclusion needs to state why what you said is significant. What should the reader take away from your discussion?

Briefly describe what your conclusion will state.

Gives *context* of the subject/topic and discusses the *purpose* of your writing.

For each *body paragraph*, briefly describe what you will discuss and how it connects to your *thesis*.

Needs to state *why* what you said is *significant* and what the audience can take away from your essay.

Professor De León-Monjiván

Essay Planning Outline Worksheet

Introduction: Gives your reader context of the subject/topic you are writing about and then discusses the purpose of your writing (the point or issue you will ultimately be making). Your thesis statement should be located at the end of this paragraph and describe what your overall purpose or argument will be.

Briefly discuss how you will introduce your subject/topic.

What is your thesis statement?

Body paragraphs: Include *at least* three to four body paragraphs. Each paragraph should only discuss only one topic/issue/idea that connects to your thesis statement. Do not begin or end a paragraph with a quote.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph one and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph two and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph three and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Briefly describe what you will discuss in body paragraph four and how it connects to your thesis statement.

Conclusion: Your conclusion needs to state why what you said is significant. What should the reader take away from your discussion?

Briefly describe what your conclusion will state.

Gives *context* of the subject/topic and discusses the *purpose* of your writing.

For each *body paragraph*, briefly describe what you will discuss and how it connects to your *thesis*.

Needs to state *why* what you said is *significant* and what the audience can take away from your essay.

Typical Outline

I. Introduction

Thesis: *High Performance Teams*

II. Talent, skills, and work ethic

1. supporting detail
2. supporting detail

III. Power and empowerment

1. supporting detail
2. supporting detail

IV. Communication

1. supporting detail
2. supporting detail

V. Conclusion

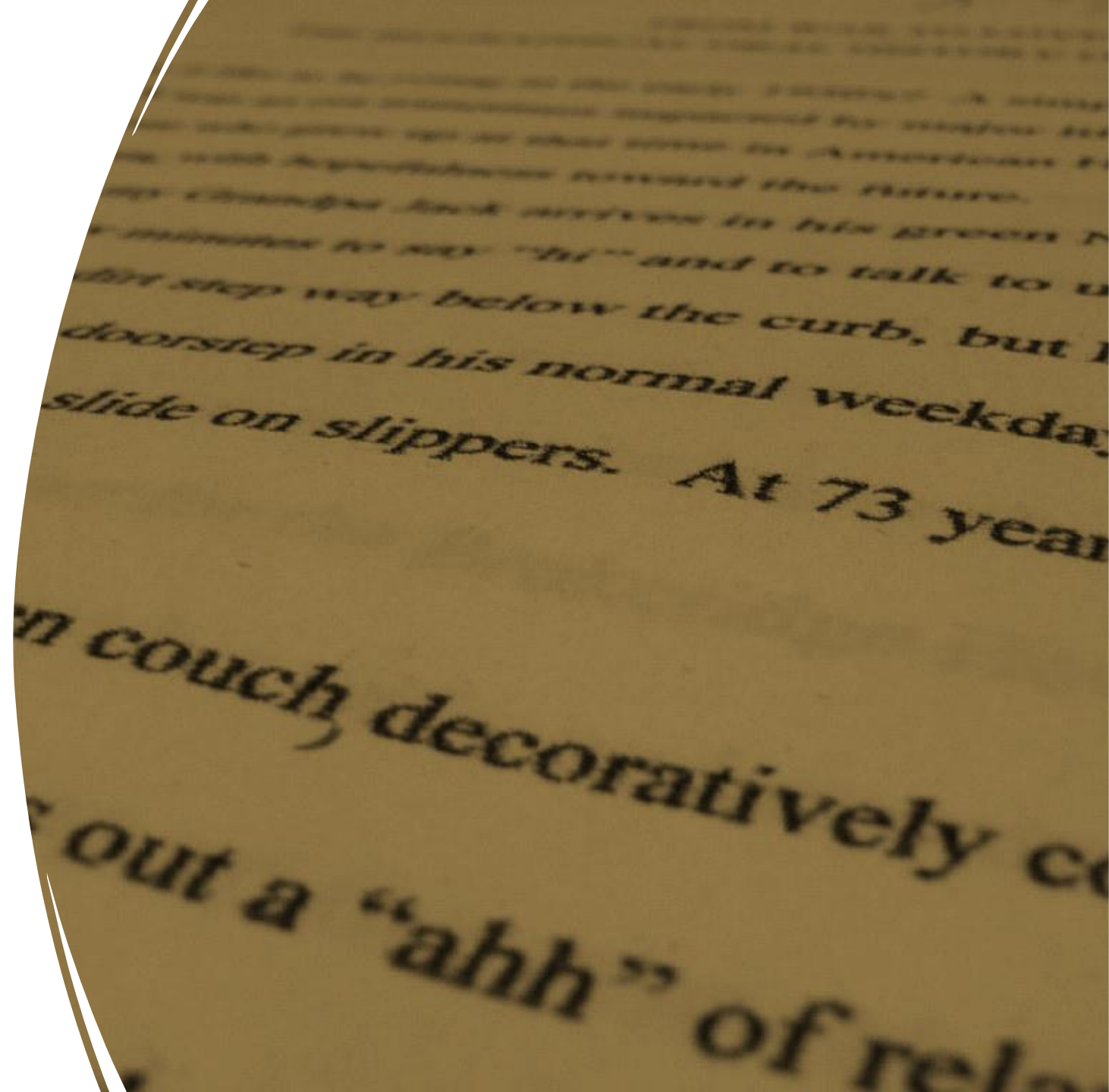
1. restate thesis
2. summary
3. your reflection about topic

The Basis of a Good Essay

A strong thesis

Adherence to all
grammar and
punctuation rules

Revision





Criteria for a Strong Thesis

- Provable; debatable; arguable
- Limited to 1-2 sentences; best to use a complex sentence structure
- Unambiguous word choice
- Narrow in scope
- Supportable with facts and evidence
- Demonstrates what's at stake-- ("so what?")



Weak Thesis:

Technology benefits education in positive ways.

Stronger Thesis:

Despite what critics say about the negative impact of computer usage in young children, computers allow fourth graders an early advantage in technological and scientific education.

Note that the stronger thesis explains *how* technology benefits education and *why* it matters.

What to look for as you reread your essay?

1 Look for

Consider your word choice and change any words that don't say what you mean.

2 Look for

Capitalize all of the first person "I."

3 Look for

Check for mistakes with homonyms:

its/it's

their/there/

they're

to/too/two

..and these...

your/you're

are/our

Than/then

were/where

know/no

5 Look for

Grammar check cannot distinguish which of these homonyms are the correct versions.

Some of the most common errors



Plural or possessive



Sentence fragments



Run-ons – fused sentences and comma splices



Commas in a series

Is it plural or possessive?

She has three dollars^s, but it is her brother's^s money.

Is it plural or possessive?

There are three families at the county fair.

Is it plural or possessive?

Jack's car is in the driveway.

BUT

Moses' mother was Jewish.

Sentence Fragments

All sentences (Independent Clauses) should contain a subject and verb.



NO: While he was driving around the school. He saw his sister.

YES: While he was driving around the school, he saw his sister.



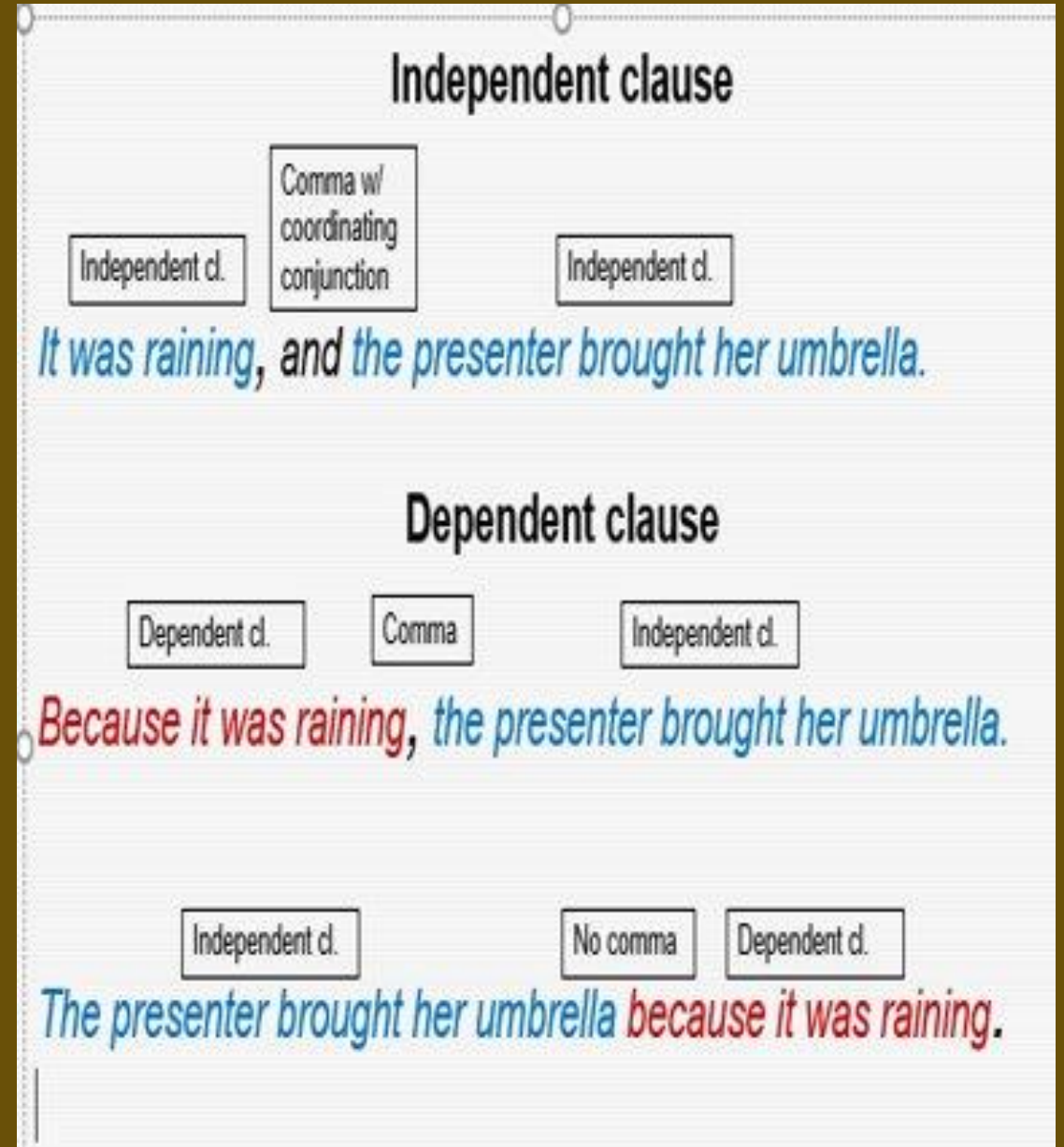
Sentence Structure

Independent clause

A complete sentence.

Independent clauses serve as the main clause because it is complete.

- *The presenter brought her umbrella.*
- *It was raining.*



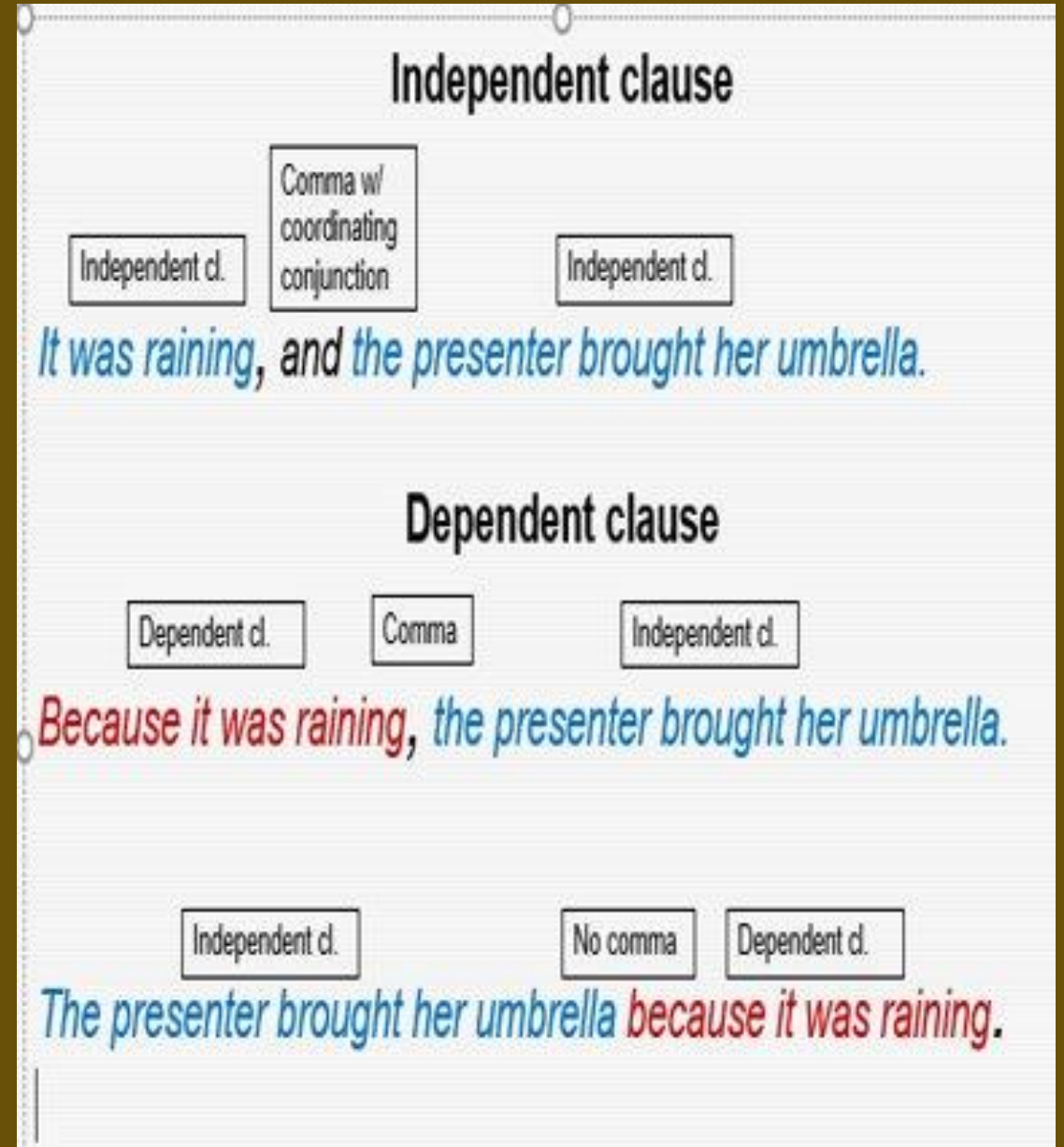
Sentence Structure

Dependent clause

A fragment, phrase, or group of words which are NOT a complete sentence.

They depend on a main or independent clause to be complete.

- *because it was raining*
- *which could have been mistaken for a rose*
- *taking the dog for a walk late at night*



Combining Sentences

	CLAUSE CONNECTOR CHART	
CLAUSE	PUNCTUATION	CLAUSE
Independent clause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period• Semi-colon• Comma with a coordinating conjunction	Independent clause
Independent clause	Conjunction (coordinating or subordinating)	Dependent clause
Dependent clause	Comma	Independent clause

<u>Coordinating conjunctions:</u>	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
<u>Subordinating conjunctions:</u>	after, although, as, before, because, even though, if, since, until, while, when (and more)
<u>Adverbial conjunctions</u>	<p>need a little extra: i.e. however, therefore, thus, nevertheless</p> <p>Ex. She announced that the campus will reopen; however, she added some conditions for students' return.</p>

Fused Sentence/Comma Splice

Sha'Ne lost weight recovering from surgery, her doctor wants her to get back to a healthy weight.

Sha'Ne lost weight recovering from surgery, so her doctor wants her to get back to a healthy weight.

Run-on Sentence

Error: Terrence writes daily he is trying to finish a research paper.

*Terrence writes daily **because** he is trying to finish a research paper.*

OR

*Terrence writes daily. **He** is trying to finish a research paper.*

Commas in a Series

However, another common use is the commas in a series. When there are at least three items in a sentence, you must place commas between each item in the list. A series of 3 phrases also need commas.

John has his backpack, his calculator, and his laptop.

A close-up photograph of a man with dark skin and glasses, wearing a dark sweater over a white collared shirt. He is looking down and writing in a white spiral notebook with a yellow pencil. The background is slightly blurred, showing a light-colored wall.

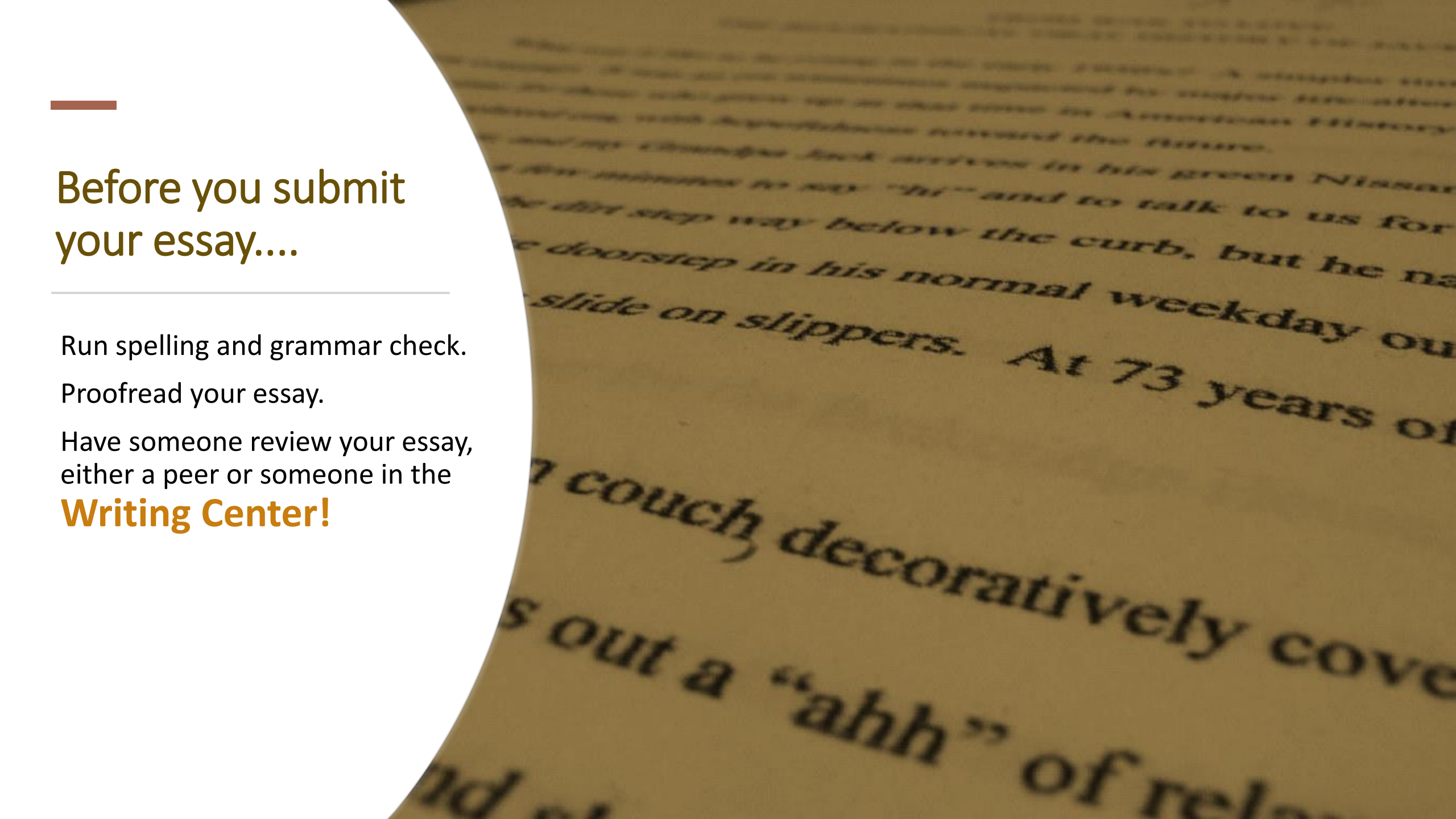
Basic Writing Tips

- Avoid the use of the “I” pronoun and its relatives (we, us, our, my, etc.)
“~~I think~~ the Cosmopolitan magazine exploits women even though it claims to build women’s self-esteem in its articles.”
- Vary sentence structure. Refrain from starting every sentence with “the”, “a”, “there are/is/was/were”, “it is/was”.
- Avoid contractions (“it is” instead of “it’s”) and always use diction (word choice) that is appropriate for academic writing over casual, conversational language.

A close-up photograph of a person with dark skin and glasses, wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt. They are holding a yellow pencil and writing in a white spiral-bound notebook. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window with light-colored curtains.

Basic Writing Tips

- Use transitions liberally. When providing evidence and support to prove your points, “for example”, “an example”, “another instance,” etc., are great for introducing your evidence. A tip sheet is available on our website.
- Never end a paragraph with a quotation or cited information from a source. You must explain how the source information expands your claims/points.



Before you submit your essay....

Run spelling and grammar check.

Proofread your essay.

Have someone review your essay,
either a peer or someone in the
Writing Center!



REVIEW

Writing is NOT a linear process;
it's messy.

Use formal language and
conventions appropriate for
college-level writing

Always proofread and review
your work before submitting.

Basics of Good Writing

Student Workshop
Evaluation



Faculty Workshop
Evaluation



*Two Locations: In the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library, First Floor
and Madison 109*

Tel: 757-823-2271

Email: writingcenter@nsu.edu

Website: nsu.edu/writing-center