STARTING OFF RIGHT
By Susan Atkinson, Writing Tutor

Getting started on a paper can be incredibly frustrating for a student, especially if you have limited time to work on it. In class writing, essay questions on tests, and even those "short answer" responses that require at least three full sentences can make the best writer's palms go sweaty with anxiety. How do you handle an essay under time constraints, or beginning any essay for that matter?

There are a few tips that you can adopt to meet your needs. The first, like any good comp teacher will tell you, is to pick your topic; sometimes this is sneaky called a "thesis" or "purpose statement." Whatever the name, you simply pick what it is you want to write about. Make sure that your topic meets the requirements of the assignment, but make it interesting for you. Have you been assigned to write about the effects of media technology but really love gender studies? Then focus on the effect of smartphones on Asian-American women. Personalize it.

Another good thing to do is to make a road map. Teachers love to call these "outlines." Planning out what you want to say will save you time and stress and help keep you focused on your topic. If times allows, take 5 to 15 minutes and jot down your topic, your main points, and your concluding point that ties them all together before you start. Going back to this road map will give you something to say when you feel lost for words; you can simply move to the next point. It will also help you self-check at the end to make sure that your essay hasn't wandered away from your point and that you have really developed all the details of your supporting points.

The last thing to remember for any piece of writing, timed or not, is to not worry about grammar until the end. Worrying about grammar before you've fleshed out your topic will just kill the entire paper. You will focus so much on having commas in the right places or capitalizing correctly that you will neglect the real substance of your paper, the topic, for the veneer of it, the grammar. And the teacher will still count off because now you have per-fect grammar while saying nothing worth hearing. So do yourself a favor: leave checking the grammar until the end and make sure that you have something worth writing about first.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN "GOOD" AND "WELL"
By Kimberly Dingess, Writing Tutor

Incorrect usage of "good" and "well" is a common grammatical error made in both writing and speaking. Here is how they are supposed to be used:

"Good" is an adjective, meaning it describes a noun (a person, place, or thing). Ex: Sara did a good job on her test.

"Well" is a verb, so you must use well.

As the first round of papers and projects begin to crop up on MC's campus, the Writing Center tutors wish to share a few helpful hints about recurring issues we often address in the Center. The following quotes are about some of our most common topics we cover:

- "Having trouble coming up with a good topic? Start reading. Anything really will work. Start reading and eventually you'll find something interesting. Reading will make you a better writer and help you find some good topics." —Wesley Traylor
- "If you don't know how to organize the main points of your paper, start with an outline or treat the paper like a story to help you get the flow." —Haley Hawsey
- "Often writers struggle with transitions because their organization is skewed. If you organize well, there is almost no need for those transitional words you learned in high school like "since," "therefore," "furthermore," and "however." —Susan Atkinson

WHAT TUTORS ARE READING:
- Greatest Human Strength: Willpower by Roy F. Baumeister
- Theories of Failure by Sandra Beasley
- They Eat Dogs, Don't They by Christopher Buckley
- Erasing Hell by Francis Chan
- The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner
- The White Bone by Barbara Gowd
- Blown for Good: Behind the Iron Curtain of Scientology by Marc Headley
- Not Fifty Shades of Grey by E. L. James
- The Four Loves by C. S. Lewis
- Railsea by China Mieville
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Must see our new space!...This August, the MC Writing Center found that new space on the first floor of the Leland Speed Library! Suddenly, we have a reception desk (and 3 new receptionists), a new couch, multiple tables, and computers. Tables are spread out, and the tutors now have room to work in pairs, or small groups, or writers can even head off and work on their own. While I miss seeing the energetic, excited tutors in Jennings 304 (I swear I can still hear the echoes of Sarah C. yelling at Kyle! J.), I love watching how we’re claiming and shaping the new space: how Micah comes back after his shift to study, how Ariel Jade and Jeremy are talking on the couch between sessions, how Mallory’s friends stop by the reception desk to say hello.

Some special thanks are deserved for the new space: the move to the library would never have been possible without all the work of Lingshan Song, Assistant Director of the writing center, who spent much of her summer planning. And, Kathleen Hutchison and Wanda Mosley, from the Leland Speed Library, have welcomed us into the new space, and we love our collaboration with them.

“New” is the key word at the writing center this fall. Please stop by the writing center this fall and say hello to our four great returning tutors (Kim, Heather, Susan, and Haley), our ten new tutors (Tori, Jeremy, Larry, Kelsey, Ariel Jade, Stephanie, Micah, Frank, Wesley, and Brittney), our three new receptionists (Mallory, Gwen, and Caroline), and our new graduate assistant (Nathaniel). And, of course, come by to see our new space!

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Writing Center Services
Our purpose is to help writers at any stage in the writing process. We confidentially work with writers on a variety of writing issues from brainstorming and pre-writing, to researching and evaluating sources.

We serve two types of writers: walk-ins and scheduled writers. You may drop in for a single visit, make an appointment before you come, or even establish regular appointments.

This year the Writing Center has moved to a bigger and better space in the LRC of the library. And, yes, we still have candy. Come by and see us soon. We look forward to working with you!

Visit the Writing Center in LRC, Leland Speed Library.
MONDAY/WEDNESDAY: 9 AM — 8:30 PM
TUESDAY/THURSDAY: 9 AM — 8 PM
FRIDAY: 9 AM — 3 PM

Make an Appointment
Call 601-925-7289
E-mail writingcenter@mc.edu
Drop by the Writing Center!