

Formal Essay: Things that kill Your Paper, Dude!

No-No Words/Phrases

First- and Second-person pronouns (I, me, we, our, us, you, your)

Vague Pronouns (this, that, these, those, it)

- so, but, like
- thing(s)
- stuff
- good/bad
- obviously
- This shows that ...
- This demonstrates ...
- In conclusion, ...
- In this essay, I will argue ...
- This quote shows ...

Colloquialisms:

(an informal word or phrase that is more common in conversation than in formal speech or writing)

- Gonna → going to
- Kids → children
- Guy → man/gentleman
- Awesome → wonderful/ amazing/ fabulous
- A lot → many/multiple/ numerous
- Mom/Dad → mother/father
- Totally → absolutely
- Dope / tight / dank / cool
- No text-talk: IDK / LOL/i/u/ ...

Wishy-Washy Words

- Kind of
- Sometimes
- Probably
- Could
- Might
- Should
- Maybe
- Ought
- Very
- Seems like
- could of / would of

Clichés

- *Above and beyond*
- *Time flies when you're having fun*
- *No time like the present*
- *Don't let the cat out of the bag*
- *All that and a bag of chips*
- *Clear as a bell*
- *Clean as a whistle*
- *Dumber than a box of rocks*
- *I think she has a screw loose*
- *It's always darkest before dawn*
- *Curiosity killed the cat*
- *Needless to say...*
- *Mark my words...*
- *Nip it in the bud*

...and thousands more. Here's the "long and short of it," if it sounds like something everyone says, it's a cliché—don't use it!