

### ***Do's and Don'ts of Writing***

**Do not** 'announce' your topic. I am going to write about the Civil War. (If your teacher cannot tell what your topic is by reading your paper, you are in serious trouble.)

**Do** begin with a memorable opener. You can begin a paper with a question, a story, a joke a personal experience, an interesting fact or statistic or a clear topic sentence if you are answering constructed response questions in a class or on a standardized test.

**Do not** assume that your teacher or evaluator knows what you mean.

**Do** make your meaning absolutely clear with good, specific examples. Also, organize your ideas and use clear transitions. Your paper should be so clear that if you read it aloud, the listeners would be able to take notes on what you read.

**Do not** try to write your response without thinking about it. The idea that you can "wing" it is a myth that will result in very painful crash landings.

**Do** take some time to plan – whether you use a graphic organizer, outline, list or whatever – what you want to write. Though it may not seem like it, a brief plan will save you time when it comes to actually writing the response. When a contractor constructs a house, he or she does not "wing" it.

**Do not** assume you can write an error-free paper the first time you try. Even on a test, you often have time to edit and/or revise your answers.

**Do** take the time to revise and edit your paper. If you are word-processing, print a hard copy of your work to look over. If you have time, read your paper aloud, or even better, let someone else read your paper aloud.) I do not recommend this strategy when you are taking a test.)