Twelve Things Laura **Does Not Want to Find** in Your Final Paper

1. **Any form of the phrase “this is seen,” “it can be seen,” “the reader can see,” “we see in this example,” “the author shows,” etc.** Rather than telling me what we might metaphorically “see,” just explain what the example you offer “reveals,” “demonstrates,” “suggests,” etc.
2. **Overuse of the word “very” or “really.”** “Very” (or “really”) is not a helpful detail because it suggests an indeterminate quality. If I were to say to you that I am not only excited to grade your essays, but that I am really, very excited, do you have a clear sense of the difference in meaning?
3. **Contractions.** Just don’t.
4. **Imprecise synonyms.** Make sure you know what all of your words mean in your paper. Refrain from using the synonym function to make your paper sound more “complex.” If you can’t tell me what “profligate” means, then don’t use it. In general, double-check that the words you use mean what you think they do.
5. **The word “this,” used as a determiner, NOT followed by a noun—aka, the “naked this.”** If you are not sure what **this** (sentence) means, ask me to explain **this** (concept). You may use “this” as a pronoun (i.e., without a noun following it), but only when you are sure it is clear what the “this” refers to.
6. **Plurals with apostrophes and/or possessions without apostrophes. Its** sometimes difficult to figure out **sentence’s** when **apostrophe’s** show up in the wrong **places**’. (If you did not recognize that the sentence is full of mistakes, please review how to use apostrophes on eClass.)
7. **Spelling mistakes.** Microsoft’s spellcheck might not be perfect, but it is willing to look over your essay for you (for free) even in the middle of the night! Unless your roommate or mom is an awesome speller and wants to read your essay, give spellcheck a go.
8. **Passive Voice – use the “by zombies” test!** [Passive] **Passive voice can be seen (by zombies)** throughout essays, most frequently when **an argument has been written** (**by zombies)** that a writer is unsure about claiming. 🡪 [Active] Passive voice occurs, most frequently, when a writer makes an argument they are unsure about claiming.
9. **Hedges.** It **sometimes seems** like we **might** want to use **some** hedges in our claims, but it **kind of** just diminishes the strength of your argument, **sort of**. Am I right?
10. **The same verb multiple times in the same paragraph.** I know that using the verb “says” is useful, but there are so many verbs in the English language. Try out some of the other options! After all, variety is the spice of life.
11. **Broad sentences that state the obvious and make descriptive statements over specific claims.** *Throughout the centuries racism has plagued American society.* While you may see this as true, can you, as an individual, speak for all of America? Is racism a giant, inert monolith? What does this statement accomplish? Is it fact or opinion? Why should we care? Answers to any of these questions will make your claim more specific. Remember, your claims should not exceed the scope of the text. When I wish upon a star, I wish for NO GENERALIZATIONS!
12. **Improper italics or quotation marks for titles of primary works.** If I see “A Raisin in the Sun” or “*A Raisin in the Sun,*” I will not be held accountable when your paper mysteriously goes missing.

**ENGL 102 (A02): Final Essay Requirements**

**To hand in on Friday, June 7, 2019:**

* **Primary Checklist:**

☐ Final Essay

☐ Works Cited (no separate page required)

☐ First Draft (with peer review marks and comments)

☐ Peer Review Worksheet (the copy your partner completed for you)

☐ Journal #6

* **Formatting Checklist:**

☐ Typed, 12-ptfont (this includes your title, heading, and works cited page)

☐ Double-spaced pages

☐ 1-inch margins

☐ A specific title (but no title page)

☐ Name, Course Number, Instructor’s Name, Submission Date (this information should be listed in the **top left corner** of your first page only; **double-spaced**)

☐ Page numbers in the top right corner of *all pages* (page numbers should only include your last name. Ex: Sydora 2)

☐ Word Count (at the end of your essay, after the conclusion)

☐ Single-sided pages

☐ Pages stapled or paper-clipped together!