Six Things to Improve Your Writing

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Astronomy 1001: Exploring the Universe

1. Use Active Voice. Rewrite all passive verb constructions (was done, would be, is thought) using active verbs. This brightens your writing; the reader will have a better, clearer impression of your subject and exposition.

2. Develop a thesis before you begin writing. For part C of the first essay, for example, the thesis could be as simple as "There is a strong well-coordinated program of impact prevention in the United States today."

3. Develop a logical framework to support your thesis. For part A of the first essay, for example, you could organize your thoughts as follows
   1. Topic/thesis sentence to give overall preview of paragraph
   2. Summary of evidence from craters
   3. Summary of evidence about known impactors
   4. Models of origins and early stages of solar system and why impacts fit into this picture

4. Spend time writing your conclusion! The conclusion offers a last impression to your readers, so it is important to end well. Use an interesting fact or introduce a concept that helps draw the content of your paper together.

5. Remove unnecessary clauses. They obscure your point and chop up the flow of your writing.

6. Read your paper out loud. Then have someone else read your paper out loud. This will allow you to identify awkward phrases or paragraphs. I can not emphasize enough how important this is: if you choose to do only one thing to improve your writing, READ IT OUT LOUD!

University Resources for Writing Help

Student Writing Support
15 Nicholson Hall
9 Appleby Hall