9.0 Tips for success in college
No-one plans to flunk out of college. And yet people—far too many of them—do so. Why is that? Although there is no one simple answer to that question nor is there one simple step that will guarantee success, by adhering to the following basic steps students can greatly increase their chances of graduating.

9.1 Actively attend class
Most people have heard the adage, “Fifty per cent of life is just showing up.” There is a great deal of truth to that saying: success without regular attendance is impossible. Hard and fast rules regarding attendance are difficult to come by, but most professors would agree that students who miss more than three sessions per semester risk failing their class on attendance alone.

However, to “actively attend class” means much more than being physically present. Students should arrive at class well rested, well-prepared and ready to learn. Sit in the first row if at all possible and stow electronic equipment (including cellular telephones) out of sight before class begins.

9.1.1 Be prepared for class
Being prepared for class means having the necessary materials, but it also means keeping up with the syllabus so the student knows what will be covered in that day’s meeting. Homework assignments from previous class meetings should be completed well before class begins and all readings should be completed. Notes from previous sessions should be reviewed before all class meetings.

9.1.2 Be alert
Good students arrive at class early having read their syllabus and knowing what is planned for that day. Students should sit as close to front center as possible and keep their eyes on the professor throughout the class meeting, taking careful notes as needed. The best way to avoid the temptation of distracting devices such as cellphones is to store them out of sight throughout the class meeting.

9.2 Study smarter
Despite its obsequious presence in movies and TV shows about college, the all-night cram session has been proved to be the worst way to study for a test. Instead, educators agree that students should review their notes for just five minutes every night beginning with the first class meeting and continuing all the way until the final exam. That way, they can succeed without the long sleepless night before the exam.

9.3 Take advantage of opportunities
Many unsuccessful academic careers could have been saved if students had just taken advantage of every opportunity they were given. For example, if a professor assigns a major project on October 7th, it is because he or she thinks it will take that students two months to complete the project successfully. Students can—and do—begin the project much later, but they do so at their peril. Another opportunity that students should tacould Begin projects early. Office hours are another great opportunity for students
and should be the first stop for any student who is struggling. Extra credit opportunities, when offered, should be seized upon whether or not the student thinks he or she will “need” the points: you never know. Forming study groups with two to four other like-minded students is also very beneficial.

9.4 Prioritize
Knowing how to prioritize is an important part of developing good academic habits. Knowing due dates, what percentage of final grades assignments are worth, and knowing what deserves painstaking attention and what can be done quickly are valuable tools for the GSC student.

9.5 The Gordon State College Student Success Center
Imagine if the GSC administration gathered a group of talented teachers, administrators, counselors, and students together and told that group to begin working on boosting graduation rates. Imagine if the administration built an attractive, bright and modern space for this group to work in. Imagine if they filled that attractive space with state-of-the-art computers. Imagine if the group began tutoring sessions, holding presentations and in general doing everything that they could think of to help our students. Of course, this place is not imaginary, it is real; it is the Gordon State College Student Success Center.

9.5.1 Location
The Student Success Center is centrally located on campus on the second floor of the Student Center, directly above the GSC bookstore.

9.5.2 Hours of operation
SSC hours can vary on a semester by semester basis, but typically the Center operates under two sets of hours. Tutoring is usually available from around 9AM to around 6PM M-Th. The Center is usually open a bit longer for computer work and for printing. See the SSC staff for this semester’s hours.

9.5.3 Cost
All SSC services—tutoring, skill sessions, faculty presentations, and computer usage are free to Gordon State College students.

9.5.4 SSC computer lab
The SSC features some of Gordon State’s newest, fastest, and most state-of-the-art desktop computers as well as high speed printing. Note: SSC computers are designated for academic use only. Access to social media and other non-academic websites is restricted.

9.5.5 SSC tutoring: what happens
Tutoring in English and math is at the heart of the Student Success Center’s work. Tutoring sessions feature student tutors and run anywhere from five to thirty minutes. Student tutors strictly abide by the principle that the “pen stays in the client’s hand” that is, tutors will help students write for themselves, but the tutors will never write for the
student. Tutoring sessions can focus on any aspect of the writing process: grammar, mechanics, usage, thesis, organization, research, or getting started. Students using the Center’s tutoring services are strongly encouraged to bring their professor’s assignment sheet with them to the tutoring session.

9.5.6 SSC tutoring: what does not happen
Tutors will not write papers, proofread documents or research papers for students. Tutoring at the GSC SSC is an active process. It is not like hiring a private chef to cook for you; it’s like going to cooking school yourself. Moreover, students should make plans to visit the SSC well before their deadline. There is very little tutors can do for a student who has a paper due in an hour.

9.5.7 Benefits of tutoring
Statistics indicated that students who make frequent and regular visits to the SSC pass their Area A classes at a substantially higher rate than those who do not visit the SSC.

9.5.8 Other SSC services: professor-hosted workshops
In addition to its tutoring work, the SSC sponsors frequent professor-hosted workshops on such disparate areas of interest as using Galileo, good study skills, time management and many more

9.5.9 Other SSC services: student-hosted workshops
The Gordon State College Student Success Center also host hands-on participatory workshops on such “meat and potatoes” issues as subject verb agreement, comma use, and MLA form. See the Center for this semester’s schedule.

9.6 Working/writing against the clock: some strategies for timed writing assignments

9.6.1 The importance of defining terms
Just what is meant by “timed writing assignment”? The definition, “a writing project with a deadline” doesn’t really tell the whole story. In fact, in the larger sense, all writing assignments are timed writing assignments—the semester itself is a time limit. For that matter the human life span itself is a deadline (no pun intended); we are allowed “x” number of years to writing something great and no more.

But for our purposes in this book, let us refer to timed writing assignments as academic composition projects where the student writer is limited to ½ hour, hour, or two hour period. Such assignments include college in-class essays, midterm examinations, and final examinations. These assignments provide their own special challenges for the writer.

9.6.2. Step one: forget everything
Well, maybe not everything. But in some ways, in-class timed writing assignments ask the student writer to re-think some of the most dearly-held principles of writing. For example, one thing that many writing teachers—including the authors of this book—strongly encourage is the practice of taking some time, say, twenty-four hours or so,
between the completion of the first draft and the beginning of the revision process. Obviously, that’s not possible in a two-hour timed writing assignment. Use of the Student Success Center tutors is generally not going to be an option either. Depending on the assignment and the time allowed, substantial re-writing might not be possible either.

9.6.3 Timed writing assignments: before, during, and after
The special nature of timed writing assignments requires adjustment to the student-writer's plan of attack. Those adjustments should take place before, during, and after the timed writing assignment has been executed.

9.6.3.1 Adjustments made before the timed writing assignment
When approaching a timed writing assignment, the student writer should ask two questions:
-- 1) “Will I have access to the question before the writing period begins?”
-- 2) “Will I be writing an argumentative essay or an expository essay?”

9.6.3.2 Having access to the question before the writing period
Sometimes the professor will give the students the question a day or two before the in-class writing assignment; sometimes students will not see the question until the timed writing period begins. Being able to see the question in advance is undoubtedly an advantage—students can think carefully about the topic, do a little light research, and pre-write at their own pace. However, in some ways, access to the question in advance puts an onus on the student writer.

Think about it this way: if you have access to the question in advance, so do the other students. The professor is going to evaluate the essays with the idea in mind that the students had access to the question in advance. Therefore, such a professor is apt to hold students to a higher standard than the professor who withheld the examination question until class time. It is important to take advantage of the question and sketch out a few ideas in advance—your classmates (with whom you’re in competition with, after all) are doing it, so you should too.

So, when having access to the question in advance, at the very minimum the student writer should complete a number of activities before the class meets. The student writer should develop a working thesis (complete with subtopics), have two salient examples for every subtopic, and have some idea of what the essay’s conclusion will cover. The professor may (or may not) allow students to bring notes or source material into the examination room; students should also prepare accordingly. Blue books or notebook paper, if needed, should also be procured and set aside along with pens (at least two, blue or black ink) and a dictionary. It is usually a good idea to put this material together in a corner somewhere a two to three days in advance of the exam—the morning of the exam is NOT the time to be searching for an errant ballpoint pen.

9.6.3.3 No access to the question before the writing period
When the student writer is not given access to the examination question in advance, there is still plenty to do. In fact, there’s arguably more work to do when access to the question is withheld. The first thing a student should do in that case is to ask the professor whether or not the professor allows students access to previous semester’s exam questions. Many professors save exam questions (or “prompts” as they are sometimes known) and will allow students access to the prompts—usually in the professor’s office and during regularly scheduled office hours. By examining a number of old prompts, the student-writer will get a strong idea of what to expect when the examination time arrives.

If accessing old prompts is not possible, the student writer should sit down and ask his or herself a series of questions like, “If I were the professor, what would I ask on the final examination?” “What has been important to the professor?” “What has been mentioned more than once during the semester?” “What did the professor say about the subject on the very first day of class?” (Some professors love to “bookend” the semester by referring back to something that was mentioned on the very first day of classes.)

9.6.3.4 Argumentative timed writing essays
After determining whether or not the student writer will have access to the prompt before the writing period begins is to determine whether the essay prompt directs the student to write an argumentative essay or an expository essay. Many worthwhile academic efforts have been torpedoed by argument essays being mistaken for expository essays or expository essays being mistaken for argumentative essays. The difference can sometime be subtle, but it is always present: an argumentative essay seeks to change the mind of one who feels differently; expository essays merely present information in an unbiased may. To use the daily newspaper as a metaphor, an expository piece would be in the “news” section and an argumentative piece would more likely be found in the “opinion” or “editorial” section. It is important to realize that the identical topic can yield two very different essays and a good expository essay is likely to be a very poor argumentative essay. All too often students argue when they are not expected to and fail to argue when they are expected to do so.

An argumentative essay seeks to change the reader’s mind about an issue. Usually an argument needs a claim. The claim is what you want and is often expressed as a sentence that begins with “We should….”. Then use reasons and evidence to convince the reader of the validity of your claim. Reasons should reflect the audience’s values. Evidence, on the other hand, should be sufficient, credible, and accurate. Also: a good argument usually anticipates counter-arguments and refutes them.

As an example, imagine trying to convince a friend that the friend should become a public elementary school teacher. The writer would collect all of the best things about being an elementary school teacher: e.g., it is important work, it is fairly secure, it allows for ample time off, etc.

9.6.3.5 Expository timed writing essays
In an expository essay, the writer is not asked to take a side; in fact, the writer *should not* take a side in the issue at all. The writer should simply gather all relevant information and present it to the reader in an unbiased way so that the reader is capable of making the best possible decision. The writer’s biases, if any, should be hidden so well that the reader should have no idea how the writer feels about the subject. The writer of an expository essay should also take pains to present all aspects of the question –both good and bad. So the writer of an expository essay on being an elementary school teacher would present all the positive aspects of teaching, and also all the negative aspects: e.g., students are often underprepared, parents tend to blame teachers for their students low grades, many schools are under-funded, etc. The writer of an expository essay on teaching would need to present both sides of the issue, not only the advantages to teaching, but the disadvantages as well.
9.7 Sets of Words You Just Might Be Mixing Up

**affect and effect**
We tend to use these words interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing. In most cases *affect* is a **verb**, as in the sentence, “Sad movies affect me deeply.” *Effect* is usually a **noun**, as in the sentence, “The drug has a side effect associated with it.”

**accept and except**
To *accept* is a **verb** and it means to receive or to take. *Except* is a **preposition** meaning “not including.” So, for example, a testy hot dog vendor might say, “I accept [verb with an ‘a’] all US currency; except [preposition with an ‘e’] for big bills, and wheat pennies.”

**allusion and illusion**
To make an *allusion* is to refer back to something, often to a cultural product like a book or a movie. If someone grumbled in an Irish-accent, “you’re a wizard, Harry; and a thumpin’ good one, I’d wager,” that person is make an *allusion* to the *Harry Potter* series. If that same person seems to pull a rabbit out of a hat, he is making an *illusion*.

**bemused and amused**
Although some might think that *bemuse* is similar to *amuse*, the words are actually quite different. Most are comfortable with the definition of *amused*: it means to be entertained or to smile. But to be *bemused* is to be puzzled, or bewildered. Although a student might be *bemused* by a Calculus test, he or she would probably not find such a test amusing.

**breathe and breath**
*Breathe* (with an ‘e’) is a **verb**; *breath* (no e) is a **noun**. So we might say, “Donna breathed [past tense verb] deeply. She took a deep breath [noun].”

**capitol and capital**
The words are both **nouns**, but a *capitol* [with an ‘o’] is a building; a *capital* [with an ‘a’] is a city. A person could write, “Our capitol [the US Capitol building] is in our capital [Washington, DC].”

**complimentary and complementary**
This one is a tiny bit trickier as *complimentary* is an **adjective** with two definitions. It can mean “to give praise,” as in, “Susan liked my new tie; she was quite *complimentary*.” Or, it can mean “to be given free of charge,” as in, “We got *complimentary* tickets to the Motörhead show since my uncle is Lemmy’s podiatrist.” *Complementary* refers to something that works well with something else, as in, “Notice how the bass line is *complementary* to the guitar solo in this song.”

**converse and conversate**
This one is easy: to *converse* means to talk with someone. To *conversate* is a recently made-up word that has no recognized meaning in Standard Academic English. Simply avoid using “*conversate*” and use *converse* in its place.

**e.g., and i.e.**
We can thank English’s Latin roots for this pair of confusing words. *E.g.* means “for example,” and *i.e.*, means, “that is.” A writer could state, “Look at any state in the Mid-Atlantic region; e.g., [for example] Maryland.” Similarly, another writer might state, “I found what I needed to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, i.e., [that is] peanut butter, bread, jelly, and a knife.”

**eminent and imminent**
To be *eminent* is an adjective meaning famous and well-respected. *Imminent* is an adjective meaning about to take place. For example, if the famous astronomer Neil deGrasse Tyson was scheduled to speak at 7:30 PM and it was 7:25 PM, we could say that the talk by the *eminent* astronomer was *imminent*.

**farther and further**
Both words are adverbs, but they are used in different ways. In most cases *farther* refers to distance and *further* refers to time. A person might live “farther down the road,” but he or she might refer to the elementary school years as “further back in time.”

**fewer and less**
To understand the difference *fewer* and *less* the concept of *count nouns* must be understood. Not surprisingly, a *count noun* is a noun that can be counted: concrete things like people, trucks, and Phillips-head screws. *Non-count nouns* are abstract things that cannot be counted: honor, love, fun. With that in mind, *fewer* is used solely for *count nouns* and *less* is used solely for *non-count nouns*.¹

**flaunt and flout**
To *flaunt* is to show something off in an obvious way as to draw attention to it. For example, if an athlete is awarded a championship ring and he constantly waves his hand as to draw attention to the ring, he could be said to be *flaunting* the ring. To *flout* something is to boldly ignore a rule or law. If students light cigarettes right under a blue “No Smoking” sign, then they could be said to be *flouting* Gordon’s no smoking policy.

**imply and infer**
The difference between these two verbs is simple: *implying* is done by the speaker; *inferring* is done by the listener. For example, if one roommate notes, “That’s your third dessert tonight,” the dessert lover could reply, “Are you *implying* I eat too many sweets?” The speaker could then retort, “No, I think you are *inferring* too much from my statement.”

**its and it’s**
*Its* [no apostrophe] is an adjective meaning “belonging or relating to a certain thing.” *It’s* is a *contraction* for “it is.” Therefore, we could state, “It’s [contraction meaning ‘it is’] true that the dog broke *its* [the leg belonging to the dog] leg.”

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¹ That means that the signs at the quick checkout lanes of most grocery stores are, in fact, wrong: they should read “ten items or fewer” since “items” can be counted. Feel free to bring that up the next time you visit the Barnesville Ingles.
lay and lie
Arguably the toughest pair of words to keep straight, correct usage of *lay* and *lie* depends on what verb tense is being used. In the present tense it is important to remember that *lay* is a transitive verb, so it needs an object. Therefore, we would write: I *lay* the book on the desk. *Lie* is an intransitive verb, so it cannot take an object. Therefore, we would write: “I feel woozy; I need to *lie* on the bed.”

As complicated as *lay* and *lie* are in the present tense, unfortunately it gets even more confusing when we move to the past tense. The past tense of *lie* is actually *lay*, so even though “I *lie* in bed” is correct in the present tense, in the past we would have to make it “As I *lay* in bed earlier this morning…” The past tense of lay is *laid*: for example, “When Dr. Venus *laid* down my second draft, I could tell by his smile it was better.

The past participle tense does not make things any easier. The past participle of *lay* is *lain*. One could write, “Crumpet the cat has *lain* in the kitchen’s sunniest spot for over two hours.” The past participle of *lie* is *lay* (just like it is in the past tense) so we would write, “She had *lay* in bed since the accident.”

literally and figuratively
If a writer uses literally, he or she should do a quick double check and ask, “did this actually happen; or am I exaggerating?” This is because literally means actually. If a person states, “When I heard that they broke up my head literally exploded,” that person is either using the word incorrectly or dead. Figuratively means “emblematically” or “metaphorically;” in other words, not literally.

me, myself, and I
As Beyonce taught us, this trio of words all mean the same thing. However, they function in radically different ways in a sentence. *I* is always a subject: in the sentence “I went to the movies.” *Me* is a pronoun and it always forms an object as in “she’s with me.” *Myself* is an objective pronoun and its use is limited to the writer or the speaker referring to his own person as in, “with all the increases in college fees, I do not have enough money to feed and clothe myself.”

principle and principal
Principal is an adjective meaning “most important.” With that in mind it is easy to see how the term became associated with a school’s boss—the principal is the most important educator on a high school campus. Principle with an ‘e’ is a noun meaning

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2 Of course, *lie* can also mean “to tell an untruth,” but let us put that aside for now.

3 Even if you struggle with *lie* and *lay* you are in good company. Grammatically, Eric Clapton’s song “Lay Down Sally” means that he wants someone to pick Sally up and put her down somewhere—probably not what he meant. Similarly, Bob Dylan’s “Lay Lady, Lay” should be “Lie Lady, Lie.”

4 It should be noted that this definition of literally seems to be in the process of changing. A recent version of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary lists a secondary definition of literally as “in effect,” or, “virtually.” However, formal academic English should keep to the original definition for the foreseeable future. In academic writing, it is almost always better to adopt the “old fashioned” approach.
“moral or ethical rule”. Therefore one could have a principal principle—say, treating all with respect and kindness.

**set and sit**

Standard usage of *Set* and *sit*, like *that* and *who*, differentiates between human beings and objects. People *sit* (an **intransitive verb**); objects are *set* (a **transitive verb**). Although you might hear, “I am going to *set* myself down and read the paper,” that construction is actually a non-standard one and should be avoided while writing in Standard Academic English. Since *set* is a **transitive verb**, it has to have an **object**: “I *set* my coffee cup on the table.”

**than and then**

*Than* is a **conjunction** used to show a relationship between two other **nouns** as in the sentence, “Steve is taller than Marty.” *Then* is an **adverb** meaning “at that time” or is used to describe what happened next. For example, “The 1980s were an interesting time; then a portable phone was as big as a shoe box.” *Then* came the 1990s, with less expensive and more powerful cell phones.”

**that and which**

The problem with these two pronouns is not so much their meaning, but when to use them. *That* should be used in independent clauses. *Which* is parenthetical—the sentence could exist just fine without it.

**that and who**

*That* is only used for things; *who* is only used for people. This can be tricky because in informal contexts, we use *that* for people all the time. But in Standard Academic English we should write, “Are you the person *who* (not “*that*”) sits behind me in Western Civilization?”

**their, there, and they’re**

*There* is an adjective meaning, “of or relating to certain people.” We could say, “Atlanta residents love *their* Falcons.” *There* is an **adverb** meaning, “at that location.” If we were standing across the street from the Georgia Dome, we could say, “The Falcons play over *there*.” They’re is a **contraction** of two words: *they* and *are* as in “They’re going to win the NFC South this year.”

**too, to, and two**

*Too* is an adverb meaning “to an excessive degree” as “the music was *too* loud for me.” *To* is a preposition used to indicate direction or location as, “We drove *to* my house.” Two is an adjective representing the second as, “I have *two* part-time jobs.” We can even use all three of them in the same sentence: “By *two* o’clock [the hour after one] in the morning Steve was *too* drunk [that is, excessively drunk] *to* [where? home] drive home.

**your and you’re**
Your is an adjective meaning “of or relating to you.” You’re is a contraction of two words: you and are. We might ask, “Is that your car?” meaning, “is that the car that belongs to you?” Similarly, we might state, “So you’re [meaning you are] a SUV owner.” One way to avoid confusion when using these tricky words is to take the contraction out the equation and think of you’re as you are.
9.8 Paper Space Wasting Words and Phrases that Add Nothing to Your Writing (So You Should Probably Stop Using Them)

Sometimes student writers are so intimidated by minimum length requirements in essays ("Oh my goodness, how am I ever going to think of one thousand words!") that they, perhaps subconsciously, try to “fatten up” their prose by using three words when one will suffice or using phrases that don’t add anything of merit to the writing. Below are some of the most common examples of Paper Wasters from the last couple of years of Gordon State English essays.

“all things considered . . .”
As the name of a National Public Radio news program, “All Things Considered” is just fine. In a student essay, it seems to be just a slightly more long-winded version of “in conclusion . . .,” and could easily be shortened to “in conclusion” or simply eliminated altogether. After all, it should be obvious that the essay has reached its conclusion.

“at this point in time” (or “at the present time,” or “at this moment in time”)
For starters, these phrases are redundant (what is the difference between “at this time” and “at this point in time”?). But even the shorter “at this time” is rarely needed as the reader of a student essay that was composed earlier that semester is not likely to think that the writer is referring to some distant past.

“at the end of the day…”
This phrase is a bit too casual for formal academic writing, but even its more formal cousin, “in conclusion” is usually not needed. The reader should be able to see he or she has reached the conclusion of the essay.

“each and every…”
Since “each” and “every” are synonyms, using “each and every,” rather than “each” or “every” alone is a waste of paper space. Such usage is tantamount to writing “every and every.”

“having said that....”
This is a meaningless transition. Think about it this way: you have just “said” that (or, perhaps, written that); reminding your reader that you have written what you’ve already written is a colossal waste of time and paper space.

“I, personally, . . .”
There is no difference between “I like country music,” and “I, personally, like country music” so “personally” can always be cut.
“in today’s society…”
Readers will assume that the writer is talking about twenty-first century America unless the writer states otherwise. “In today’s society…” does little other than burn precious paper space.

“in my personal opinion”
Opinions are personal. There is no such thing as a “civic opinion” or a “corporate opinion.” Therefore, “personal opinion” is redundant: “in my opinion” works fine.

“it is to be thought…”
A needlessly wordy and passive way of saying, “I think,” “it is to be thought” demonstrates the tortuous things writers are willing to do to avoid the first-person personal pronoun.

“it is what it is”
This tautology has infected our language very quickly within the last few years. Like *like*, or *y’know?* the phrase *it is what it is* really has no meaning and serves no purpose except to fill space. One might respond: of course *it is what it is*; how could it be what it is *not*? It is probably best to leave this phrase out of formal academic writing.

“just sayin’”
Although this space waster is much more common in informal spoken English, it is beginning to infect formal academic writing as well. Like others on this list, it simply restates what should be obvious to a reader and contributes nothing of value to the writing.

“let me begin by saying…”
If the writer begins, does he or she have to inform the reader the essay is beginning? Can the essay just begin?

“on this planet of ours…”
Like many of the paper-wasters on this list, this one is obvious if we think about it from the reader’s perspective. Since there is little or no chance that the reader thinks you are writing about life on Neptune or Pluto, reminding the reader that we are talking about Earth is pointless.

“thanks in advance…”
Written after asking the reader for a favor, “thanks in advance” is not only paper-wasting, but seems to take the ability to say “no” away from the recipient.

“to begin with…” (and its cousin, “in conclusion,”)
Like others on this list, the phrase “to begin with” demonstrates a lack of audience awareness. If a paragraph is on the first page and at the top of a writer’s essay, it’s pretty obvious that it is situated in the beginning. In short, the reader knows the writer is beginning; there is no need to re-inform the reader of that fact. Similarly, the last
paragraph is (or should be) the conclusion and there is often little need to restate the obvious.

“totally”
Oh, Moon Unit Zappa, the troubles that you have caused. The problem with totally—as with many others on this list—is that it does not add anything to the sentence. Consider this: what is the difference between “I totally got an “A” on my American Literature quiz.” And “I got an “A” on my American Literature quiz.” If there is no difference, then the word adds nothing and can be eliminated.

“we, as human beings”
In addition to sounding a little pompous, this is obvious. Yes, we are human beings. We are not muskrats or doggie chew toys or number two pencils with bite marks. But since the reader knows (or at least suspects) that we are human beings, reminding them of the fact is superfluous.

“with all due respect…”
This phrase serves little purpose even when the writer has respect for the person being addressed. But an even bigger problem might be this: it is usually used just before showing a total lack of respect to the reader. Consider the sentence: “With all due respect, Dr. Provolone, you’re an idiot.” In that sentence the writer clearly has NO respect for poor Dr. Provolone; after all, the writer just called him an idiot. If writers wish to demonstrate respect, they can certainly do so. But feigning respect and then immediately showing contempt seems a bit twisted—as well as wasting precious paper space.
9.9 Words or Phrases That You’re Probably Using Incorrectly:

awesome
What You Think it Means: good, great
What it Actually Means: to be struck with awe

could care less
What You Think it Means: you don’t care
What it Actually Means: you do care

bemuse
What You Think it Means: amuse
What it Actually Means: examine doubtingly

irregardless
What You Think it Means: without regard
What it Actually Means: without without regard, so with regard

hoi polloi
What You Think it Means: rich and powerful people
What it Actually Means: common and ordinary people

irony
What You Think it Means: coincidence
What it Actually Means: Irony refers to at least two different things: verbal irony and situational irony. Verbal irony refers to a tension between a word’s dictionary definition and the way it is being used—not unlike sarcasm. Situational irony is when the actual result is drastically different from what is expected.

like
What You Think it Means: “said” or, “I am just filling space while I think of the next thing I wish to say.”
What it Actually Means: “as” or “fond of”

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5 So, for example, French fries might be delicious, but they are not awesome as no one is “awed” by French fries. Think of it this way: people, if they are very lucky, probably have two or three “awesome” experiences in their lives—e.g., meeting the love of their life, childbirth, seeing the Grand Canyon, etc..

6 If you “could care less,” there must be some amount of caring that is already going on, right?

7 Misunderstanding the term ironic has even made it into the pop music charts. The lyrics to Alanis Morissette’s 1995 song, “Ironic” make it clear that the Canadian singer-songwriter has little idea what irony means.

8 Overuse and/or incorrect use of the word like tends to be much more prevalent in spoken English than it is in written English. Still, its use and misuse should be monitored.
literally
What You Think it Means: figuratively
What it Actually Means: that the action in question actually happened\(^9\)

penultimate
What You Think it Means: the last one, the final, the grand finale
What it Actually Means: the second to the last one. So the “penultimate” quarter of a basketball game is the third, not the fourth.

unique
What You Think it Means: kind of special
What it Actually Means: one of a kind\(^{10}\)

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\(^9\) So if a friend states, “I died; I literally \textit{died} when he asked me to the dance,” she has apparently come back from the dead and is a zombie. Activate zombie protocols immediately.

\(^{10}\) One way to remember \textit{unique} is this: you are unique. Those pants you bought at Old Navy are not unique –they made thousands of them.
9.10 Exercises

9.10.1 Exercises for 9.8
*Using what you learned about paper space wasting words from section 9.2, make the appropriate cuts in the paragraph below.*

Let me begin by saying that I, personally, see no reason why we should have to complete an exercise on wordiness for this class at this particular point in time. With all due respect to the textbook authors, each and every assignment in this section is stupid. To begin with, in today’s society writers use words very carefully and never let excess wordiness choke the document that they are working on. We, as human beings, know that words matter and all things considered, you are just making your essay hard to read when you include any and all extras. Having said that, anyone and everyone knows that sometimes essays are too wordy. But, at the end of the day, with all things considered it’s not that big of a problem in my personal opinion.

9.10.2 Exercise for 9.9
*Using what you have learned about these words from section 9.3, place a check mark next to the sentences that use the bold-faced word correctly. Place an “X” by sentences that use the bold-faced word incorrectly.*

1. He said, he was going to break up with me. I said, "I could care less;" you’re a really crummy boyfriend anyway.

2. I’m a junior here at Gordon State, so this is my *penultimate* year.

3. Fig Newtons are very *unique* cookies.

4. I don’t find Louis CK funny at all; I’m just like, dude, what’s up with you? I guess what I’m trying to say is that I don’t find him *amusing*; I just find him *bemusing*.

5. Our senior prank wasn’t *awesome* but our senior trip was: we went to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. All the fish really took my breath away.

6. It was *ironic* to see Dr. King in line at the bank today.

9.10.3 Exercise for 9.7
*Using what you learned about tricky words from section 9.7 circle the word that best completes the sentence for each of the following below.*

1. Hold on, I have too much in my hands; I need to [set/sit] some of this stuff on the counter.

2. A side [affect/effect] of high gas prices is [fewer/less] traffic.
3. There is definitely [fewer/less] traffic these days; you see [fewer/less] cars on the road.

4. [It's/Its] true what you have heard; my cat broke [it's/its] leg

5. Criminology 901 is the class [that/which] I want to take.

6. Dr. Sam Spade is the professor [that/who] teaches Criminology.

7. You don't look so good; you better [lie/lay] down.

8. Charlie sent me this really weird email that left me feeling [bemused/amused], so I went home and watched two hours of Family Guy until I felt [bemused/amused].

9. [Your/You're] asking me to do something that is unethical. I cannot take [your/you're] midterm for you!

9. He only reads books by women [e.g./i.e.], Jane Austen. Also, he only orders appetizers when he eats out [e.g./i.e.], he never orders an entrée or dessert.

11. "Family first" is the one guiding [principal/principle] I try to live by.

12. By saying, “. . . if you can ever manage to put that iPhone down” , he [implied/inferred] that I spent too long texting.

13. She brazenly [ flaunts/flouts] convention by coming to school in a ballet skirt, swim fins, and a football helmet.

14. Dr. Wilcox said she could [accept/except] my paper even though it was a day late. I have it all prepared [accept/except] for the Works Cited page.

15. Katie is standing over [there/they’re/their]. Those people with her? [They’re/their/there] her parents. Yes, that 2015 Honda is [their/they’re/there] car.

16. Georgia’s [capitol/capital] is Atlanta; the [capitol/capital] building has a bright golden dome.

17. Six ounces of Tabasco sauce is way [to/too/two] much for the chili. The recipe says [to/too/two] use no more than [to/too/two] ounces.

18. After having run up all four flights of steps in the IC, I was a little out of [breathe/breath].

19. The moon does not really disappear from the sky during an eclipse; that’s just an [allusion/illusion].
20. Which town is [further/farther] from campus: Thomaston or Griffin?

21. Bill Gates should give some of his money to [me/myself/I]. [Me/Myself/I] think that I would spend it all on [me/myself/I].

22. I am so hungry that I could [literally/figuratively] eat the entire contents of Ingles in one [sitting/setting].

23. You and I need to talk soon. Let’s [converse/conversate] before Chemistry.

24. The test is scheduled for tomorrow; it’s [imminent/ eminent].

25. First there were a lot of books about vampires, [then/than] there were a lot of books about zombies. What’s next?