The “How To” Essay Assignment

50 points

Your job on this assignment is to explain how to do something - do a jump shot, be a sister, get through high school - to someone who may not know much about it.  Pick something that you actually know a lot about--don’t do any research. You should use your understanding of voice and tone as they appear in *Part Time Indian*to guide you as you think and write.

The specifics:

* Your paper should be no more than three pages
* Adopt a voice that will amuse as well as inform us, though you need not try to be humorous if that doesn’t come naturally to you.  You must maintain the same voice throughout the piece.
* Write in second person (actually talk to us; tell us what to do).
* Use concrete details. See *Part Time Indian* for examples
* Read the samples before you begin writing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  **Just** **Begins** | **Approaches** | **Meets** | **Exceeds** |
| **Ideas/Content: the essay:*** Describes how to do a concrete task in a way that actually helps us understand how to do it!
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Organization*** Paragraphs are arranged in the order of the process itself, so that it is easy to follow
* Each paragraph is **unified** around a specific step in the process (a topic sentence)
* Each paragraph contains **specific details** that add to our ability to imagine the process
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Voice*** is natural-sounding
* has a tone that is consistent throughout the paper, whether humorous, wistful, serious etc.
* Is written in second person – addressing the reader
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Word Choice: The Essay uses:*** A level of vocabulary appropriate for the topic; varied and clear word choices; vivid verbs and specific nouns consistently, and adjectives and adverbs sparingly
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Sentence Structure: The essay*** Avoids sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma-splices, uses: openers and closers for variety, and uses a variety of phrases and sentence types
* Uses: the active voice; subject-verb split position for variety; a variety of clauses; deliberately uses passive voice/sentence errors as a rhetorical choice
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Mechanics: the essay*** Punctuates phrases correctly; avoids errors in subject/verb, pronoun/ antecedent agreement and parallelism
* Shows evidence of proofreading
 |  |  |  |  |