Some elements and guidelines of writing to consider:

-**Subject/Verb agreement**: Based on singular/plural constructions. For example: I/you eat, he/she/it eats, we/they eat.

-**Verb Tense**: The proper context (past, present, future, etc.) to present verbs. An example is the use of active/present tense while summarizing an author's argument or story.

-**Use of articles**: Situations where an indefinite article (a/an), a definite article (the), or neither should be used.

-**Use of prepositions**: How to use prepositions, directional or otherwise, to follow verbs. For example, a person can "talk to" someone, or "talk with" someone, but that person cannot "discuss to" or "converse to" someone.

-**The possessive form:** Singular – "My friend's house" Plural – "My friends' house" Consider also that the word "its" is possessive, whereas "it's" is a contraction of "it is."

-**Clarity and Directness:** Placing greater importance upon how clearly one presents his or her content rather than thumbing through a thesaurus for pretty, but potentially confusing diction.

-**Transitioning between paragraphs:** How smoothly the reader is taken from one section to the next through the use of topic sentences and concluding statements.

-**Avoiding run-ons and sentence fragments**: Making sure a sentence has a subject and a predicate.

-**When proofreading, read your writing aloud**: This is a handy tool for writers no matter their level of experience. Speech often exposes anything from typos, to clunky phrasing, to legitimate mistakes.

-**Comma Use**: Avoid comma splices, wherein two independent clauses are separated by a comma. Example: "It is three o'clock in the morning, I am procrastinating yet again." A conjunction ("and," "thus," "therefore," etc.) can remedy this particular example, depending on the desired meaning. Bear in mind, a comma separates an independent clause from a dependent clause (in this case, an introductory clause from an independent clause). Reading aloud can also reveal misused commas when the writer notices an unnatural pause in speech.