***Writing Tips***

***Background Paragraph Writing Tips***

**Basic definition of a background paragraph:**

A background paragraph should contain any pertinent information that the author needs to give their reader so they have enough context to understand the argument or essay they are about to read.

**Placement of background paragraph in essay:**

The background paragraph can be placed in the essay two different ways. First, the author may select to place the background paragraph at the beginning of the essay, after the introductory paragraph. This placement typically would be only place in the essay where the author gives their reader any contextual information.

The second way an author may choose to insert background information into their essay is at the beginning of a section (typically at a new BTS) in the essay. This contextual information will give their reader more detailed information that is linked specifically to the section of the argument or essay. Furthermore, when an author chooses to give their reader contextual information in this style the author will typically need more than one background paragraph.

NOTE\* Either one of the choices listed above are appropriate. However, when an author chooses either format they must consider multiple things. First, the author must consider the length of the essay (if the essay is short stick to one paragraph versus multiple). Second, if the author chooses to write more than one background paragraph make sure that the essay does not turn into a report (versus and argument).

**Information included in a background paragraph**

The information included in the background paragraph should be factual and contain information found in books, journals, or any other important texts researched while preparing develop the author’s argument or essay. **IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU CITE YOUR SOURCES, IN TEXT AND IN YOUR WORKS CITED (or bibliography).** However, when you are including background information it should not be a direct quote. The information in the background paragraph(s) should be paraphrased and put in your own words, and then cited in text.