

# 11 Essay Phrases to

# OUTLAW

## 1 Since the beginning of time...

**Example:** "Since the beginning of time, countries have fought in wars."

**Why It's Outlawed:** These statements are vague, hyperbolic, and extremely difficult to prove.

## 2 My paper is going to be about...

**Example:** "Hi, My name is Bryce and I am going to tell you about cell reproduction."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Just tell us. Don't tell us what you're going to tell us or write how you're going to write about your subject. If using phrases like these help you to get started, great. Just remember to cross them out eventually and get right to the content of your essay.

## 3 It's just my opinion but...

**Example:** "It's just my opinion but I think Teddy Roosevelt was a better president and leader than Franklin Roosevelt."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Own it! The whole point of an essay is to express your point of view. Delete this timid phrase and any others like it.

## 4 Kind of... Sort of...

**Example:** "The War of 1812 was kind of an important turning point in the history of the United States."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Using "kind of" and "sort of" makes you sound unsure of your argument. Was it an important turning point or wasn't it? And sorta isn't a word at all.

## 5 A wise man once said...

**Example:** "Anonymous once said: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Who is this "wise man" you speak of? If you can find the

source, identify it. If you are quoting a commonly used idiom or cliché, chances are you should cross it out and use your own words instead.

## 6 The reason why is because...

**Example:** "Macbeth and Lady Macbeth decide to murder King Duncan. The reason why is because they want Macbeth to become the next king."

**Why It's Outlawed:** This phrase "the reason why is because" is grammatically incorrect and unnecessary. Cross out these four words, "The reason why is," and combine the remaining words with the previous sentence to make one sentence. Then, re-read the sentence. It still makes sense, doesn't it?

## 7 Very

**Example:** "Benjamin Franklin was a very fascinating man."

**Why It's Outlawed:** The word *very* is overused. It often weakens the point you are trying to make. Cross it out!

## 8 Like... like... like

**Example:** "The Supreme Court made like the wrong decision in Bush vs. Gore. Like the course of history was decided by a hanging chad."

**Why It's Outlawed:** If the word *like* appears in your writing and it is not used as a verb ("to like") or as a synonym for "similar to," remove it immediately. Enough said.

## 9 Things... stuff...

**Example:** "There were a lot of things wrong with the way the South viewed slavery."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Most of the time, there's a more specific and accurate word to use to strengthen your argument. In the case of the example, a good writer



would look for a more powerful word or phrase that means "things wrong with" such as faults, errors, or defects.

## 10 I hope you like this essay.

**Example:** "I hoped you liked my essay about why kangaroos are dangerous."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Your conclusion is your last opportunity to persuade your reader. Close the discussion with a final point instead of slinking away.

## 11 LOL, Grt, OMG, WDYT, IDK

**Example:** "The ending of *The Diary of Anne Frank* was so sad OMG."

**Why It's Outlawed:** Text-speak does not belong in a formal essay. Equally important, text abbreviations and acronyms are general and vague. Expressing outrage in writing demands more than an OMG and joy should be represented by more than a smiley face. Unless, of course, you want your teacher to LOL.