**Formal Five**

**1. Avoid contractions:** Contractions are appropriate only for conversational use and for informal writing, **never** for technical or formal writing.

a. Can’t = cannot c. Couldn’t = could not

b. Won’t = will not d. Shouldn’t = should not

2. **No slang, texting lingo, or symbols:** DO NOT write like it is a conversation with a friend, an email, or a text message.

a. & = and d. b/c = because

b. w/ = with e. lol – laugh out loud

c. w/out = without

3. **Do not use unnecessary abbreviations:** Abbreviations serve as shortcuts for long expressions or words. Some abbreviations are appropriate in formal writing while others are not appropriate.

* It is acceptable to use Dr.
* It is acceptable to use educational degree abbreviations (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.)
* Do not abbreviate days of the week; names of countries, states, or cities; do not abbreviate words like Street, Avenue, Road, Drive.
* There are some abbreviations that are universally acceptable, even in formal writing, for instance: “P.M.” or “p.m.” (post meridian), “CST” (Central Standard Time), “TV” (television), or “et.al.” (and others).

Note: There is basically only one main rule governing the usage of acronyms in formal writing: When initially using an acronym that might be unfamiliar to your reader, spell out the meaning, followed by the acronym enclosed in parentheses, after which you can use only the acronym. For example, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is a federal agency that is responsible for [aerospace](http://www.yourdictionary.com/aerospace" \t "_top) research, [aeronautics](http://www.yourdictionary.com/aeronautics" \t "_top), and the civilian space program.

4. **Avoid use of “you” (second person):** The use of “I” in formal writing is debatable. Audience, purpose, and/or task determine the use of “I”.

5. **Introducing or giving credit to text:** The Core requires us to do more writing that is text dependent, so students need to have a formal way to introduce a text, introduce part of a text, or give credit to the text within the document. These types of phrases are called “signal phrases”; they will signal the reader that the ideas or research are not the writer’s own. Example: “ In Emily Dickenson’s poem "I'll Tell You How the Sun Rose", the poet describes the natural phenomena of sunrise and sunset. Example: According to the article “ Did You Really Just Post That Photo?” from *Scholastic Scope*, the author shared that 39% of kids say they have posted something online they later regretted.