**Grammatical Expectations:**

* When writing for Study Breaks,please:
  + Put into quotation marks: album names, movies, newspapers, magazines, TV shows, quotes, song names, book titles and TV episodes.
    - We know this is grammatically “incorrect,” but it streamlines the process and is becoming more common in the digital/print industry.
  + Write “percent” instead of %
  + Avoid demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those, it) when at all possible. Seriously, if you’re using one, go back and change it unless doing so is impossible. They obscure your writing by allowing you to avoid saying exactly what you mean.
    - THIS IS IMPORTANT
  + Avoid using the words “we,” “us” and “our.” Speak of yourself in the third person, if at all. Use “students,” “millennials,” “undergrads” etc.
    - THIS IS IMPORTANT
  + Write “(age)-years old” not “(age)-years-old. (The difference is the omitted second dash.)
  + Do ***not***use the Oxford comma.
    - “I eat apples, oranges and bananas.”
  + Punctuate ***within***quotations.
  + Write in single space 12 pt. Times New Roman.
  + Do **NOT** indent
  + Turn in **all writing** in Word documents.
  + Hyperlink [***anything and everything***](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHg5SJYRHA0)that you reference, including: songs, videos, statistics, interviews, pictures, etc.
    - THIS IS IMPORTANT
  + Include a title and subtitle in all pieces. (It will likely not be used, but gives an idea of what you think the piece is about.)
    - “Living Commando: Why I Haven’t Worn Underwear in 10 Years.”
  + Write your name under the title in the format you see it in on the website:
    - *By John Doe,* American University
  + Write in an informal, non-academic voice.
    - Feel free to end sentences with prepositions, start sentences with conjunctions, cuss, use slang and generally let your hair down stylistically.
  + Rarely—***rarely****—*useellipsis. Use them only in their classically approved form, i.e. to suggest a delay in speech.
    - “And the winner is…”

**Tone and Voice:**

* Above all else, focus on writing intelligently and creatively.
* Do not balk at obscure words, but don’t hesitate to use slang either.
* Humor is always a plus. If you can write in a funny fashion without being ostentatious or trying too hard, by all means do.
* If comedy is not your style, then don’t worry about it and don’t force it. Our best writers are not our best writers because they’re funny.
* Avoid taking yourself too seriously.
* Focus on writing things that you have **not** seen elsewhere.

**Words to Avoid:**

* Generally avoid these words:
  + Truly, very, plethora, acquire, stated, cacophony, now (to equivocate at the beginning of a sentence), unique, entitled (to mean “called”)