Rookie Mistakes to Avoid in Writing

* Book/Movie titles are *Italicized* if typed and Underlined if handwritteni.e. MAJOR works
* Short Story/Song/Chapter/Article titles are put in “quotation marks,” i.e. MINOR works
* The basic MLA citation looks like: (Author page number), e.g. (Dickens 7).
  + N.B. The punctuation comes AFTER the citation. e.g. “Quoted stuff” (McGlynn 1).
  + If the citation isn’t right next to the quote, the punctuation goes INSIDE the quotation marks. e.g. Essays should “quote stuff,” often in the middle of a sentence (McGlynn 1).
* If there is **no known author** or you are citing two works by the **same author**: (Title page number). E.g. (“How I Got an A” 35) or (*The Fault in Our Stars*28).
  + N.B. The title is *italicized* or “quoted” depending on the work (book, article, etc.)
* Write about a book’s plot/characters in **present tense**. E.g. “Harry **is** teased by his cousin Dudley.”
* **DO NOT USE 1ST PERSON PRONOUNS (I, MY).** If you can avoid it, don’t use any personal pronouns (e.g., “**We** all wonder why **our** minds make **us** do the crazy things **we** do”).
  + Do we? Do we literally “all” wonder? Who elected you to speak on behalf of the entire human race?
* COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS
  + **Its:** possessive form of "it"
  + **It’s:** contraction for "it is"
  + **Affect:** affect to influence (verb). E.g. His parents’ disappointment **affect**ed him.
  + **Effect:** effect result (noun). E.g. The **effect** of his parents’ yelling was so large that he started to do all of his homework.
  + **Their:** their possessive form of "they.” E.g. English was **their** least favorite class.
  + **There:** there in that place. E.g. They hated going **there**.
  + **They’re:** they're contraction for "they are.” E.g. **They’re** just biding their time until 2:05 each day.
  + **Then:** then at that time; next. E.g. I’m going to play video games, and **then** I’ll do my homework.
  + **Than:** used in comparisons. E.g. I would rather eat dirt **than** do my homework.
  + **Your:** possessive for "of you"
  + **You’re:** contraction for "you are"
* AGREEMENT (SUBJECT-VERB AND PRONOUN-ANTECEEDENT)
  + Every**one**, Every**body**, Any**body**, Any**one**, No**body**, Some**body**, Some**one** and No **one** are all SINGULAR and require a singular VERB and/or PRONOUN.
  + E.g. “Every**one** feels that ~~they~~ **he or she** ~~are~~ **is** a little lonely sometimes.
  + If it says **body** (which, you should note is singular) or **one** at end of the word, you are talking about a **singular subject**. It is okay to say “they” in conversation, but NOT in writing.
* POSSESSIVES
  + **Subjects NOT ending in “s”:** Add **’s** to the subject. E.g. If it was Sebastian**’s** fault: It was all the boy**’s** fault.
  + **Subjects ending in “s”:** Add **’** to the subject. E.g. If it was Sebastian and Jimmy**’s** fault: It was all the boys**’** fault.