Write a Good Essay—Anytime, Anyplace

A. Diction, Audience
1. Don’t put on airs or write "fancy" stuff.
2. Use the same diction you’d use in normal conversation with an adult.
3. Choose comfortable words--not awkward, pretentious words you are
   not sure of.
4. Avoid trite expressions.
5. Be honest and gracious in thinking about your audience.
6. Use a good word, well-placed.

B. Organization
1. Think before you write. Sketch out an outline in a couple of key words.
   Then go. Place yourself with a watch. Proofread in last 2-3 minutes.
2. State the main idea simple and directly in the first 3 or 4 lines.
3. Give factual supporting statements--two or more.
4. Don't worry about the number of paragraphs (but one long one is
   suspicious).
5. Illustrate your supporting statements with evidence, facts,
   observations, personal experience, etc.
6. "In conclusion" should not be necessary to say: a sense of closing is.
7. Don't open by re-stating the question unless desperate. Put it in your
   own words. Better yet, a short, snappy "grabber"
8. Use transition words at the start of your second ff. paragraphs:
   however, nevertheless, etc.

C. Supporting Your Main Idea
1. History, literature, experience, and observation for support.
2. Review the good books—esp. classics; names of main characters, point
   of the book—use for support.
3. Your experiences are most convincing and persuasive support.
   Embellish your personal observations and experiences.
4. Don't re-tell a story—just use a reminder of the book.

D. Mechanics
1. Neat cross-outs are permissible, make correct word neatly above.
2. Neat handwriting helps readers. Inserts: *-- then * at bottom.
3. Complete statements. Well used semi-colons add a touch of
   sophistication, especially if used in a parallel construction.
4. Go for spelling--read from bottom up. Check to, too, and two.
5. Put in a sentence or two that sparkles. Parallel structure is good.
6. Use "you" or "I"--not "one."