Developing your writing style

Whether it’s for a paper in history class or texting your best friend your writing style says something about who you are. Writing style refers to the choices one makes when composing a written document. These choices can include word choice, punctuation, sentence order and topic. Your “writer’s voice” can reveal much about your personality, background, and interests. Developing and improving your writing style may be a difficult process, but you will reap the rewards by becoming a more effective communicator.

Tips for developing your style:

1. Say what you mean, and mean what you say: don’t use euphemisms, jargon, slang or long complex words.
2. Try to sound like yourself: but don’t write like you would speak in a conversation. Spoken language is different from written language, and your “writer’s voice” should reflect that fact.
3. Avoid using IM or texting language in academic writing: nuf said lol.
4. Be ruthless in your revisions: don’t be afraid to cut huge sections of your paper that don’t fit in with your thesis.
5. Try to select topics that you care about: love and hate are both effective motivators.
6. Invest in a copy of The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. This book has been a mainstay of college composition and literature classes for nearly a century. A definite classic!

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1 Developed by LLCC Learning Lab, Springfield, Illinois.