Writing in French

✓ Make sure you <u>know what the writing assignment is</u> before you begin to write.

✓ For chapter writing assignments, <u>review the vocabulary and grammar</u> of the chapter before beginning to write.

✓ Use the <u>vocabulary list</u> to trigger your ideas and creativity: start with nouns and verbs and build sentences around them.

✓ <u>Do NOT write first in English</u>, then translate into French: this will lead you to use vocabulary and grammatical structures that you are not familiar with and create many errors. Write directly into French. <u>You should NOT be using a dictionary or an on-line translation program</u> to translate from English to French. English and French do not correspond to each other on a word-to-word basis. And there are many idiomatic expressions which, if translated directly into another language, make no sense. For an example of WHY translation doesn't work, visit this site. Every page has numerous examples of someone having used an on-line translation program and/or a dictionary to directly translate from another language into English. Read the description for shampoo and conditioner: do you understand it? Does it make you laugh? This is the result of bad translation.

✓ I will not give you assignments that cannot be done using the grammar and vocabulary you should know. While you may need to check spelling, verb forms and/or genders in your book, and may even use a dictionary to look up a word or two you'd like to add to your text (and to your personal vocabulary list), stick with what you know (if you write directly in French, this should be no problem). Be aware that your texts will be very simple at first, and if you were to translate them into English, they would seem like something a young child would write. As you continue your studies, and learn more vocabulary and grammar structures, your writings will 'grow up.'

✓ <u>Take notes</u>, then <u>write a first draft</u> (this should be done several days before the final assignment is due).

✓ <u>Check your draft</u> for spelling, agreements of verbs and adjectives and overall structure (do the ideas flow well?). For checking grammar and sentence structure, it often works best to start with the final sentence and work your way backwards. In that way, you are less apt to read what you THOUGHT you wrote (your brain filling in the correct information) and more apt to really see what you wrote. For checking overall flow, of course you will read through from beginning to end.

✓ Check to see that you are using <u>parallel structures</u>. That is, using the same types of words (ie: verbs or nouns) in the same structure. For example, "I like to hike, read books, and music" is incorrect because it combines verbs ('to hike,' '(to) read") with a nouns ("music"). Instead, turn all into verbs ("I like to hike, read books, and listen to music") or nouns ("I like hiking, reading and music").

✓ Write a final copy, making sure to <u>double space</u>. Write <u>legibly</u> or type. <u>Recheck</u> your spelling and agreements of verbs and adjectives.

✓ <u>Check for repetition</u> of words. Try to think of a synonym or another way to say the same thing, especially as your study of French progresses and you develop a larger vocabulary. Also check for repetitious structure. Are all your sentences starting the same way (subject-verb)? If so, vary them: use transition expressions, or change the order of the sentence (for example: Instead of "Je sors avec mes amis le weekend," you could write, "Le weekend, je sors avec mes amis."

✓ When you get back your assignment, you may have the opportunity to correct it and <u>rewrite</u> it for additional credit. DO IT! And after you get back the final copy, pay attention to any remaining errors. Make sure you understand what was wrong and how to correct it.

✓ A note on plagiarism: plagiarism is taking the words and/or ideas of another and presenting them as your own. Anytime you use another person's words or original ideas, you must cite them. Another type of plagiarism taking someone else's text in English and translating it into French. Don't do it!