**The Idiot’s Guide to Writing Commentaries (Both AP and IB)**

Process:

1. Dissect the prompt; what do you have to prove in your essay?
2. Colormark everything, especially what the prompt suggests and patterns and motifs
3. Write an outline (very brief if AP, just working thesis, perfunctory assertions and 3 pieces of support/body paragraph)
4. Write:

* Intro: 2-4 sentences usually (2 is OK for AP, consider leaving a space and writing the introduction last)
  + Hook + Claim (Thesis) + Title and author
    - Sophisticated Hook: Toni Morrison’s *Sula \_\_\_\_\_\_\_*[insert muscular verb here]
      * Other options:
        + Rhetorical question (never have more than one)
        + Dramatic statement
        + Journalistic hook
    - Thesis-most important thing, have something to say, make a claim
      * The author uses x to show y
      * Replace *uses* and *shows* with purpose words
* Body: 2-4 paragraphs
  + Assertion: Makes a claim about a specific literary strategy and how it contributes to the thesis.
    - Sophisticated transition-take key word from thesis in first assertion
  + Order?
    - Strongest argument first, most challenging last.
  + Ideal Inference: 1 sentence if possible, 2 if you need to explain more, 3 is just you blabbing on about nothing
    - Lit. Device + Quote + Purpose Word+ Function/Effect/Purpose (applied from notes)= masterful supporting sentence.
      * Doesn’t have to be in any specific order
    - Repeat 3+ times until assertion is sufficiently proven
  + Concluding sentence: connect the purpose of this paragraph back to thesis without sounding repetitive.
    - Your understanding of the subject of this paragraph should have developed as you wrote the paragraph; show it here.
* Conclusion
  + Transition: Take key word from end of last body paragraph
    - “Go global and noble”
    - Doesn’t repeat anything
    - Doesn’t add anything- No new quotes
    - Closure:
      * Position statement
      * Dramatic statement/Call to action
      * Statement of judgment
      * What has the author revealed about human nature or society?
* Creating variety:
  + 1 short sentence (1/3 of the length of your normal sentence), one complex sentence, 3 pieces of exotic punctuation: ; ? – ()

1. Revise: Spellcheck, grammar check, peer review, read out loud