**What to Expect from a *Writin’ Titan* Coaching Session**

***Here’s what we do:***

1. We help writers at any stage of the writing process. You can come in even if you haven’t even started the assignment—perhaps you need help coming up with a plan of attack. We can help you decide on a topic or brainstorming for details to write about. We’ll lend you assistance in coming up with an outline. Maybe you’d just like help coming up with an introduction or conclusion? We do that. If you have a draft of a paper, we’d be glad to read it over and discuss it with you. Confused about how to cite your sources? We can help. We do help writers proofread their work, but only if the paper is in its final stage. Basically, if it’s writing-related, we’d be glad to lend a hand.
2. We will work to improve your writing skills, in addition to helping you improve your paper. Your *Writin’ Titan* coaches are not experts, but we will try to pass along what we know about writing to help you with future assignments, not just the assignment at hand.
3. We will keep coaching sessions private. If you come to a coaching session, we won’t blab to classmates about what was worked on. Only your coach, the teacher whose assignment you worked on, and Mr. Martin (the *Writin’ Titan* coaching supervisor) will know what was discussed during your session.
4. We will treat you with respect and kindness. You won’t need to worry about having to work with some know-it-all who is eager to put you down for every little mistake they see. The *Writin’ Titan* coaches are classmates who genuinely like to help their peers. In fact, friendliness is the number one factor considered when coaches are selected.

***Here’s what we don’t do:***

1. We don’t write or fix your paper for you. Coaches generally won’t even touch your keyboard or notebook. If you come to a *Writin’ Titan* coaching session, expect to do most of the work. We basically just give advice and help you think about your writing. We truly are “coaches.” Coaches stay on the sidelines while the athletes play the game. You’ll be the one writing; your coach will be on the side to help you along the way.
2. We don’t put down teachers or their assignments. You may be angry at your teacher for giving you yet another writing assignment, or maybe you think the assignment is dumb. However, we don’t want to hear it. We’re here to help you get your writing assignment done, not to help you hate on staff or others.
3. We don’t guarantee A’s. *Writin’ Titan* coaches want the classmates they help to earn high marks on their papers. However, as you know, writing is difficult work. Even multiple coaching sessions may not allow for all the time needed to help a writer with every aspect of an essay. A coach will try to give you as much guidance as he or she can in the time allotted, but you may end up working on only a small portion of your paper. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own writing.

**Basic Instructions for Leading a *Writin’ Titan* Coaching Session**

**1. Start with a warm welcome!**

* The writer may be nervous or even perturbed about coming, so open with a “How’s it going?”, “What’s up?”, or other friendly banter to make him or her feel at ease. Smile! Offer them a piece of candy.

**2. Find out everything you can about the assignment.**

* What is the purpose of the writing assignment and who will be the audience?
* Ask to see the rubric, grade sheet, and/or essay question.
* Find out the due date and how many points the assignment is worth.
* Clarify if the writer feels he or she understands the assignment.

**3. If this is the writer’s first coaching session, tell them what they can expect.**

* Briefly go over our expectations sheet with the writer.

**4. Find out where the writer is at in the process of finishing the assignment and ask what specific concerns they have.**

* Do they need help coming up with a topic, brainstorming for details and support, outlining, writing a specific part of their paper, or revising a draft? Perhaps they need help researching or citing their work.

**5. If the writer has a draft for you to help revise, have him or her read the draft aloud to you.**

* Often, when a writer reads his or her own work, they catch many of their own mistakes**.** If they catch something, have them make a mark in the margin and continue reading.

**6. Once you’ve read through the draft together, compliment the writer on some feature of his or her work.**

* Writers who come to see you may feel insecure about their paper or their skills and can use some encouragement. Find something to compliment.

**7. Work with the writer to make a goal for how to spend the rest of the session.**

* It’s seldom possible to polish a piece of writing in one coaching session, so you might narrow your focus. Perhaps you’ll just concentrate on one or two paragraphs.
* Remember to focus on higher order concerns (a thesis statement, organization, topic sentences, strong support and detail) before focusing on lower order concerns (grammar and spelling). Don’t bother polishing the car if it doesn’t run.

**8. Instead of *telling* the writer what they did wrong, ask questions to find out the writer’s thinking.**

* Rather than say something like, “This is out of order,” ask, “Why did you decide to put this paragraph here?” Instead of “This makes no sense,” ask, “Could you explain what you meant by this?” This strategy will help the writer think more about their choices, while not browbeating them for making mistakes.

**9. Bring the session to a proper close in the final minutes.**

* Ask the writer how he or she feels the session has gone.
* Inquire what the writer feels he or she needs to do next.
* Find out if the writer would like further help; they may want to set up another appointment.
* Offer some final compliments or encouragement to the writer about their paper.

**10. Fill out a *Writin’ Titan Coaching Summary* for your coaching session.**

* Record the date, time, student, teacher, assignment, and a brief description of what you accomplished during the session. Turn in your summary to Mr. Martin by the end of the day.