𝒪𝒪 General Essay Oral Exam Checklist 𝒪𝒪

(**1**) Iff the essay is a ***4 1/2 Part Essay***:

- Is there an **Intro**? clearly marked? ❑
- Is **Thesis Sentence** clearly marked? Is it coherent!? Complete?[1] ❑
- Are your Arguments used as **Topic Sentences**? ❑
- Followed by **Paragraphs** of evidence & explanation? ❑
- Is there a **Conclusion**: a summing up to help your reader? ❑
- Is it **One Page** or Less? ❑

(**2**) For ALL (except "mini-") Essays:

- Did you **omit needless words**? ❑

The wordy way ⇓	The elegant way ⇓
"he is a man who" ---------->	"he"
"the reason why is that" --->	"because"
"this is a subject that" ----->	"this subject"
"in spite of the fact that"-->	"though" (although)

"Try to reduce your final draft by 1/3." —Dorothy Sayers, Mystery Writer and Translator

- Did you try to use the **active voice** as often as possible? ❑

passive ⇓	active ⇓
"There **were** a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground"	"dead leaves covered the ground"
"It was not long before he **was** very sorry that he had said what he had."	"He soon repented his words."
Eliminate vigor-leeching "To Be" whenever possible!----->	"~~there is,~~" "~~could be heard~~," etc.

- Did you try to put statements in a **positive form**? ❑

instead of the negative ⇓	insert a positive ⇓
"He was[2] not very often on time."	"He usually came late."
"**not** honest"	"dishonest"
"did **not** remember"	"forgot"
"did not pay attention to"	"ignored"

- Is your writing **specific, definite, and concrete**? ❑

Deal in particulars and report details. Do your words call up **pictures** in your reader's mind?

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.' Ecclesiastes (King James Version)."

(**3**) On Using **Punctuation** to Improve *Lucidity, Force, and Ease* in Writing

(No pedantic nit-picking allowed): See the "**ESSAY ORALS PUNCTUATION CHECKLIST**" for 7 Sets of Guidelines on: Commas/Semicolons/Dashes & Parentheses/Quotation Marks/Colons/Apostrophes/End Marks)

[1] short, declarative sentences, please!

[2] notice the evil, "To Be," again makes an appearance.