

ENC 1101/1102 Summer Reading Questions
Stephen King's *On Writing*

Directions: Provide extended responses to the following questions, making sure to use quotes from the book whenever possible (with citations). Your answer should be at least a well-developed paragraph in length. **Your Summer Reading Assignment is due on Wednesday, August 17, 2022.**

- 1) What purpose would biographical detail serve in a book title On Writing? (Remember, King says that what we put in our writing needs to have a reason to be there—why does he include the biographical part?)
- 2) How does King's use of profanity impact the tone of the book? What purpose might that serve in the book as a whole?
- 3) King says that writing is "telling yourself the story," while re-writing is "taking out all the things that are not the story" (57). How might this quote apply to academic writing? When we talking about drafting academic writing, what pieces/steps might we add to King's axiom?
- 4) King says, "You must not come lightly to the blank page" (106). What does he mean? How might this statement apply to academic writing?
- 5) According to King, what are the key tools that every writer of any kind needs in her writer's "toolbox"?
- 6) If, as King says, "the bread of writing is vocabulary" (114), why does a good writer NOT dress up his vocabulary?
- 7) What, according to King, is wrong with the passive voice (122)? Does King's rule also apply to academic/formal writing? Why/Why not?
- 8) King says "language does not always have to wear a tie and lace-up shoes." He further describes writing as "seduction" (134). What does he mean, and how might these metaphors apply to all writers?
- 9) According to King, "The paragraph, not the sentence, is the basic unit of writing" (134). How might this be true for formal writing as well as fiction?
- 10) Why, according to King, should the writer remove ALL distractions (156)? Should this axiom also apply to non-fiction? Why/Why not?
- 11) King compares a writer's use of test readers to film's use of test audiences (216). What does he say are the value and drawbacks of using such readers? Does this idea also have relevance to non-fiction writing?
- 12) What happened to King in the middle of writing this book? Why is this event relevant?