Monday sample:
The rational part of my brain understands they aren’t doing it to be rude. But my rationality loses strength when faced with their sheer defiance and the callous, boorish nature of the act. I get distracted from my conversation; I can’t focus on my task. I find myself shooting daggers from my eyes in a silent but desperate attempt to coax the perpetrators away from their offense. I hesitate to speak because I fear giving way to the frustration, indignation, and irritation that threatens to bubble up from my gut and crack my voice in two. My pet peeve – the insolent behavior that aggravates and annoys me – is the group of impatient student who stand at the door waiting for the bell to ring.

Your assignment: Write a paragraph about the emotions your pet peeve creates, without naming the pet peeve until the last sentence.

Tuesday sample:
I glare at the pack of students milling at the door, books in hand. Heat radiating from my flushed face, I’m only dimly aware of the eight slivers of pain in my palms. Flexing my hands again, I swallow the words on the tip of my tongue, the acrid taste of frustration stinging my throat. A searing red flush creeps up my neck and across my face, visual testament to my internal boiling point. The conversations in the room are reduced to a buzzing drone in my ears, drowned by the students’ silent plea to flee from my presence. My focus narrowing, I see the milling throng as an eagle must see a family of field mice. Beware, little mice: the talons are out.

Your assignment: Write about your pet peeve using sensory description. You must include at least four of the five senses. You may mention your specific pet peeve as often as you like.
Wednesday sample:

Remember, I “accidentally” used a metaphor in my last paragraph: My focus narrows and I see the milling throng as an eagle must see a family of field mice. If you did not use a metaphor in your work so far, create a metaphor to extend in this paragraph.

The term “eagle eye” is no accident – when an eagle begins its hunt, it puts aside input from all other senses and the power of its sight and hearing increases. An eagle can spot a twitching tail while hundreds of feet in the air. It tenses, blocking out the sun, the wind, the cawing of an uninteresting crow. In this way, I see the student sidling toward the door and freeze. The person talking to me becomes the crow; the inching foot of the student by the door becomes that tail. I feel myself become the eagle – spreading my wings to swoop out of nowhere, pounce on the impatient idler, and bring a fury upon them. Perhaps not the death that awaits that mouse, but I’m determined I can be no less frightening.

Your assignment: Write about your pet peeve using an extended metaphor. You may name the pet peeve as often as you like.

Final assignment: Write about pet peeves on a thematic or psychological level. (Discuss pet peeves in general. What do they say about the human condition? Are they a normal part of life? Are they an abnormal manifestation of something negative in human nature? Make your own determination.)