

Revision Checklist for Essays

Writing experts generally agree that while details such as grammar and punctuation are important, they are far less important than solid organization, fresh writing, and creative content. The following guidelines are designed to give students a checklist to use, whether they are revising individually or as part of a peer review team.

Organization

- Is there a clear introduction, body, and conclusion?
- Does the introduction provide sufficient background for the reader? Are the "who," "where," "why," "what," and "how" questions addressed?
- Is there a thesis sentence? Is the purpose of the essay clear?
- Does the essay move from general to specific?
- Are there sufficient transitions between related ideas?
- Is the overall organization murky or clean? In other words, does the writer avoid introducing new material in the conclusion or switching subjects in the middle of a paragraph in the body?
- Does every paragraph address the subject matter of the thesis in some way?

Content and Style

- Does the essay show that the writer has a knowledge of the audience?
- Is the length appropriate and adequate?
- Has the writer used sufficient examples and detail to make his or her points clearly?
- Has the assignment been addressed?
- Is the tone of the essay appropriate?
- Has the writer avoided insulting the reader?
- Is the tone of the essay professional and appropriate?
- Is the language convincing, clear, and concise?
- Has the writer used fresh language and a creative approach?

Research and Sources

- Are all sources credible?
- Is the research accurate, unbiased, and complete?
- Has the writer fully interpreted the findings?
- Has the writer commented on each source used?
- Is the analysis based on hard evidence?
- Is the analysis free of faulty reasoning?
- Is the documentation in the Works Cited page and body of the essay correct?
- Have all quotations been checked against the original?
- Are all quotations introduced? Is the flow of the essay seamless?
- If material was paraphrased, are the sources still mentioned?
- If necessary, are limitations clearly spelled out?
- If included, are recommendations based on accurate interpretations?
- Have all facts been checked for accuracy?
- Have any potentially libelous statements been eliminated?

Proofreading

- Has the writer checked grammar and punctuation?
- Has the writer spell checked the essay?
- Has the writer checked for his or her particular pattern of error?
- Are the page numbers correct?
- Is the title capitalized correctly?
- Has the writer used the correct margin and font?
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