

Thesis

What exactly is your paper about?
Does your paper have a central focus that has been narrowed down and can be expanded?
Is your thesis clearly stated?

Purpose

What is your paper intended to do? (e.g. analyze, summarize, argue, etc.)
Does the purpose match what you're asked to do in the assignment?

Audience

For whom are you writing?
Is your tone appropriate for the audience you are addressing?

Organization

How is the paper organized? Is the organization logical?
Does your paper have clear directions and transitions?

Development

Do you have examples or evidence to back up your arguments?
Do the examples and/or evidence match/support your main points?

Sentence Structure

Have you identified and corrected grammatical issues in your paper?
Have you read your paper out loud to find awkward phrasing?

Punctuation

Does your punctuation follow punctuation rules?
Is your use of punctuation consistent?

Word Choice

Are there words whose meanings you are not sure about?
Can you find another word that would more accurately convey what you mean?

Spelling

Have you completed a spell check?
Did you proofread your paper?
Try reading sentence by sentence starting at the end of each paragraph to focus on what is really on the page.



More Important



Less Important

When you've written a draft you are happy with, take the time to make sure it's as good as it can be. Use this checklist to ensure that you are clearly expressing your ideas to the reader and that you are presenting your best writing.

- Highlight your thesis statement. It should be one sentence in the first paragraph of your paper.
- On a separate sheet of paper, write down the topic sentence of each paragraph. How does each one support, explain, or expand on the thesis statement?
- Reread the assignment instructions. Does your writing fulfill all the requirements?
- Use direct quotations sparingly; paraphrase whenever possible. Save direct quotations for statements that are difficult to paraphrase or are exceptionally well stated. Check that all the direct quotations you have used are necessary. Can you paraphrase instead?
- Take a look at your in-text citations. Have you written them correctly? As you find them, cross-check them with your bibliography to ensure that what you have cited in-text is included in the bibliography.
- Take a look at the end-of-text citations in the bibliography. Have you written them correctly?
- Use the spell-checker. You don't have to obey the computer's command, but you should ask yourself why your version might be highlighted.
- Use the grammar-checker. Again, you don't have to obey the computer's command, but ask yourself why your version is highlighted.
- Circle all the sentences that begin with *there is*, *there are*, *it is* or *they are*. Try to reword half of them so that they begin with a stronger subject. For example, "There are five important factors to consider," can be better stated as "Five important factors require consideration." The second sentence is stronger because it has a specific subject and verb. Some sentences cannot be reworded so leave those as they are.
- Choose paragraphs at random to edit. Doing so helps you focus on what is actually on the page versus what you think is there. Read each paragraph aloud. You will be surprised how many small errors you can catch with this method of self-editing. Errors like mistyping "form" instead of "from" or "hen" instead of "then" are easier to find when you read aloud.