Final Checklist for Writing Essays

After you have completed a draft of your paper, think about each of the following questions. If you find yourself unsure of the answers, ask a friend, your professor, or someone in the Teaching and Writing Center for help. If you answer 'no' to any of the following questions, you have probably identified a place where your paper needs a bit more work.



- [ ] Does my paper respond to the assignment? Does it answer the question? Is it in the proper form?
- [ ] Do I have a thesis statement? Does it express my main idea? Is it too narrow? Too broad? Misleading?
- [ ] Is my paper well organized? Does it have an introduction, a body and a conclusion? Do my paragraphs flow logically and smoothly? Do I include transitions?
- [ ] Is my argument well-developed? Do I give sufficient support in examples, quotations, and details? Do I use too many quotations? Do I quote enough? Do I have any questions unanswered?
- [ ] Does all the information I have included relate to my thesis? Is it all necessary? Does it add to my argument, or detract from it?
- [ ] Is my tone appropriate to the assignment, subject matter and the course? Do I sound too informal? Too stuffy? At any point am I condescending or offensive?
- [ ] Am I writing to the proper audience? Who am I supposed to be writing for? My professor? A classmate? A random person off the street? Is my paper geared for this audience?
- [ ] Do I use proper citations? Have I made it clear which ideas are mine and which come from my sources? Have I followed the citation style my professor suggested? If there is no specification, did I follow a standard form in a published style manual?
- [ ] Have I spell-checked my paper? Have I proofread it for typos and grammar problems?
- [ ] Does my paper end with a strong conclusion? Does it relate back to my thesis? Do I have any loose ends? Does it feel finished?

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