

Essay Checklist

Introduction

- ? Do you have a thesis? _____
- ? Is your thesis clear and concise? _____
- ? If you are answering a mid-term or final exam essay question, does your thesis directly and clearly address the question being asked? _____

Organization

- ? Does your paper have an introduction, a body and a conclusion? _____
- ? Is every single one of your paragraphs directly and clearly related to your thesis? _____

Paragraphs

- ? Do each of your paragraphs start with a transitional sentence? (A transitional sentence makes reference to the topic under discussion in the previous paragraph while at the same time introducing the topic of your new paragraph.) _____
- ? Is the topic of your paragraph directly and clearly related to your essay thesis? _____
- ? Is every sentence in your paragraph directly and clearly related to the topic of the paragraph? _____
- ? Is each sentence in your paragraph clearly linked to the one that comes before and after it? (Have you used linking words or phrases such as “for example,” “additionally,” “in addition to,” etc.?) _____
- ? Have you used plenty of concrete, specific examples to back up your assertions? _____
- ? Have you analyzed, or interpreted, your concrete, specific examples so that your reader knows what they are meant to indicate? In other words, what do you want your readers to notice in this quotation? Have you explained how the quotation relates back to the topic of your paragraph or to your theses? _____

Language

- ? Have you used correct grammar? _____
- ? Are all of your sentences complete sentences? _____
- ? Does every last sentence make sense? _____
- ? Do you know the meaning of every word you have used, and have you used all of these words correctly? _____
- ? Have you defined unusual or historically specific words or concepts? _____
- ? Is your entire essay in the past tense? (If you are discussing a piece of art or literature in great depth, see me regarding exceptions to this rule.) _____
- ? Have you avoided using the word “I” except possibly in your conclusion? _____

Final Thoughts

- ? Is your paper double-spaced throughout? _____
- ? There should be no extra spaces between you paragraphs—are there any? _____
- ? Did you indent each paragraph? (Hit your keyboard “Tab” button once.) _____
- ? Did you spell check? _____
- ? Did you proof read your essay? _____
- ? Did you have someone else proof read your essay and tell you where they got lost or confused? _____
- ? Is the paper you are ready to turn in neat, clean and stapled together? _____