

ESSAY CHECKLIST

Use to make sure your essay covers all the bases

1. ASSIGNMENT

- The essay responds to the prompt and discusses the question(s) posed.
- The essay stays focused on the prompt throughout.

2. CONTENT

- A clear main idea/ thesis is established.
- The main idea is supported by a number of major points or arguments.
- The supporting points are backed up by evidence (from readings, outside sources, relevant experience, etc.).
- Any evidence offered is analyzed to strengthen the main idea(s) in the paper.
- A variety of relevant perspectives are considered and addressed.

3. USE OF TEXT/ READINGS

- The paper includes text from outside sources.
- The information from outside sources has been interpreted correctly.
- The paper uses both paraphrasing and direct citations to support arguments/ points.
- Quotations have been ‘blended’ correctly and smoothly – proper use of ...ellipses..., [square brackets], “quotation marks”, c,o,m,m,a,s, p.e.r.i.o.d.s., etc.
- Quotes are integrated effectively by using proper verb tense, capitalization, and proper identification of the person who wrote/ said the words.
- All readings/ outside sources are properly cited to avoid plagiarism.

4. ORGANIZATION

- The essay has a clear beginning (introduction), middle (body) and end (conclusion).
- The introduction provides brief background and clearly expresses the main idea.
- The body paragraphs have topic sentences that tie directly back to the main idea/ thesis.
- Each body paragraph is well organized and has a topic sentence, supporting evidence and proper analysis.
- Each body paragraph lends effective support to the overall main idea.
- Transitions and other techniques are used to make the essay flow coherently.
- The conclusion sums up the essay and expresses the significance (the “so what?”) of the overall issue.

5. LANGUAGE & MECHANICS

- Spell-check was used.
- The paper was proofread to make sure that nothing slipped past the spell-check.
- There are no serious and frequent errors in capitalization, grammar, punctuation or spelling.
- The paper is formatted properly.

Adapted from Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 213-214