

Essay Writing Checklist

Topic and Thesis

- Does your introduction develop from the general (broad topic) to the specific (thesis statement)? Does your thesis express an opinion, attitude or idea about your topic? Is it clearly and concisely stated?
- Does everything in your essay relate to your topic and thesis? Have you shown the relationships clearly?
- Have you included enough support for your thesis? Do you have sufficient facts, quotations, examples, and statistics? Have you shown how the support you have provided is relevant to your essay's development?
- Have you avoided making unsupported generalizations?
- Does your conclusion develop from the specific (thesis restatement) to the general (a final thought)?

Organization and Support

- Is the organizational pattern effective? Are the ideas in the essay clearly ordered?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and one controlling idea with appropriate supporting details?
- Do you use a variety of transition words or phrases to show the relationship between the points you make?
- Are there any gaps in your logic or points that are off topic?

Tone and Clarity

- Is the tone consistent and appropriate for the audience and the subject matter?
- Is the language clear and concise? Have you avoided being too informal or using too much jargon?
- Have you varied your vocabulary to express your ideas more accurately? Have you used a variety of sentence types to strengthen your position and keep your reader interested?

Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation, Referencing, Formatting

- Have you referred to previously marked essays to note the typical grammatical errors you make (i.e. sentence structure, verb tense, pronoun use ...)? Have you made your own personal grammar checklist to help you detect and fix your errors from now on?
- Do you use a spell-checker or a Canadian dictionary to check your spelling?
- Do you use commas, semi-colons, quotation marks, italics, and capitalization correctly?
- Have you followed the proper citation format both within text and on the References or Works Cited page?
- Have you followed the assignment requirements for formatting such as title page, font size, length, and margin size?

References

- Academic Skills Centre. (2005). *Thinking it through: A practical guide to academic essay writing* (3rd ed.). Peterborough: Trent University.
- Finnbogasson, J. & Valteau, A. (2010). *A Canadian writer's guide* (4th ed.). Toronto: Nelson.
- Hacker, D. (2001). *A Canadian writer's reference*. Toronto: Nelson.