Self-Editing Checklist

Just because you have finished your paper does not mean that you are done. Most papers that receive high scores do so because they have gone through multiple revisions before the final due date. Even if you think your paper is fine, there may be some small errors such as typos or unclear sentences that could take away points from an otherwise well-crafted paper. Below is a checklist of things you should keep an eye on before you turn in your final paper.

Check off each step as you go!

General Advice

☐ Plan ahead. Too often, people leave their papers until the last minute and end up turning in something that does not accurately represent them as a student or as a writer. Before you do anything, make sure you leave yourself time to look over the paper and make changes before it is due.

☐ Take a break. This is more important than you may think. By taking a break, you allow your brain to step back from the work you have done, and when you come back to it, you will be able to see your writing from a different perspective.

☐ Read the paper aloud to yourself. This process will help you catch awkward wording or sentences that go on too long without proper punctuation.

If you can, have someone read your paper aloud to you.

Proper Format

☐ Use the proper format. Follow the directions for the appropriate citation style: MLA, APA, or CMS.

☐ Paragraph indentations should be 1/2-inch.

☐ Set page margins to 1-inch all around.

☐ Double-space correctly. There should be no extra space between paragraphs.

Assignment Guidelines

☐ Ensure you have met the page length or word count requirement.

☐ Discuss everything you were asked to discuss.

☐ Use at least the minimum number of sources required. Each source should be cited in the body of your paper and appear in the Works cited/References/Footnotes/Endnotes.

☐ Follow any requirements about the age or type of sources. E.g. peer-reviewed, less than five years old

Citations

☐ Cite all quotes, paraphrases, and other borrowed information. Double-check the format of the citations.

☐ Include a complete Works Cited/Reference/Bibliography. Double-check the format of each entry.

☐ Confirm that all quote text is copied exactly and that quotation marks in the proper places

☐ Include periods after a parenthetical citation. Periods only stay within the quotation marks if there is no parenthetical citation.

Style

☐ Use strong, precise language.

☐ Eliminate informal language. Avoid contractions and using the second-person (e.g. you, your).

☐ Keep your verb tenses consistent.

☐ Check for commonly misspelled words.