

Self-Editing Checklist

Tips and Tricks

★ Use our online resources

- <https://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/how-guides/academic-skills-online-resources-index>

★ Make a new outline after you finish your first draft.

- Even if you did an outline before writing, go back and see if you can easily identify your thesis statement, topic sentences, sub-arguments, and evidence. Check to see if your introduction and conclusion draw the reader in and help them to understand why they should be interested in and care about your topic

★ Do a global edit first. Do a second edit focused on spelling, grammar, and style.

- Edit your paper first for content. Does your argument make sense? Are you using evidence effectively? Is it structured coherently?

★ On your second edit, read aloud and edit paragraphs in random order

- When we read aloud and/or edit our paragraphs in random order, we are more likely to see what's really on the page rather than what we think we wrote.

★ Revisit the assignment instructions periodically.

- It's easy to go off on a tangent or forget some of the criteria

Content

Component	Is it/Are they...
Thesis statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clearly identifiable and a solid "umbrella" statement that covers all the other opinions and evidence in the rest of the paper? ➤ At or near the end of your introduction (or in a more appropriate place, depending on the assignment) ? ➤ A statement of opinion or perspective ➤ A response to a question?
Topic Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clearly identifiable? ➤ The single central idea in each paragraph? ➤ A statement of your opinion or argument? ➤ An aspect of your overall thesis? ➤ A response to a question that falls under your main question?
Sub-arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clearly identifiable? ➤ Related to and supportive of your topic sentence in each paragraph? ➤ Supported by solid evidence from your data?
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Drawn from scholarly or otherwise appropriate sources? ➤ Organized into "APE" (Argument - proof - explanation) structure? ➤ Properly documented? ➤ Paraphrased or quoted directly in appropriate proportions for your subject?
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A clear progression from general comments on the topic to a thesis statement that is a specific response to a question? ➤ At least four sentences long? ➤ Complete, including important background, information about your topic, such as the title and author of a source you are summarizing, reviewing, or analyzing?
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete, including a thesis restatement and at least four sentences that make the paper feel "finished"? ➤ An explanation of the importance of the topic? ➤ Convincing?
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fulfilled, based on the professor's stated expectations?
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on guidelines in our "How to" site?

Style

Component	Do you...
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow a format that makes sense for the assignment or is required by the criteria? ➤ Have some form of introduction and conclusion?
Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize your ideas into coherent paragraphs around a single idea? ➤ Write in groups of between 6 and 10 sentences? ➤ Break your ideas at an appropriate point so that your paragraphs are an appropriate length and each centres on a single organizing idea?
Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vary your sentence length? ➤ Use a simple, complex, and compound sentences? ➤ Connect your ideas using words such as "however", "as a result" or "therefore" rather than just "and", "but" and "so"? ➤ Make sure you are coherent by reading aloud?
Diction and Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand who your audience is? ➤ Understand the level of formality required? ➤ Avoid using "you" as a universal pronoun? ➤ Avoid using first person unless it's absolutely necessary? ➤ Avoid slang? ➤ Use terminology that is specific to your discipline? ➤ Avoid jargon? ➤ Explain acronyms or initialisms before using them?
Quotations and Paraphrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Show the relationship between and link quotations to your own ideas? ➤ Understand when to use direct quotations and when to use a paraphrase? ➤ Paraphrase using no more than 1/3 of the original language from the source? ➤ Add further clarification to your phrases? ➤ Attribute/document all paraphrases and direct quotations using the correct citation format?

Mechanics

Component	Have you...?
Grammar	<p>Checked for these common grammatical problems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Misuse of apostrophes➤ Word confusion➤ Sentence fragments➤ Run-on sentences➤ Semicolon abuse➤ Comma abuse➤ Subject-verb agreement➤ Capitalization mistakes➤ Misplaced modifiers
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Checked the words you most commonly misspell after identifying these?➤ Checked names of authors against your sources?➤ Checked titles against sources?➤ Checked the spelling and usage of important terminology?➤ Checked the 100 most commonly misspelled words?➤ Used your spellchecker and double-checked errors?➤ Learned about your own spelling habits?➤ Checked for consistency when there are alternate spellings of a word?➤ Proof-read your paragraphs and sentences out of order and out loud?
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Used our grammar modules

Formatting and Citation

Component	Have you...?
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Checked how numbers are expressed in your text? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In MLA style, numbers that can be expressed in one or two words are spelled out, and other numbers are represented by numerals. ○ In APA style, numerals are used to express numbers 10 and above. ➤ Indicated which words and phrases in the text of your essay are titles? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quotation marks should be placed around the titles of chapters of books, articles, short stories and short poems. ○ The titles of longer works, such as complete books, journals, plays, and films should be in italics. ○ Follow rules of documentation style for footnotes and in-text citations, which may be different. ➤ Quoted properly and introduced your quotations using the correct punctuation? ➤ Included page numbers in the proper place?
Citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cited all of your sources using an acceptable style, and stuck to this style consistently throughout? ➤ Included in your final list of references... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In MLA or APA style - all the works you have cited? ○ For Chicago style (footnoting) - all materials you have consulted? ➤ Included all the information your instructor needs on your title page?
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Used the appropriate style guide