Paper Requirement Fulfilled: Did you complete all your instructor’s requirements for the essay?

An Interesting Title: Is your title creative? You didn’t just restate your topic, did you?

Introductory Paragraph: Does this paragraph prepare your reader for the rest of the essay’s content by giving background information, defining a term that will be used, or identifying a situation related to your topic? Have you given the reader a reason to keep reading?

Thesis Statement: Is your thesis in your introductory paragraph? Is your thesis statement an assertion? An assertion is a claim or statement presented as true that is supported by facts and examples within the paper. Does your thesis include an overview of three or more broad areas of the topic that will be covered in more detail in the paragraphs below?

Topic Sentences: Does each paragraph contain a sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph? Do these statements relate directly to the thesis in the introduction?

Paragraph Support: Are there enough examples in each paragraph (at least three)? Do your examples support the main idea in the paragraph? Make sure your examples are not repetitive!

Good Transitions Between Ideas in a Paragraph: Do you use transitional and signal words, phrases, or sentences to connect ideas and examples within your paragraphs? A transitional word handout is available in the Writing Center.

Good Transitions Between Paragraphs: Do you use transitional and signal words, phrases, or sentences to begin or end paragraphs to show how the topics of each paragraph relate?

Analysis: Are your examples in each paragraph followed by at least one statement that shows how your supporting material leads to a point of view, change of perception, or other result that you alluded to in your thesis? Don’t save this for the conclusion only! (This also goes for quotes: make sure you have explanations for your quotes and they are not standing alone in your paper.)

Effective Structure: Are your paragraphs organized in a way that strengthens your points? Did you organize your paper chronologically (using time sequence), spatially (according to location or space), emphatically (saving the best for last), or with simple concepts leading your reader to the more complex ones?

First Person or Third Person: If you wrote a research or other formal paper, it should be in third person or first person plural. Third person: he, she, it, they, the author, the expert. First person plural: we. If you wrote an informal essay such as a narrative or description, it can be in first person (I, me, we). Be sure not to use second person for any academic paper. Second person: you, your. Note: this handout is written in second person.
Good Conclusion: Does your concluding paragraph give the reader a sense of completion? Does it make a final statement that summarizes your thesis, examples, and point of view? Does it go beyond your introduction to state a further conclusion? Does it end with a clincher that will make your audience think more about the topic?

And Edit
WAIT UNTIL ALL YOUR REVISION IS DONE BEFORE YOU EDIT!

Do you have concise, well written sentences?: Are there words you can remove from your sentences without changing their meanings? Do any of the sentences sound awkward when read aloud? Do you vary sentence structures between simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex?

Punctuation

Did you use periods, question marks, and exclamation marks appropriately?

Are your commas in the right place?
- separating transitional words or phrases
- between two independent clauses and after coordinating conjunctions
- after introductory elements
- setting off nonessential material
- preceding direct quotations
- before titles following a name
- within dates and addresses

Did you use the semicolon properly?
- separating independent clauses without coordinating conjunctions
- separating items in a series that contain commas within the items

Did you use apostrophes, quotation marks, dashes, parentheses, brackets, slashes, and ellipses accordingly?

What about the colon?
- to introduce lists or explanatory material
- only following a complete sentence (independent clause)!!

Spelling/Mechanics

Do you have correct spelling? If you use spell check, be sure the replacement choice is the word you mean to use. Proofreading will help you catch these mistakes; you should not always rely on the computer.

Did you use capitalization properly? Specific names, titles, and events.

Did you set off titles and names properly?
- Books and Newspapers should be in ITALICS
- Articles, essays, short stories, short poems, songs, and book chapters should have “quotes.”

Grammar

Avoid comma splices: two independent clauses joined together with only a comma.

Avoid fused sentences: two independent clauses joined together without punctuation.

Avoid sentence fragments: dependent clauses punctuated as if they are complete sentences.

Do you have subject-verb agreement? Correspondence between words in number, person, and gender.
Do you have proper singular and plural pronoun-antecedent agreement?
- singular: he, him, she, her, it, me, myself, and oneself
- plural: we, us, they, them, and their

Do you have appropriate tense, mood, and voice?