# A Checklist for Research Papers

- If there is a title, is it informative and appropriate?
- Is the thesis clear? Is the organization logical? If headings and subheadings are used, do they consistently follow an accepted format?
- Are sentences varied in length and structure?
- Are tone, voice, and diction consistent and appropriate?
- Are transitions smooth from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, section to section?
- Are credible sources and evidence used? Is the supporting material suitable and persuasive? Does it adequately support the thesis?
- Are quotations and paraphrased and summarized passages properly introduced with a signal phrase?
- Are visual materials--tables, figures, charts, maps, and the like--introduced before they appear in the text?
- Are long quotations set off from the text in block quoting format?
- Is proper credit given to sources throughout?
- Does the paper consistently adhere to the style used (MLA, APA, CMS, CSE, and so on) in format and in documentation, both with the text and in the reference list or list of works cited?
- Were the instructions for the assignment--length, number and kind of resources to be used, directions for title page or documentation--followed carefully?

# A Checklist for Lab Reports and Scientific Papers

- Is the title concise, and does it adequately describe the contents? For example, with the title "Substance Y Alters Blonial Structure of Elephant Bone Marrow", researchers interested in substance Y, bilonial structures, elephants, or bone marrow will recognize that the article may be of interest to them.

- Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included and in proper order?

- Are the tone and style appropriate? Scientific writing, for the most part, is intended to be more factual than entertaining and is not embellished with descriptive language, anecdotes, personal opinion, humor, or dialogue.

- Does the writer use passive voice, which is the generally accepted convention? The writer of a lab report, for example, should use the passive past tense: "Solution A was centrifuged," not "I centrifuged Solution A."

- Is past tense usd for describing the procedures and present tense for describing the results and conclusions?

- Are sentences short and to the point, expressing facts clearly and concisely? Does the writer answer all basic questions about the topic?

- Have disciplinary conventions related to symbols and abbreviations been observed?

- Are figures and tables numbered and accompanied by explanatory captions? Are they introduced before they appear in the text?

# A Checklist for Argument/Position Papers

- Is the claim or proposition--what the writer is trying to probe--clearly stated?
- Are all assertions supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence--facts, interpretations of facts, opinions--appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Cited sources should be reliable.
- Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
- Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinions placed properly? Are they used in the appropriate context?
- Is the evidence carefully documented?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Has the writer avoided all logical fallacies?
- Are terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
- Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?

# A Checklist for Literature Papers

- Is the thesis clearly stated? Is the organization logical and easy to follow?
- Does the writer use examples from the text to convincingly support her interpretation or analysis?
- Has the writer avoided giving a simple plot summary?
- Are parts of the work clearly and accurately indicated? Writers need to refer to parts specifically--for example, "the scene in which…" or "at the end of Chapter 3."
- Does the writer use the present tense when describing events in a work of literature, as is the convention?
- Are titles properly punctuated? Titles of short stories, essays, and most poems appear in quotation marks; titles of books, plays, epics, or other long poems are italicized.
- Has the writer referred to the author properly, using the full name initially and the last name in subsequent references?
- Is quoted material properly punctuated, indented (if longer than four typed lines of prose of three lines of verse), and documented according to the format specified by the teacher?

# A Checklist for Book, Film, and Play Reviews

- Does the first paragraph include the title and other important information, such as the author's, playwright's, or director's name?
- Does the introduction give readers an idea of the nature and scope of the work? Does it establish criteria for evaluation?
- Are evaluative terms or phrases, such as "good action or "like a soap opera" defined? (What are the characteristics of good action or soap operas? How does the work embody those characteristics?)
- Does an early paragraph orient the reader by briefly summarizing the plot or contents?
- Does the review make reasonable assertions and present convincing evidence (quotes, examples, and specific references) to support those assertions?
- Is the tone appropriate? Does it suggest that the reviewer is being fair? Does it indicate respect for readers?
- Does the reviewer avoid overuse of phrases like "i think" and "in my opinion"? (Such qualifiers weaken the writer's assertions.)

# A Checklist for Group Writing Projects

- How has the group structured its work? Is someone "in charge"--at least enough to maintain a schedule of deadlines and coordinate meetings? What specific role does each group member assume? What is each person responsible for? Is there a calendar with deadlines?
- What are the teacher's requirements?
- What is the purpose of this document? What changes in the reader and his thinking or practices does the group want the paper to effect?
- Who is the audience and what are the reader/client's needs? What do they know or need to know? What will they do with the information the group provides?
- Are there any broader or secondary audiences? Lay readers? Other professionals in the same or different fields? Legislative assemblies? Bureaucrats? How will the group accommodate them?
- How can the information be organized and presented most effectively? Would headings and subheadings, graphics, appendices, or other ways of presenting information be appropriate?
- What ancillary information might need to be investigated/presented? How can it be organized/presented most effectively?
- What role is the group playing in creating this document? Do they represent students? Concerned citizens? Experts? A combination of roles? How does that role connect to the group's relationship with the audience? What authority do they have? How do they communicate that authority?

# A Checklist for Powerpoint and Alternative Platform Presentations

- Has the writer carefully considered the audience, purpose, and occasion for presentation?
- Has the writer carefully considered his position in relation to the audience and how he wishes to be perceived by them (ethos)?
- Does the presentation truly complement the talk? Is the amount of text on each slide appropriate?
- Is the slide progression logical? Is the text simple and phrased in a consistent manner (parallelism)?
- If appropriate, does the presentation reinforce key concepts or phrases?
- Do the text, images, tables, graphs, and other visual aids facilitate and complement the presentation? Can they be seen clearly from a distance?
- Does white space appropriately set off text, images, tables, graphs, and other visual aids?
- Are the colors, fonts, background, and themes appropriate and consistent?