

## Final Draft Checklist

- ❑ **Is there a clear thesis statement?** A thesis statement is an assertion, backed by evidence, that is falsifiable. It should make a claim and should indicate to the reader that the claim being offered will be defended with sound evidence and logic. It is NOT a statement of fact or opinion, or a mere description of an author's main claim.
- ❑ **Does this paper address the assignment?** Re-read the assignment, and then read your introduction and thesis. Does your thesis sound like a direct answer to the main question asked in the assignment? It should.
- ❑ **Does the first or second paragraph indicate how the argument will proceed?** Your introduction should preview the main points of your argument. Think of this as the roadmap, telling the reader where the paper will take him or her.
- ❑ **Does each paragraph have one topic sentence?** The first sentence of every paragraph should introduce the subject of that paragraph. The rest of the sentences in the paragraph should relate to the topic sentence, and all of the topic sentences should relate to your thesis. If you identify two (or more!) topics or topic sentences in one paragraph, make two paragraphs, each with their own topic sentence.
- ❑ **Does your evidence support your claim?** Make sure that you not only identify evidence that will support your claim, but that you tell your reader why THIS evidence supports your claim. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your evidence: did it all come from one point in the ideological spectrum (not great) or from a variety of policy positions (much better)? Did it all come from one website (not good) or did you find several corroborating sites that convinced you the evidence was sound (much better)?
- ❑ **Is your argument clearly focused and supported?** There should be a logical progression to your paragraphs, and each paragraph should be

integral to your larger argument. If there are paragraphs that are not important to the argument you are making, get rid of them.

- **Are counterarguments addressed?** Your argument will be stronger if you anticipate possible criticism and conflicting viewpoints and address them. Make sure to explain why your argument is superior to the opposing ones. Three easy ways to do this are to challenge the assumptions, implications, and priorities of those with opposing views.
- **Are transitions made clearly?** Once you think your paper is completely finished, try reading it out loud from beginning to end. Not only does this help you hear how well your paper makes transitions, you might be surprised how many little grammar and spelling errors you catch.
- **Do you have a conclusion?** Your conclusion should sum up your argument and demonstrate that you proved your thesis: think of this as a look in the rearview mirror, reminding the reader of where you have taken him or her. Beware of introducing new questions in your conclusion! You need to decide whether those new questions change your argument. If they do, they need to be addressed within the paper, not the conclusion.
- **Are your citations and references correct?** Did you explain the significance of quotations (using the three-part “quotation sandwich”: 1. Signify the author/context, 2. Give the quote, 3. Explain how the quote helps your argument)? Are ALL paraphrases and quotes properly cited?
- **Did you proofread?** Don’t let your reader be turned off because of sloppiness. Small typos and errors that don’t show up in spell-check can significantly affect how others respond to your argument.
- **Get an objective eye to look over your paper.** Having an someone else (your roommate, a classmate, or a tutor in the Writing Center) review your paper is another good way to make sure your argument is clear, your evidence is convincing, and your paper is polished.