



The Betty East Tutoring Center at Victoria College

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Essay Checklist

Check your essay draft for the following points to ensure you are off to a strong start:

General:

- ✓ Essay is in the format the instructor wants, such as MLA, or APA
- ✓ The paper is double spaced and space is removed between paragraphs
- ✓ Your sources are cited correctly within your paper and on your separate Works Cited page; all of your sources are accurate and academic
- ✓ Paragraphs are not so long that they contain too much information, but are at least three sentences long

Introduction:

- ✓ One sentence, usually the last, can easily be identified as the thesis statement that previews the topic the paper will be about
- ✓ The thesis also previews the structure and organization of the paper (what points will be addressed and in what order they will be discussed)
- ✓ If analyzing a specific work, the author and their work have been introduced
- ✓ Try to save quotes and other information that needs a citation for the body paragraphs to support claims and provide examples

Body Paragraphs:

- ✓ The wording is precise, not vague; facts are supported by research, not opinions
- ✓ Each body paragraph begins with a topic sentence that states the point of that paragraph and what will be discussed; this topic relates back to the thesis
- ✓ The information discussed is relevant to the thesis
- ✓ Any quoted material is introduced and supports the topic sentence of the paragraph
- ✓ No quotes stand alone as sentences
- ✓ All quoted, paraphrased, and summarized information is cited to avoid plagiarism
- ✓ The paragraphs each close with an effective concluding sentence that rephrases the point of the paragraph
- ✓ The thesis may need to be revised to more clearly reflect the point of each paragraph

Conclusion:

- ✓ All the major points made in the body paragraphs are reviewed and restated, and they all relate back to the thesis
- ✓ The thesis truly reflects the entire paper; nothing in the thesis statement is left out of the paper, and no new information is introduced that is not in the thesis
- ✓ No new points or information are added to the conclusion, all information relevant to the paper can be found in the body paragraphs

- ✓ The introduction and conclusion are similar in content; the conclusion restates the points of the paper introduced in the introduction and discussed in the body paragraphs
- ✓ The thesis is restated, re-visited, or in some other way present in the conclusion

Works Cited:

- ✓ The Works Cited page is its own page, separated by a page break from the concluding paragraph
- ✓ All sources are listed in alphabetical order
- ✓ Each source that continues on to more than one line of text has a hanging indent; the top line should be flush with the left margin, the next line(s) are indented a ½ inch to the right
- ✓ All information included in the paper that is not common knowledge is cited, both in the text and in the Works Cited page
- ✓ All sources listed on the Works Cited page have at least one in-text citation, and every in-text citation has a listing on the Works Cited page