

THREE-PASS REVISION CHECKLIST SYSTEM

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Complete **THREE** separate passes through your essay, focusing on different elements each time:

- **PASS 1:** Structure & Argument (Big Picture)
- **PASS 2:** Paragraph Development (Middle Level)
- **PASS 3:** Sentences & Polish (Fine Details)

Important: Wait at least a few hours (ideally overnight) between passes. Fresh eyes catch more issues!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Pre-Revision Setup

- ☐ Print your essay or open in a clean document
- ☐ Have your assignment requirements handy
- ☐ Review your thesis statement
- ☐ Set aside dedicated, uninterrupted time
- ☐ Get a highlighter or use comment features

Essay Title: _____

Word Count: _____ / Required: _____

Current Draft Date: _____

Pass Completion Dates:

- Pass 1: _____
 - Pass 2: _____
 - Pass 3: _____
-

PASS 1: STRUCTURE & ARGUMENT

Focus: Big Picture Elements (30-45 minutes)

Goal: Ensure your essay has a clear, logical structure and your argument flows coherently from start to finish.

What to do: Read through QUICKLY without stopping to fix small errors. Mark problem areas but don't fix them yet.

INTRODUCTION STRUCTURE

Opening Hook

- ☐ My first sentence is engaging and relevant (not generic)
- ☐ The hook connects to my topic naturally
- ☐ I avoid clichés like "Throughout history..." or "In today's society..."
- ☐ The opening makes readers want to continue

If no, note issue: _____

Background Information

- ☐ I provide necessary context about the text/topic
- ☐ I include title, author, and publication info (if applicable)
- ☐ I give just enough background—not too much, not too little
- ☐ The background leads naturally to my thesis

Missing information? _____

Thesis Statement

- ☐ My thesis is the last sentence of the introduction
- ☐ It makes a specific, arguable claim (not just an observation)
- ☐ It previews my supporting points
- ☐ It's clear and easy to understand
- ☐ It answers "so what?" (explains significance)

Thesis strength: [] Strong [] Needs work

If needs work: _____

BODY PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Overall Organization

- ☐ I have 3-5 body paragraphs (appropriate for essay length)
- ☐ Each paragraph focuses on ONE main point
- ☐ Paragraphs follow a logical order
- ☐ The order builds my argument effectively

Organization issue? _____

Body Paragraph #1

Topic sentence clearly states main point: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Evidence supports topic sentence: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Analysis explains HOW evidence proves thesis: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Paragraph length is appropriate (200-300 words): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Connects to next paragraph: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Issues to fix: _____

Body Paragraph #2

Topic sentence clearly states main point: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Evidence supports topic sentence: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Analysis explains HOW evidence proves thesis: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Paragraph length is appropriate (200-300 words): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Connects to next paragraph: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Issues to fix: _____

Body Paragraph #3

Topic sentence clearly states main point: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Evidence supports topic sentence: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Analysis explains HOW evidence proves thesis: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Paragraph length is appropriate (200-300 words): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Connects to conclusion: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Issues to fix: _____

[Additional Body Paragraphs - Copy Above Format As Needed]

CONCLUSION STRUCTURE

Conclusion Elements

☐ I restate my thesis in fresh language (not word-for-word)

- ☐ I synthesize my main points without just listing them
- ☐ I explain the broader significance ("so what?")
- ☐ I end with a strong final thought (not a cliché)
- ☐ I avoid introducing new arguments or evidence
- ☐ My conclusion feels complete, not rushed

Issues to fix: _____

OVERALL ARGUMENT FLOW

Coherence Check

- ☐ Every paragraph directly supports my thesis
- ☐ My argument builds logically from point to point
- ☐ No paragraph feels "off-topic" or disconnected
- ☐ Transitions guide readers through my logic
- ☐ My essay answers the question/prompt fully

Flow issues: _____

Balance Check

- ☐ No paragraph is significantly longer/shorter than others
- ☐ I give equal attention to each main point
- ☐ My analysis is balanced (not too much summary, not too much opinion)
- ☐ Evidence and analysis are properly balanced (about 40/60 split)

Balance issues: _____

THESIS-TO-CONCLUSION ALIGNMENT

Read Your Thesis → Read Your Conclusion

- ☐ My conclusion proves what my thesis promised
- ☐ I addressed all points mentioned in my thesis
- ☐ My argument delivered on its claims
- ☐ No "thesis drift" (argument didn't change mid-essay)

Alignment issues: _____

PASS 1 SUMMARY

Major Issues to Address:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Restructuring Needed:

- ☐ Move paragraphs: _____
- ☐ Rewrite thesis: _____
- ☐ Add missing paragraph: _____
- ☐ Remove paragraph: _____
- ☐ Strengthen conclusion: _____

Complete restructuring before moving to Pass 2

PASS 2: PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Evidence & Analysis (45-60 minutes)

Goal: Ensure every paragraph has strong evidence, thorough analysis, and clear development.

What to do: Read paragraph by paragraph, checking each element carefully. This is your most detailed pass.

TOPIC SENTENCES

For Each Body Paragraph Check:

- ☐ Topic sentence states the paragraph's main point
- ☐ It's specific (not vague)
- ☐ It clearly connects to the thesis
- ☐ It makes a claim (not just announces a topic)
- ☐ It guides the entire paragraph

Weak topic sentences: Paragraph #, #, # _____

Revisions needed: _____

EVIDENCE QUALITY

Evidence Check (For Each Paragraph)

Paragraph #1:

- ☐ I have 2-3 pieces of specific evidence

- ☐ Evidence is properly integrated (not just dropped in)
- ☐ Quotes are introduced with context
- ☐ Citations are correct and complete
- ☐ Evidence is relevant and strong (not just convenient)

Issues: _____

Paragraph #2:

- ☐ I have 2-3 pieces of specific evidence
- ☐ Evidence is properly integrated (not just dropped in)
- ☐ Quotes are introduced with context
- ☐ Citations are correct and complete
- ☐ Evidence is relevant and strong (not just convenient)

Issues: _____

Paragraph #3:

- ☐ I have 2-3 pieces of specific evidence
- ☐ Evidence is properly integrated (not just dropped in)
- ☐ Quotes are introduced with context
- ☐ Citations are correct and complete
- ☐ Evidence is relevant and strong (not just convenient)

Issues: _____

QUOTE INTEGRATION

Check Each Quote:

- ☐ No "naked quotes" (all quotes have introduction)
- ☐ I use signal phrases (e.g., "Fitzgerald reveals," "According to...")
- ☐ Quotes flow grammatically within my sentences
- ☐ I provide context before the quote
- ☐ Quote length is appropriate (usually under 4 lines)

Integration problems: _____

Quote Format Examples:

- ✓ GOOD: According to Smith, "the economy collapsed due to speculation" (45).
- ✓ GOOD: The narrator observes that Gatsby "stretched out his arms toward the dark water" (Fitzgerald 20).
- ✗ BAD: "The economy collapsed due to speculation" (Smith 45). [No introduction]

ANALYSIS DEPTH

The 2:1 Analysis Rule

For every 1 sentence of evidence, you need 2-3 sentences of analysis

Paragraph #1:

- ☐ I explain WHAT the evidence shows
- ☐ I explain HOW the evidence works (technique/method)
- ☐ I explain WHY it matters (significance/meaning)
- ☐ I connect analysis back to thesis
- ☐ I avoid just summarizing the quote

Analysis strength: [] Strong [] Adequate [] Weak

Where I need more analysis: _____

Paragraph #2:

- ☐ I explain WHAT the evidence shows
- ☐ I explain HOW the evidence works (technique/method)
- ☐ I explain WHY it matters (significance/meaning)
- ☐ I connect analysis back to thesis
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Paragraph #3:

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- ☐ I connect analysis back to thesis
- ☐ I avoid just summarizing the quote

Analysis strength: [] Strong [] Adequate [] Weak

Where I need more analysis: _____

ANALYSIS QUALITY CHECK

Common Analysis Problems:

Plot Summary Instead of Analysis:

- ☐ I avoid simply retelling what happens
- ☐ I focus on meaning, not events
- ☐ I interpret rather than describe

Paragraphs with too much summary: #, #, # _____

Obvious Observations:

- ☐ My analysis goes beyond the obvious
- ☐ I explain insights readers might not see immediately
- ☐ I dig deeper into meaning and significance

Analysis that needs deepening: _____

Missing "So What?":

- ☐ Every analysis section explains significance
- ☐ I connect to larger themes/thesis
- ☐ I answer "why does this matter?"

Where significance is unclear: _____

PARAGRAPH INTERNAL STRUCTURE

For Each Paragraph:

- ☐ Clear order: Topic Sentence → Evidence → Analysis → Evidence → Analysis
- ☐ Sentences connect logically
- ☐ No sudden jumps in logic
- ☐ Each sentence relates to the paragraph's main point
- ☐ Concluding/transition sentence wraps up the point

Paragraphs with structural issues: #, #, # _____

Specific issues: _____

TRANSITIONS & CONNECTIONS

Between Sentences:

- ☐ I use transition words/phrases where needed
- ☐ Connections between ideas are clear
- ☐ I avoid choppy, disconnected sentences
- ☐ Ideas flow smoothly within paragraphs

Choppy sections: _____

Between Paragraphs:

- ☐ Each paragraph connects to the next
- ☐ I use transition sentences or phrases
- ☐ The progression of ideas is logical
- ☐ No jarring jumps between topics

Weak transitions between: Para. #____ → #, **Para.** # → #____

Common Transition Words by Function:

Adding information: Furthermore, Moreover, Additionally, Also **Showing contrast:** However, Nevertheless, On the other hand, Conversely **Showing cause/effect:** Therefore, Consequently, As a result, Thus **Giving examples:** For instance, For example, Specifically, Particularly **Emphasizing:** Indeed, In fact, Certainly, Undoubtedly

Transitions to add: _____

TERMINOLOGY & LITERARY DEVICES

Literary Analysis Language:

- ☐ I use analytical verbs (reveals, demonstrates, suggests, illustrates)
- ☐ I correctly identify literary devices
- ☐ I use literary terms accurately
- ☐ I maintain present tense when discussing literature
- ☐ I refer to author by last name (after first full reference)

Terminology issues: _____

PASS 2 SUMMARY

Paragraph-Level Issues:

1.

2.

3.

Evidence/Analysis Tasks:

- ☐ Add evidence to paragraph: _____
- ☐ Expand analysis in paragraph: _____
- ☐ Improve quote integration in paragraph: _____
- ☐ Strengthen transitions between: _____

Complete these revisions before moving to Pass 3

PASS 3: SENTENCES & POLISH

Focus: Clarity, Style, & Correctness (30-45 minutes)

Goal: Polish every sentence for clarity, eliminate errors, and ensure professional presentation.

What to do: Read slowly, sentence by sentence. Read aloud if possible—you'll catch more errors!

SENTENCE CLARITY

For Every Sentence:

- ☐ Each sentence has one clear main idea
- ☐ No overly long, convoluted sentences (25+ words)
- ☐ No sentence fragments (incomplete thoughts)
- ☐ Subject and verb are clear
- ☐ Meaning is immediately clear on first reading

Unclear sentences: _____

Sentence Variety:

- ☐ I vary sentence length (mix short, medium, long)
- ☐ I vary sentence structure (not all subject-verb-object)
- ☐ I avoid starting every sentence the same way
- ☐ I use different sentence types (simple, compound, complex)

Sections with repetitive structure: _____

WORD CHOICE & STYLE

Precision & Conciseness:

- ☐ Every word serves a purpose
- ☐ I cut unnecessary words and phrases
- ☐ I use specific, concrete words (not vague terms)
- ☐ I avoid filler phrases ("it is clear that," "due to the fact that")
- ☐ I eliminate redundancy ("completely eliminate" → "eliminate")

Wordy phrases to cut: _____

Common Wordiness Fixes:

- "due to the fact that" → "because"
 - "in spite of the fact that" → "although"
 - "at this point in time" → "now"
 - "in order to" → "to"
 - "it is important to note that" → [delete]
-

Academic Tone:

- ☐ I avoid contractions (don't → do not)
- ☐ I avoid casual language/slang
- ☐ I avoid first person (I, me, my) unless assigned
- ☐ I avoid second person (you, your)
- ☐ I maintain formal, analytical tone
- ☐ I avoid emotional language (amazing, terrible)

Tone issues: _____

Powerful Verbs:

- ☐ I use strong, specific verbs
- ☐ I minimize "to be" verbs (is, are, was, were)
- ☐ I avoid passive voice where possible
- ☐ I use analytical verbs (reveals, demonstrates, illustrates)

Weak verbs to strengthen: _____

GRAMMAR & MECHANICS

Sentence-Level Grammar:

- ☐ No run-on sentences
- ☐ No comma splices
- ☐ No sentence fragments
- ☐ Subject-verb agreement throughout
- ☐ Consistent verb tenses (present tense for literature)
- ☐ Proper pronoun references (clear antecedents)

Grammar errors found: _____

Punctuation:

- ☐ Commas used correctly
- ☐ Semicolons used correctly (if any)
- ☐ Quotation marks around all direct quotes
- ☐ Periods inside quotation marks (MLA style)
- ☐ Apostrophes used correctly (possessives and contractions)
- ☐ No missing or extra punctuation

Punctuation issues: _____

Common Comma Rules:

- ☒ After introductory phrases: "In the novel, Gatsby represents..."
 - ☒ Before coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences: "X, and Y"
 - ☒ Around nonessential clauses: "Gatsby, who made his fortune illegally, dies alone"
 - ☒ NOT between subject and verb: "The green light symbolizes hope"
-

CITATION & FORMATTING

Citations:

- ☐ Every quote has proper citation
- ☐ Citation format is consistent (MLA/APA/Chicago)
- ☐ Page numbers are accurate
- ☐ In-text citations match Works Cited/References
- ☐ No missing citations

Citation issues: _____

MLA Quick Check:

- ☐ Author's last name and page: (Fitzgerald 25)
- ☐ No "p." or "pg." before page number
- ☐ Period goes AFTER parenthetical citation
- ☐ Quotation marks before citation: "quote" (25).

APA Quick Check:

- ☐ Author, year, page: (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 25)
- ☐ "p." or "pp." before page number
- ☐ Period goes AFTER parenthetical citation

Formatting:

- ☐ Title is centered and properly formatted (not underlined)
- ☐ Paragraphs are indented OR have space between (pick one)
- ☐ Font is appropriate (Times New Roman, 12pt)
- ☐ Double-spaced throughout (including Works Cited)
- ☐ 1-inch margins all around
- ☐ Header with last name and page number (MLA)
- ☐ Works Cited/References on separate page

Formatting issues: _____

TITLE CHECK

Your Title:

- ☐ Reflects essay content accurately
- ☐ Is specific and interesting (not "Analytical Essay")
- ☐ Is NOT in quotation marks or italics
- ☐ Uses title case (capitalize major words)
- ☐ Includes text title properly formatted

Title improvement needed? _____

Better title ideas: _____

PROOFREADING SPECIFICS

Read Backward:

Start with last sentence and read backward to catch typos better

- ☐ No spelling errors
- ☐ No typos
- ☐ No missing words
- ☐ No repeated words
- ☐ Names spelled correctly
- ☐ Text title spelled correctly

Errors found: _____

Commonly Confused Words:

- ☐ their/there/they're used correctly
 - ☐ its/it's used correctly
 - ☐ affect/effect used correctly
 - ☐ then/than used correctly
 - ☐ to/too/two used correctly
 - ☐ your/you're used correctly
-

Read Aloud:

Read entire essay aloud (or use text-to-speech)

- ☐ No awkward phrasing
- ☐ Sentences sound natural
- ☐ Rhythm and flow work well
- ☐ No tongue-twisters or confusion

Awkward sentences: _____

WORKS CITED / REFERENCES

Bibliography Check:

- ☐ All sources cited in essay are listed
- ☐ All listed sources are cited in essay
- ☐ Entries are in alphabetical order
- ☐ Hanging indent format used
- ☐ All required information included (author, title, publisher, date)

☐ Format matches citation style (MLA/APA)

Works Cited issues: _____

FINAL POLISH

Presentation:

- ☐ Essay looks professional
 - ☐ No handwritten corrections visible
 - ☐ Consistent formatting throughout
 - ☐ Clean, easy to read
 - ☐ All pages numbered
 - ☐ Name and date on first page
-

Final Read-Through:

- ☐ I've read the entire essay start to finish one final time
 - ☐ I'm confident in my argument
 - ☐ Everything makes sense
 - ☐ I'm proud of this work
-

PASS 3 SUMMARY

Sentence-Level Fixes:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Proofreading Corrections:

- ☐ Grammar errors fixed: _____
 - ☐ Punctuation corrected: _____
 - ☐ Citations verified: _____
 - ☐ Formatting checked: _____
-

FINAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Before You Submit:

Requirements Met:

- ☐ Word count requirement met: _____ / _____
 - ☐ All assignment requirements addressed
 - ☐ Correct format (MLA/APA/Chicago)
 - ☐ All required sections included
 - ☐ Submitted to correct location/platform
-

Quality Assurance:

- ☐ Thesis is clear and arguable
 - ☐ Every paragraph supports thesis
 - ☐ Evidence is strong and well-integrated
 - ☐ Analysis explains HOW and WHY
 - ☐ No plot summary without analysis
 - ☐ Introduction and conclusion are strong
 - ☐ All grammar/spelling errors corrected
 - ☐ All citations are complete and correct
-

File Check (if submitting digitally):

- ☐ File named correctly (usually: LastName_Assignment.doc)
 - ☐ Correct file format (.doc, .docx, .pdf)
 - ☐ File opens properly
 - ☐ All formatting preserved
 - ☐ No tracked changes or comments visible
-

REVISION TRACKING

Time Spent on Each Pass:

- Pass 1: _____ minutes
- Pass 2: _____ minutes
- Pass 3: _____ minutes
- Total revision time: _____ minutes

Major Improvements Made:

1.
2.
3.

Confidence Level:

Before revision: ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

After revision: ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

POST-SUBMISSION REFLECTION

What I Learned:

What I'll Do Differently Next Time:

Strongest Part of My Essay:

Area for Future Improvement:

QUICK REFERENCE: REVISION PRIORITIES

If you have limited time, focus on these high-impact areas:

Priority 1 (Must Fix):

- Thesis clarity and arguability
- Evidence supporting each claim
- Citations and Works Cited accuracy
- Major grammar errors
- Meeting assignment requirements

Priority 2 (Should Fix):

- Analysis depth and quality

- Topic sentence strength
- Paragraph organization
- Transitions between ideas
- Introduction and conclusion strength

Priority 3 (Nice to Fix):

- Sentence variety
 - Word choice refinement
 - Minor style improvements
 - Formatting polish
-

 **CONGRATULATIONS! You've completed all three revision passes!**

Your essay is now:

- Structurally sound ✓
- Well-developed ✓
- Polished and professional ✓

You're ready to submit with confidence!