

Classification Essay Checklist

Introduction

- ☐ Opens with engaging hook (question, quote, scenario, or interesting fact)
- ☐ Provides background/context about the topic being classified
- ☐ Clearly states what you're classifying
- ☐ Includes a clear classification thesis statement
- ☐ Thesis announces all categories and classification principle
- ☐ Thesis uses proper format: "[Topic] can be classified into [#] types based on [principle]: [Category 1], [Category 2], and [Category 3]"

Example Thesis: "College students can be classified into three types based on their study habits: Procrastinators, Planners, and Crammers."

Classification Structure

Number of Categories

- ☐ Has 3-5 categories (not too few, not too many)
- ☐ All categories clearly defined and distinct
- ☐ Categories don't overlap significantly
- ☐ Categories are mutually exclusive when possible

Classification Principle

- ☐ Uses ONE consistent organizing principle throughout
- ☐ Classification principle is logical and appropriate
- ☐ Principle stated or clearly implied in thesis
- ☐ Same principle applied to all categories

Common Principles: behavior, appearance, function, skill level, frequency, attitude, time period, purpose

Body Paragraphs (One Per Category)

Structure - Each Body Paragraph Has:

- ☐ Clear topic sentence introducing the category
- ☐ 2-3 defining characteristics explained
- ☐ At least 1-2 specific examples
- ☐ Analysis explaining the category
- ☐ Proper transitions between paragraphs

Equal Development

- ☐ All category paragraphs roughly equal length
- ☐ Each category developed with similar depth
- ☐ No category significantly shorter than others
- ☐ Same level of detail for all categories

Category Order

- ☐ Categories arranged in logical order
 - ☐ Order makes sense (simple→complex, least→most important, chronological)
 - ☐ Order explained or justified (if relevant)
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Examples and Details

- ☐ Every category has specific, concrete examples
- ☐ Examples are relevant and illustrate characteristics
- ☐ Examples are detailed enough to be clear
- ☐ Uses real-life scenarios or situations
- ☐ Examples help readers visualize each category
- ☐ No vague or generic examples

Good Example: “The Procrastinator waits until 2 AM the night before to start a research paper due at 8 AM.”

Weak Example: “Procrastinators wait until the last minute.”

Transitions

- ☐ Smooth transitions between introduction and first category
- ☐ Transitions between each category paragraph
- ☐ Uses appropriate classification transition words
- ☐ Transitions show relationships between categories
- ☐ Transition from last category to conclusion

Useful Transitions: - First/Second/Third type... - Another category... - Unlike [Category 1]... - In contrast to... - The final category... - While [X] does this, [Y]...

Characteristics and Definitions

- ☐ Each category clearly defined
 - ☐ Characteristics specific to that category
 - ☐ Distinctions between categories obvious
 - ☐ No confusion about what belongs where
 - ☐ Explains what makes each category unique
 - ☐ Characteristics support classification principle
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Conclusion

- ☐ Restates classification (not word-for-word from intro)
 - ☐ Summarizes all categories briefly
 - ☐ Shows relationships between categories
 - ☐ Explains significance of classification
 - ☐ Answers “so what?” - why this classification matters
 - ☐ Ends with memorable final thought
 - ☐ No new categories introduced
 - ☐ No new information or examples
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Writing Quality

Clarity

- ☐ Clear, straightforward language
- ☐ Categories easy to understand
- ☐ No confusing or ambiguous statements
- ☐ Technical terms defined (if used)

Organization

- ☐ Logical flow from paragraph to paragraph
- ☐ Each paragraph focused on one category
- ☐ No jumping between categories within paragraphs
- ☐ Consistent structure across all body paragraphs

Tone

- ☐ Appropriate academic tone (unless otherwise specified)
 - ☐ Consistent tone throughout
 - ☐ Objective when analyzing categories
 - ☐ Balanced treatment of all categories
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Common Classification Essay Mistakes

Content Mistakes - Check That You:

- ☐ Don't have overlapping categories
- ☐ Didn't switch classification principles mid-essay
- ☐ Didn't include only 2 categories (that's comparison/contrast)
- ☐ Didn't include more than 5-6 categories (too many)
- ☐ Didn't develop one category much more than others
- ☐ Didn't leave out important examples
- ☐ Didn't judge categories as "good" or "bad" (unless that's the point)

Structure Mistakes - Check That You:

- ☐ Didn't forget thesis statement
- ☐ Didn't fail to announce all categories in intro
- ☐ Didn't mix categories within single paragraphs
- ☐ Didn't skip conclusion
- ☐ Didn't add categories not mentioned in thesis

Example Mistakes - Check That You:

- ☐ Didn't use only general statements without examples
 - ☐ Didn't repeat same type of example for each category
 - ☐ Didn't use unclear or confusing examples
 - ☐ Didn't forget examples for some categories
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Formatting and Mechanics

Basic Format

- ☐ Meets required length/word count
- ☐ Proper heading (if required)
- ☐ Title reflects classification topic
- ☐ Appropriate font and spacing
- ☐ Page numbers (if required)

Grammar and Mechanics

- ☐ No spelling errors
- ☐ No grammar mistakes
- ☐ Proper punctuation throughout
- ☐ Consistent verb tense
- ☐ Subject-verb agreement
- ☐ Proper pronoun usage

Sentences and Paragraphs

- ☐ Complete sentences (no fragments)
 - ☐ Varied sentence structure
 - ☐ Appropriate paragraph length (not too short/long)
 - ☐ Each paragraph has topic sentence
 - ☐ Paragraphs unified around one idea
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Final Review Checklist

Content Review

- ☐ Topic clearly classified throughout
- ☐ Thesis accurately reflects essay content
- ☐ All promised categories discussed
- ☐ Categories remain distinct throughout
- ☐ Purpose of classification clear
- ☐ Main point/argument evident

Audience Consideration

- ☐ Appropriate for intended audience
- ☐ Categories make sense to readers
- ☐ Examples relatable and understandable
- ☐ No unexplained jargon or terms
- ☐ Tone appropriate for audience

Assignment Requirements

- ☐ Follows specific professor instructions
 - ☐ Addresses assignment prompt completely
 - ☐ Meets all specified requirements
 - ☐ Uses required format/style
 - ☐ Submitted by deadline
 - ☐ Submitted to correct platform
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Quick Self-Assessment Questions

Ask yourself before submitting:

1. **Can I clearly state my classification principle in one sentence?**
 - If no → revise to clarify your organizing principle
 2. **Are my categories truly distinct, or do they overlap?**
 - If they overlap → redefine or combine categories
 3. **Could I add another example to each category from memory?**
 - If no → categories might need more development
 4. **Would a reader understand why this classification matters?**
 - If no → strengthen your conclusion's significance section
 5. **Are all my body paragraphs roughly the same length?**
 - If no → develop thin paragraphs or trim overly long ones
 6. **Does my conclusion add something beyond just repeating the intro?**
 - If no → add synthesis or significance
 7. **Can someone who knows nothing about my topic understand it?**
 - If no → add more explanation and context
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Category Development Test

For EACH category, you should be able to answer YES to:

- ☐ I can define this category in 1-2 sentences
- ☐ I can list 2-3 specific characteristics
- ☐ I can provide 1-2 concrete examples
- ☐ I can explain why items belong in this category
- ☐ I can explain how this differs from other categories
- ☐ I've written 5-7+ sentences about this category

If you answered NO to any: that category needs more development.

Peer Review Checklist

Have someone else read your essay and confirm:

- ☐ They understood all categories clearly
 - ☐ Categories seemed distinct and logical
 - ☐ Examples made sense and illustrated points
 - ☐ Classification principle was clear
 - ☐ Essay flowed smoothly between sections
 - ☐ Conclusion tied everything together
 - ☐ They learned something or found it interesting
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Before You Submit

Final Checks

- ☐ Read essay aloud to catch errors
- ☐ Checked against assignment rubric
- ☐ All categories equally developed
- ☐ Thesis matches actual essay content
- ☐ Introduction and conclusion connect
- ☐ No placeholder text or notes left in
- ☐ File saved with correct name
- ☐ File in correct format (.doc, .docx, .pdf)

Confidence Check

- ☐ Proud of the work submitted
 - ☐ Categories well-researched and thought out
 - ☐ Examples strengthen rather than confuse
 - ☐ Essay achieves its purpose
 - ☐ Ready for evaluation
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Print this checklist and use it before submitting your classification essay!