

Essay Writing Checklist

A comprehensive, step-by-step checklist covering everything from pre-writing preparation to final proofreading, designed to help students produce clear, accurate, academically sound essays without missing essential requirements.

Pre-Writing Preparation

- Understand the assignment, prompt, and required citation style
- Identify purpose, audience, and argument type
- Conduct preliminary research and collect credible, recent sources
- Verify source reliability and note key evidence
- Create a working thesis based on initial findings
- Outline main sections with topic points

Drafting Essentials

- Open with a clear, engaging introduction and strong thesis
- Maintain logical flow between paragraphs
- Use topic sentences to signal purpose
- Integrate evidence with proper citations
- Explain, analyze, and connect all quoted/paraphrased material
- Maintain academic tone and avoid informal language
- Ensure relevance—no filler sentences

Revision Priorities

- Strengthen thesis clarity and argumentative focus
- Ensure each paragraph supports the thesis
- Check transitions and logical sequencing
- Improve clarity, depth, and explanation of ideas
- Replace weak evidence or outdated sources
- Remove redundancies and tighten wording
- Verify citation accuracy and consistency

Final Proofreading Verification

- Fix grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors
- Ensure formatting follows required style guide (APA, MLA, Chicago)
- Confirm all sources appear in the reference list
- Check headings, spacing, margins, and title page
- Ensure final draft meets word count and assignment criteria
- Read final essay aloud for clarity and flow