

25-Point Essay Writing Checklist

(Detailed Guide)

Pre-Writing (Foundation)

1. **Read the assignment prompt carefully** — Highlight key verbs (analyze, compare, evaluate) and required components.
2. **Identify all technical requirements** — Word count, citation style, number of sources, formatting rules, due date.
3. **Clarify anything unclear** — Confirm expectations before you start research.
4. **Choose a focused, manageable topic** — Not too broad or too narrow; aligns with the prompt.
5. **Conduct initial research** — Gather credible, relevant, and up-to-date scholarly sources.
6. **Take organized notes** — Record quotes, ideas, statistics, and full citation details to avoid plagiarism.

Planning & Structuring

7. **Develop a clear thesis statement** — Specific, arguable, and directly answers the essay question.
8. **Create a detailed outline** — Plan introduction, body points, supporting evidence, and conclusion.
9. **Map evidence to each main point** — Attach sources, examples, and analysis to every paragraph.
10. **Check logical flow** — Ensure your points build naturally from one to the next.
11. **Plan transitions** — Note where linking words or sentences will be needed for smooth flow.

Drafting (First Version)

12. **Write a strong hook** — Statistic, question, bold claim, or anecdote.
13. **Provide necessary background** — Brief context that leads to your thesis.
14. **Draft a clear introduction ending with your thesis** — Sets direction and scope.
15. **Write focused body paragraphs** — Each paragraph covers *one* main idea.
16. **Use evidence effectively** — Insert quotes, examples, and data with correct citations.
17. **Include analysis after each piece of evidence** — Explain its relevance and link to the thesis.
18. **Insert transitions** — Maintain clarity and flow between sentences and paragraphs.

19. **Write a strong conclusion** — Summarize main ideas, restate significance, avoid repeating the intro.

Revision (Content & Structure)

20. **Check overall argument strength** — Is your claim clear, supported, and consistent?
21. **Review clarity and coherence** — Ensure every paragraph directly supports the thesis.
22. **Remove irrelevant or repetitive content** — Cut anything that doesn't advance the argument.
23. **Strengthen weak evidence** — Replace vague statements with precise, academic support.

Polishing & Final Checks

24. **Edit grammar, punctuation, and style** — Use tools but rely on your own proofreading too.
25. **Verify formatting and citations** — Ensure full compliance with APA/MLA/Chicago, proper references, headings, and final word count.