Editing and Proofreading Checklist

Editing for Content
☐ Have I answered the actual question?
☐ Is what I have to say interesting?
☐ Does my introduction grab the reader’s attention?
☐ Do I explore the topic in sufficient depth?
☐ Have I included a high level of detail and concrete evidence?
☐ Are all the details and evidence relevant?
☐ Do I offer specific insights rather than generalizations and clichés?
☐ Does my conclusion make an impression on the reader and answer the question “So what?”

☐ Are any of the paragraphs too long? Too short?
☐ Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
☐ Are the transitions clear and easy to spot?
☐ Are the details, evidence, and discussions well integrated?
☐ Is the essay clear and coherent?
☐ Is the structure “visible” in terms of introduction, body, and conclusion?
☐ Does it have impact?

Editing for Structure
☐ Is it easy to identify the overarching theme? Is it actually articulated?
☐ Is the thesis statement clearly identifiable and well expressed?
☐ Are the theme and thesis put in context?
☐ Do the paragraphs flow smoothly?
☐ Are there any gaps or jumps?
☐ Does each point build upon the previous point?

☐ Are any of the paragraphs too long? Too short?
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☐ Are the transitions clear and easy to spot?
☐ Are the details, evidence, and discussions well integrated?
☐ Is the essay clear and coherent?
☐ Is the structure “visible” in terms of introduction, body, and conclusion?
☐ Does it have impact?

Editing for Style
☐ Is the style consistent throughout?
☐ Are the sentence constructions varied?
☐ Is the vocabulary interesting and precise?
☐ Is the voice active rather than passive throughout?
☐ Have I avoided using too many adjectives and adverbs?
☐ Is the tone appropriate for the assignment and topic?
☐ Is my own voice evident throughout without the use of “I”?
☐ Have I included enough quotations? Too many?
☐ I have conveyed confidence, enthusiasm, and passion?

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Proofreading for Language

☐ Have I run spell check? (Note the red lines.)
☐ Have I paid attention to grammar check? (Note the green lines.)
  • Is subject/verb agreement correct throughout?
  • Is each sentence complete? No fragments!
  • Is the pronoun reference correct throughout?
  • Is the parallel structure correct throughout?
☐ Have I used any words too often? Use the thesaurus function.
☐ Have I left out any words? Read aloud, slowly, pointing to each word.

Proofreading for Punctuation

☐ Is the use of commas correct throughout?
  • Separating two complete thoughts in a sentence
    The author was born in Ireland, and she was raised in a tiny village off the northeast coast.
  • After introductory words, phrases, or clauses
    After having suffered a lifetime of destitution and deprivation, Lily did not know what to make of her new situation.
  • Around parenthetical (interrupting) statements
    Lily, in a state of confusion and despair, escaped from her mental prison and fled the island.

Proofreading for Format

☐ Is my title page correct according to instructions?
☐ Have I double spaced?
☐ Have I used Times-Roman 12 point font?
☐ Have I put in the running head?

Proofreading for Citations and References

☐ Have I cited all the sources for ideas as well as facts?
  • Are my in-text citations introduced clearly and correctly?
  • Have I done the parenthetical citations correctly? Check the style guide - don’t guess!
  • Is my reference/works cited page formatted properly?
  • Have I followed the style guide accurately for references?