

Paper Checklist

- ☐ My paper has a specific thesis or central argument.
- ☐ My thesis addresses itself to an appropriate question or topic in a full and interesting way. In other words, my thesis has an appropriate degree of complexity and it is neither too broad nor trivial.
- ☐ Every paragraph supports my thesis (either directly or indirectly). In other words, every paragraph gives me a reason to believe your thesis.
- ☐ Every paragraph has both a topic sentence and a transition sentence.
- ☐ Within each paragraph, every sentence is relevant to the topic sentence.
- ☐ The ideas in my paper are organized in a logical and coherent manner. The ideas flow well and make sense. And I stick to my point.
- ☐ I explain and not just describe the phenomena I'm writing about.
- ☐ My writing style is efficient; not wordy, flowery, or unclear.
- ☐ I have a sufficient amount of evidence supporting my thesis (either examples or empirical research depending on the context).
- ☐ My supporting evidence is of compelling quality.
- ☐ My supporting evidence is relevant – it responds to my thesis.
- ☐ I say **why** my evidence supports my thesis. In other words, I make a clear connection between my evidence and my thesis.
- ☐ I do not have any unexplained or unsupported assertions in my paper. In other words, every assertion that requires either a separate explanation or a reference has one.
- ☐ My paper is neither too long nor too short to support my thesis well.
- ☐ My paper is free of basic grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. I have proofread it thoroughly.
- ☐ My paper is free from long stretches of quotations and summaries that exist only for their own sakes and remain unanalyzed.
- ☐ My paper has a real conclusion, not simply a stopping place.

Once your paper is finished (or nearly so), please review it and assure yourself that these conditions have been satisfied. If you are having trouble with any of these issues, allow yourself enough time to come to me for help and still turn your paper in on time. Note that fulfilling each of these criteria (or believing you have) does not guarantee an 'A,' but failure to do so will result in less than an 'A.'