

MLA Editing Checklist

1. Is the **title** of my essay at least moderately informative?
2. Do I identify the subject of my essay (author and title) early?
3. What is my **thesis**? Do I state it soon enough and keep it in view throughout the paper?
4. Is the **organization** reasonable? Does each point lead into the next without irrelevancies and without anticlimaxes?
5. Is each paragraph unified by a topic sentence or a topic idea? Are there adequate transitions from one paragraph to the next? (Note: A topic sentence for a new paragraph should not be placed as the last sentence of the old paragraph to transition into the new one: the topic sentence should appear in the paragraph to which it relates.)
6. Are generalizations supported by appropriate concrete details, especially by brief quotations from the text?
7. Is the opening paragraph interesting, and, by its end, focused on the topic? Is the concluding paragraph conclusive without being repetitive?
8. Is the tone appropriate--no sarcasm, no apologies, no condescension?
9. If there is needed summary, is it as brief as possible?
10. Are the quotations accurate? Do they serve a purpose other than to add words to the essay? Are they introduced at the beginning of a sentence by giving the reader some information to establish context for them? Is their relevance clear to points being made, or is some explanation needed after the quotation?
11. Is documentation provided when necessary?
12. Are the spelling and punctuation correct? Are all mechanical matters (margins, spacing, MLA citations) in correct form? Has the paper been proofread carefully? (Check especially for **comma splices**, **run-ons**, complete sentences, **subject-verb agreement**, **pronoun-antecedent agreement**; also use spell check.)
13. Does the paper have a proper heading: author's name, instructor's name, course number, and date?
14. Has the work avoided all examples of informal/unclear diction: a lot, thing, you...(For clarification, see other examples on this website under **Style/Usage**.)