



Planning for Revision: Develop Your Own Checklist

Everyone makes mistakes, but we don't want to repeat them. Make a common error checklist that you can pull out before the next assignment. You'll be able to look for each error by reading for them individually. Similarly, you can make note of what strategies help you to see these errors and correct them.

Possible Checklist for Your Writing

1. Revise for content and structure

- ✓ Have you completed all the requirements of the assignment? (This is a good time to double check.)
strategy: *Review the minimum requirements on the course outline and assignment sheet. Can you easily identify where you meet the requirements?*
- ✓ Have you considered the audience?
strategy: *Define key terms in your paper and provide adequate background information.*
- ✓ Is your paper structured effectively?
strategy: *If your paper's structure seems weak, make an outline of your paper's sections and subsections. Does it follow the guidelines provided by the instructor?*

2. Revise for use of sources

- ✓ Have you used your sources effectively? Do they support the point you are making?
- ✓ Have you cited the source for all quotations and borrowed information—even if you put it into your own words?
- ✓ Have you documented every instance of borrowed information and included a reference list in a standard format (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA, CSE, etc.)?

3. Revise for clarity, precision and conciseness

- ✓ Are your sentences all clear and readable?
- ✓ Have you used pronouns effectively
strategy: *Reword sentences to get rid of **you** and **your**.*
strategy: *Wherever possible, keep nouns in your discussion plural so you can use the pronouns **they** and **their**. You will be avoiding sexist usage, cumbersome he/she pairs, and ungrammatical pronoun shifts (e.g. a student → they)*
- ✓ Is your writing concise?
strategy: *Cut out unnecessary references to your paper (e.g., "I will try to prove . . .")*
strategy: *Get rid of adjectives like "very," long introductory phrases that say little, and unnecessary "it is" and "there are" phrases.*

4. Edit for grammar, punctuation and spelling

- ✓ Have you edited your paper systematically?
strategy: *Check each verb for (1) correct tense, (2) correct verb form, and (3) proper agreement with the subject of the verb.*
strategy: *If you've used **it's**, make sure you mean **it is** or **it has**; otherwise, write **its**.*
strategy: *Check your possessives to be sure the apostrophe is in the right place.*
strategy: *Use **Effect** (a noun) when you mean **consEquEncE**; use **Affect** (a verb) when you mean **Act on**.*

