A Checklist for Research Papers

☐ Is the title informative and appropriate?

☐ Is the thesis clear?

☐ Is the organization logical? If headings are used, are they consistent?

☐ Are sentences varied in length and structure?

☐ Are tone, voice, and diction consistent and appropriate?

☐ Are the transitions smooth from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph?

☐ Are credible sources and evidence used? Is the supporting material suitable and persuasive?

☐ Are quotations, and paraphrased and summarized passages properly introduced with a signal phrase?

☐ Are visual materials – tables, figures, charts, maps, and the like – introduced before they appear in the text?

☐ Are long block quotations set off from the text?

☐ Is proper credit given to sources throughout?

☐ Does the paper consistently adhere to the style used?

☐ Were the instructions for the assignment – length, number, and kinds of resources to be used, directions for title page or documentation – followed carefully?

A Checklist for **Lab Reports and Scientific Papers**

- Is the title concise, and does it adequately describe the contents?

- Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included and in proper order?

- Are the tone and style appropriate? Scientific writing is intended to be more factual than entertaining: leave out descriptive language, anecdotes, personal opinions, humor, or dialogue.

- Does the writer use passive voice? (Ex: “Solution A was centrifuged” not “I centrifuged solution A.”)

- Is the past tense used for describing procedures and present tense for describing results and conclusions?

- Are sentences short and to the point, expressing facts clearly and concisely? Does the writer answer all the basic questions about the topic?

- Have disciplinary conventions related to symbols and abbreviations been observed?

- Are figures and tables numbered and accompanied by explanatory captions? Are they introduced before they appear in the text?

A Checklist for **Argument or Position Papers**

- Is the claim or proposition – what the writer is trying to prove – clearly stated?
- Are all assertions supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence – facts, interpretations of facts, opinions – appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Cited sources should be reliable.
- Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
- Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinions placed properly? Are they used in an appropriate context?
- Is the evidence carefully documented?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Has the writer avoided all logical fallacies?
- Are the terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
- Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?
A Checklist for **Literary Analysis Papers**

- Is the thesis clearly stated?
- Does the writer use examples from the text to convincingly support their interpretation or analysis?
- Has the writer avoided giving a simple plot summary?
- Are the parts of the work clearly and accurately indicated? Writers need to refer to particular moments in the text.
- Does the writer use present tense when describing events in a work of literature, as is convention?
- Are titles properly punctuated? Short stories, essays, and most poems appear in quotation marks; titles of books, plays, and epics are italicized.
- Has the writer referred to the author properly, using the full name initially and the last name in subsequent references?
- Is quoted material properly punctuated, indented (for long quotations), and documented according to the format specified?

A Checklist for Book, Film, and Play Reviews

☐ Does the first paragraph include the title and other important information, such as the author’s, playwright’s, or director’s name?

☐ Does the introduction give readers an idea of the nature and scope of the work? Does it establish criteria for evaluation?

☐ Are evaluative terms or phrases such as “good action” or “like a soap opera” defined? (What are the characteristics of good action? What does a soap opera involve?)

☐ Does an early paragraph orient the reader by briefly summarizing the plot or contents?

☐ Does the review make reasonable assertions and present convincing evidence (quotes, examples, and specific references) to support those assertions?

☐ Is the tone appropriate? Does it suggest that the reviewer is being fair? Does it indicate respect for readers?

☐ Does the reviewer avoid overuse of phrases like “I think” and “in my opinion”? (These qualifiers tend to weaken arguments.)