

The Scream List — Checklist for your papers.

Make sure you check you paper for these issues as they are the little things that really chip away at your writing (as well as your paper grade).

Content :

1. Do you follow a logical form of organization in your paper (3 is the magic number—assertion, evidence, importance)
2. If you make an assertion, do you provide evidence to support it? If you provide evidence, do you explain its importance to your argument? Do you make it clear how this assertion helps to support your overall thesis?
3. Can you clearly identify your thesis statement? If you are using critical sources to prove your argument, make sure you ask yourself “How does my argument differ from the argument I am citing to support my argument?”

Format:

1. Is your paper in MLA Format? (name, professor’s name, course/class, date— page numbers, proper margins, proper spacing, works cited page, proper font and font-size, paragraph length, no extra spaces or gaps)
2. Are your quotes and textual evidence formatted and cited properly? —
“This is a sample quote” (Hughes 121). OR Stephens states that “Chopin likes to watch television” (123).
3. Have you put your sources in proper MLA format on your works cited page? (Remember, web pages are not allowed as sources. Use articles from Library Databases, printed journals, or books instead).

Style:

Are you following the writing style rules?

1. No first or second person language (I, you, we, us, our, etc).
2. No contractions
3. No sentence fragments
4. No rhetorical questions
5. Avoid the vague “this” / put a noun after vague words to anchor them
6. Avoid the passive voice / minimize use of “to be” verbs (am, are, is, was, were, be, been)
7. Use transitional expressions to make your writing clearer to your audience and show logical progression of thoughts.
8. No Clichés (avoid overused, semi-vague, hollow, generic phrases).



Grammar —

1. Did you proofread your paper (not just spellcheck it)?
2. Do not end sentences with prepositions.
3. Gerunds take possessives.
4. Do not split infinitives.
5. Proper punctuation, capitalization, no comma splices, run-on sentences, etc.

REMEMBER YOUR COMMA RULES! This is the biggest Grammar/Punctuation error students make.

Top Three: Independent Clauses separated by coordinating conjunction.

Items in a series

When a dependent clause is at the front of a sentence (introductory material to the independent clause)

DO NOT SIMPLY PUT COMMAS WHERE YOU WOULD TAKE A BREATH OR PAUSE—WRITING IS NOT TALKING!

6. Are the titles typed correctly? *Italics* if it is a book or journal, “Quotations” if it is an article or chapter or short story.
7. Did you type your numbers correctly? One or two- word numbers are spelled out. Numbers that are more than two words are written as the number. Any number from Twenty-one or higher is hyphenated (unless it is one word). But be consistent within categories (for example, “The 7 Students joined the other 375 students in reading the two books).
8. Do pronouns and nouns agree? Do subjects and verbs agree?
9. Things take “that” / People take “who.” Carry over infinites for parallel structure (infinitives act as one word).
10. Use more formal versions of words (children, mother, father, grandfather.....not kids, mom, dad, grandpa, etc). Use “much” or “Many” instead of “a lot.”