

Macro Revision Checklist

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Purpose and Thesis. Make sure that you have accomplished the purpose you set out to accomplish. Make sure that your thesis is clearly stated and prominent in the essay. Make sure that the whole essay is working towards your purpose.

- Do you know exactly what you want your essay to accomplish? Can you put it in one sentence? “In this paper I want to ...”?
- Is your thesis stated outright in the essay? If not, have you provided clues so that your readers will know precisely what it is?
- Does every part of the essay work to achieve the same goal?
- Have you tried to do too much? Does your coverage seem too thin? If so, how might you reduce the scope of your thesis and essay?
- Does your essay say all that needs to be said? Is everything—ideas, connections, supporting evidence—on paper, not just in your head?
- In writing the essay, have you changed your mind, rethought your assumptions, made a discovery? Does anything now need to be recast?
- Have you developed enough evidence? Is it clear and convincing?

Audience. Examine the language you use and determine whether you are using language appropriate to the audience you wish to reach. Read like an outside reader – are there passages that drag? How does the essay address objections that a reader might raise? What is the tone/attitude conveyed by the essay? Is it appropriate, given the audience?

- Who will read this essay?
- Will your readers think you have told them something worth knowing?
- Are there any places where readers might fall asleep? If so, can you shorten, delete, or liven up such passages?
- Does the opening of the essay mislead your readers by promising something that the essay never delivers?
- Do you unfold each idea in enough detail to make it clear and interesting?
- Have you anticipated questions your audience might ask?
- Where might readers raise objections? How might you answer them?
- Have you used any specialized or technical language that your readers might not understand? If so, have you worked in brief definitions?
- What is your attitude toward your audience? Are you chummy, angry, superior, apologetic, preachy? Should you revise to improve your attitude?

Structure and Support. Read your essay, keeping in mind the structure. Does the introduction clearly set up the essay's direction? Does the essay deliver on what the introduction promises? Does each paragraph have a clear point (topic sentence) and well-placed evidence to support the point? Consider also whether to use more transitional phrases or move passages around to increase clarity and flow.

- Does your introduction set up the whole essay? Does it grab both readers' attention and hit at what is to follow?
- Does the essay fulfill all that you promise in your opening?
- Would any later passage make a better beginning?
- Is your thesis clear early in the essay? If explicit, is it positioned prominently?
- Do the paragraph breaks seem logical?
- Is the main idea of each paragraph clear? Is it stated in a topic sentence?
- Is the main idea of each paragraph fully developed? Where might you need more or better evidence? Should you omit or move any stray bits?
- Is each detail or piece of evidence relevant to the topic sentence of the paragraph and the main point of the essay?
- Would any paragraphs make more sense in a different order?
- Does everything follow clearly? Does one point smoothly lead to the next? Would transitions help make the connections clearer?
- Does the conclusion follow logically or seem tacked on?