

A Writer's Checklist

While it is important to get inside your material and express your perspective on it, you must also step out of the role of composer periodically to reflect on how your writing will be understood by others, i.e. the readers. To help you consider your work from a potential reader's point of view, refer to the following checklist as you read and revise your writing.

Does my paper...

Reflect an awareness of who I am writing for and why?

Focus on the assignment and topic without straying into what I would have preferred to write about?

Have a significant and interesting focal point or thesis that a reader could easily paraphrase?

Persuade the reader of my point of view by presenting credible details, examples, arguments, or other kinds of support?

Offer verbal and typographical cues to help the reader follow the information I have chosen to present?

Contain clear ideas that motivate the reader to read on?

Avoid wordiness, clichés, pat phrases, and repetition?

Say what I mean, using words I can expect the reader to understand?

Show respect for the reader by being grammatically correct, properly spelled, and adequately punctuated?

If you can answer 'yes' to each of these questions before you turn in your writing assignment, you will have helped yourself to a stronger piece of writing than if you had not considered these questions. You can also use these questions when asking a friend or relative to give you feedback on your writing. By asking friendly readers to answer specific questions about your paper, you get feedback you can use to improve your work.