

A Reader's Checklist

Readers are educated people who read what you write because they want to know what you have to say. Because reading is difficult work, writers are obligated to meet certain standards that engage readers and reward them for their attention. For example, readers need key sentences that direct their attention to important points; these sentences must be written to reveal the writer's thought, not to obscure it. Readers appreciate correct spelling and punctuation because these are signs of respect from the writer. Readers also expect the writer to be knowledgeable on the topic and to use a tone that fits the purpose and occasion of the document. To help you consider your work from a potential reader's perspective, refer to the reader's checklist as you read and revise your own writing.

When I read the paper does it...

- ◇ Reflect an awareness of who the writer is writing for and why?
- ◇ Focus on the assignment and topic without straying into irrelevant material?
- ◇ Have a significant and interesting focal point or thesis that I could easily paraphrase?
- ◇ Provide me with credible details, examples, arguments, or other kinds of to evidence to support the thesis statement?
- ◇ Offer verbal and typographical cues to help me follow the information the writer has chosen to present?
- ◇ Contain clear, flowing sentences that motivate me to read on?
- ◇ Avoid wordiness, clichés, pat phrases, and repetition?
- ◇ Contain words I can be expected to understand?
- ◇ Show respect for my time by being carefully proofread?

Expert readers are available on campus at The Writing Center in Liberal Arts 144. They will help you spot problem areas in your drafts and teach you to recognize your writing strengths. Free writing tutoring is available to all UM students fall and spring semesters, Monday through Friday. To make an appointment contact 243-2266, or growl@mso.umt.edu. For more information on The Writing Center go to www.umt.edu/writingcenter.