



A Writer's Checklist

As skilled writers read and revise, they consider their work from a potential reader's perspective. 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.

A checklist of questions for assessing your writing:

When I read my paper does it...

- ◇ Focus appropriately on the assignment and topic without straying into irrelevant material?
- ◇ Reflect an awareness of the potential audience and of the main purpose of the document?
- ◇ Have a significant and interesting focal point or thesis that a reader could easily paraphrase?
- ◇ Have a discussion/argument that develops logically and coherently?
- ◇ Provide credible details, examples, explanations, or other kinds of evidence to support the main point of the paper?
- ◇ Offer verbal and typographical cues to help a reader follow the information I have chosen to present?
- ◇ Contain clear, flowing sentences that motivate me to read on?
- ◇ Avoid wordiness, clichés, pat phrases, and unnecessary repetition?
- ◇ Contain precise and accurate language that my reader can be expected to understand?
- ◇ Show respect for the reader's time by being carefully proofread?