



Reviewing Your Academic Paper

Before you submit your essay or research paper, these are the points you should check:

Introduction

- Do the first few sentences catch the reader's attention?
- How else might the paper begin?
- Does the introduction provide sufficient background and context for the reader?

Thesis

- Is the thesis stated clearly?
- Can you identify the thesis statement?
- Does the thesis have a narrow focus?
- Does the paper fulfill what the thesis promises to discuss?

Supporting Points

- List the main points made in the draft, in order of presentation.
- Are any points uninteresting to you that can be removed or changed to be more interesting?
- Are any details irrelevant and should be eliminated (does the paper lack unity)?
- Do any points need to be explained less or more completely?
- Do any points require more evidence to support them?

Organization

- Are the points presented in the most effective order? Should the order be changed? If so, how? (order of importance, chronological sequence, spatially)
- Can you suggest ways to make connections/transitions between paragraphs clearer and easier to follow (coherence)?
- Do all paragraphs have a clear topic sentence?
- Do any paragraphs contain irrelevant sentences that do not add to the thesis?
- Which paragraphs are clearest and most interesting to read? Why?
- Do any paragraphs with more than one topic need to be split into multiple paragraphs? Or do any paragraphs on the same topic need to be combined?

Word Usage

- Underline words that are particularly effective – those that draw vivid pictures or provoke strong responses.
- Circle confusing or unclear words.
- Delete unnecessary words, e.g. "entire planet," and most qualifiers, such as very, often, hopefully, practically, basically, really, mostly.
- Do any words need to be defined?

Academic Integrity

- Are all ideas from sources documented in in-text citations and a list of references?
- Have you ensured that your paraphrasing is correctly done?

Tone

- What kind of attitude does the writing convey? Serious, humorous, satiric, persuasive, passionately committed, highly objective?
- Is the tone consistent throughout the paper?
- If the tone varies, is there a reason for this?

Conclusion

- Does the paper conclude in a memorable way, or does it end abruptly or trail off into vagueness?
- If you like the conclusion, why?
- How else might the paper end?

Final Thoughts

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the paper?
- What surprised you, and why?
- What was the single most important message that the writer communicated to the reader?