

EDITING CHECKLIST

(QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF)

1. Is the title of my essay at least moderately informative and interesting?
2. Do I identify the subject of my essay (author and title) early?
3. What is my thesis? Do I state it soon enough (perhaps even in the title) and keep it in view?
4. Is the organization reasonable? Does each point lead into the next without irrelevancies and without anticlimaxes?
5. Is each paragraph unified by a topic sentence or a topic idea? Are there adequate transitions from one paragraph to the next?
6. Are generalizations supported by appropriate concrete details, especially by brief quotations from the text?
7. Is the opening paragraph interesting and, by its end, focused on the topic? Is the final paragraph conclusive without being repetitive?
8. Is the tone appropriate? No sarcasm, no apologies, no condescension?
9. If there is summary, is it as brief as possible, given its purpose?
10. Are the quotations adequately introduced, and are they accurate? Do they provide evidence and let the reader hear the author's voice, or do they merely add words to the essay?
11. Is the present tense used to describe the author's work and the action of the work (e.g. "Shakespeare shows," "Hamlet dies,")?
12. Have I kept in mind the needs of my audience, for instance by defining unfamiliar terms, or by briefly summarizing works or opinions that the reader may be unfamiliar with?
13. Is documentation provided when necessary?
14. Are the spelling and punctuation correct? Are other mechanical matters (such as margins, spacing, and citations) in correct form? Have I proofread carefully?
15. Is the paper properly identified----author's name, instructor's name, course number, and date?

(Culled from A SHORT GUIDE TO WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE, 7th Edition, By Sylvan Barnet)