

Hierarchy of Concerns – Student Checklist

DOES THE ESSAY FIT THE ASSIGNMENT?

If not, the effort is wasted.

➤ If you're unsure of what the assignment requires, ask the instructor to clarify.

Scope of Topic

Is your topic too wide? Too narrow? Are you already way over the suggested page length and haven't gotten to your main point? Have you said all you have to say and have many pages to go?

➤ Feedback from a tutor, friend, or your instructor will help focus your ideas.

Evidence, Scholarship

Is there evidence to support all your points?

Which kinds of evidence are acceptable for this particular writing assignment?

- ...quotes, paraphrases, from textbook or class readings
- ...scholarly sources (journal articles found in library database)
- ...popular sources (websites, magazines, newspapers)
- ...anecdotes, personal opinion

Clarity

Does the essay make sense?

As a whole

Within individual paragraphs

At the sentence level

➤ Read it aloud, or have a friend read it.

Flow, Transitions

Does your essay move from point to point successfully?

- Use transitional words and phrases
- Consider reordering paragraphs
- Consider reordering sentences within paragraphs

Tone

Is the tone appropriate for what you're trying to do?

Are you presenting information, or opinion?

Are personal reflections okay, or do you need to sound academic, scientific? to sound neutral, etc.

Word Choice, Sentence Structure

Are some words used repetitively?

Do sentences stop and start clearly?

➤ check for run-ons, fragments

➤ consider changing anything that sounds

awkward when read out loud

Grammar, Punctuation, Format, Citation Style

➤ Proofread carefully, after all changes to content are made.

➤ Review citation style in your writing handbook or on-line at the library website.