



SLU CALM Resources

Academic Writing

Essay Checklist

Now that you have drafted the introduction, body and conclusion, it is time to revise and proofread. After a break of about two days, reread your draft. Imagine you are a lecturer marking essays late at night. You have never seen this essay before.

Read first for the ideas. Ask yourself:

- Does it all make sense to someone who has not read it before?
- Does it answer the question?
- Does it do what the statement of purpose says it will do?
- Is 90% of it in the writer's own words?
- Is there one main point per paragraph, and has each paragraph got a topic sentence?
- Is it clear how each paragraph relates to the main point (and the question)?
- Has the writer avoided any repetition?

Next, read for presentation. Ask yourself:

- Has the writer followed the presentation instructions (spacing, margins, etc)?
- Is all the grammar correct?
- Are there any sentence fragments (grammatically incomplete sentences)?
- Are there full stops and capital letters where they are needed?
- Has the writer used the spell checker carefully, thinking carefully before choosing an alternative, using a dictionary to clarify the difference between the alternatives?
- Has the writer closed all the brackets and quotation marks ("")?
- Has the writer used varied referencing formats?
- Has the writer referenced all the information from other sources, whether or not it is in their own words?
- Has the writer used indentation for any quotations longer than 3 lines?

- Are all the references on the Reference List correctly formatted, including all the required information, commas, full stops, quotation marks and italics?

Lastly, look at any information about the marking system which you have been given.

Imagine you are a lecturer in a very bad mood. Ask yourself: ***Could I find a way to take marks off for any aspect?***

1 Typical sentence fragments include many sentences starting with *and*, *but*, *because*, *although*, *despite* etc. These words should be used for joining two simple sentences together, so any sentence which includes one of them must have two parts.

For example:

Because the work of mining companies often directly affects the environment, they are required to report on this aspect of their operations. **[Correct sentence]**

Because the work of mining companies often directly affects the environment. **[Sentence fragment]**

Resource created by Amanda Pearce and Wendy Fleet, 2003