

Argument & Research Papers

Analysis & Literature Papers

Checklist for Argument Papers

- Is the claim or proposition—what the writing is trying to prove—clearly stated?
- Are all assertions supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence—facts, interpretations of facts, opinions—appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Sources cited should be reliable.
- Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
- Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinions placed properly?
- Is the evidence carefully documented?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Has the writer included any logical fallacies? (If you are unfamiliar with logical fallacies, refer to a writing textbook or handbook.)
- Are terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
- Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?

Checklist for Research Papers

- If there is a title, is it informative and appropriate?
- Is the thesis clear? Is the organization logical? If headings and subheadings are used, do they consistently follow an accepted format?
- Are tone, voice, and diction consistent and appropriate?
- Are transitions smooth from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and section to section?
- Are credible sources and evidence used? Is the supporting material suitable and persuasive? Does it adequately support the thesis?
- Are quotations and paraphrased or summarized passages properly introduced with a signal phrase?
- Are visual materials—tables, figures, charts, maps, and the like—introduced with a signal phrase?
- Are long quotations offset from the text?
- Is proper credit given to sources throughout?
- Does the paper consistently adhere to the documentation style used (MLA, APA, CBE, etc.) in format and in documentation both within the text and at the end of the text?
- Were the instructions for the assignment—length, number and kinds of resources, directions for the title page or documentation—followed carefully?

Checklist for Analysis & Literature Papers

- Is the thesis stated? Is the organization logical and easy to follow?
- Does the writer use examples from the text to support their interpretations or analysis?
- Has the writer avoided giving a simple plot summary?

- Are parts of a work clearly and accurately indicated? Students need to refer to parts specifically, saying, for example, "The scene in which" or "at the end of chapter 3."
- Does the writer use the present tense when describing events in a work of literature, as is convention? (This practice often confuses students. It helps to remember that the literary source's author is communicating to a present reader in a present time.)
- Are titles properly punctuated or italicized? Title of short stories, essays, and most poems appear in quotation marks; titles of books, plays, epics, or other long poems are italicized.
- Has the writer referred to the author properly, using the full name initially and the last name in subsequent references?
- Is quoted material properly punctuated, indented (if longer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of poetry), and documented according to the format specified by the teacher?

Checklist for Book, Film, & Play Reviews

- Does the first paragraph include the title and other important information such as the author and/or director's name?
- Does the introduction give readers an idea of the nature and scope of the work? Does it establish criteria for evaluation?
- Does the initial paragraph briefly summarize the plot or contents?
- Are evaluative terms or phrases such as "good action" or "like a soap opera" defined? (What are the characteristics of "good action" or "soap opera"? How does the work embody those characteristics?)
- Does the review make reasonable assertions and present convincing evidence (quotes, examples, and specific references) to support those assertions?
- Is the tone appropriate? Does it suggest that the reviewer is being fair? Does it indicate respect for the reader?
- Does the reviewer avoid overuse of phrases like "I think" and "In my opinion"? (Such qualifiers can weaken assertions.)
- Is the review critically evaluative, not just informative? Leave plenty of room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance you strike between your summary information and your evaluation. Ask your instructor; often the ratio is half-and-half.

The content of this handout was adapted with changes from the following sources:

"Writing a Book Review." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, Purdue U, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/book_reviews.html. Accessed 17 July 2019.

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

This handout was created by the Writing Centers at YVC.

Yakima Campus, Glenn-Anthon 125 | Grandview Campus, Grandview Main 101

Visit us at the [Writing Center's homepage](#).

