

Document Checklist

The majority of the items on this checklist were provided by Dr. Pat Mokhtarian, University of California, Davis. She created a checklist after finding the same errors repeated on multiple students' papers. By using this checklist to proofread your document prior to its submission to a professor or editor, you will produce a much better manuscript and learn valuable writing skills in the process.

- _____ The document was set aside for as long as possible and re-read slowly to check for errors. (If possible, the document should also be read aloud to help you read every single word. Slow, deliberate reading will reveal some of the most cleverly hidden errors. If you read at normal speed, you won't give your eyes and brain sufficient time to coordinate to spot your errors.)
- _____ The document has been checked to make sure there are no incomplete sentences (each sentence has a subject and verb).
- _____ The document has been searched for all occurrences of the words "they" and "their" and has been corrected for any places where the plural pronoun was matched with a singular antecedent.
- _____ The document has been searched for all occurrences of the words "its" and "it's," and a determination has been made whether an apostrophe was needed.
- _____ The document has been searched for all occurrences of the 's and s' and checked for the proper use of the possessive form.
- _____ The document has been searched for the unnecessary use of the phrase "in order to."
- _____ The document has been proofread to check for commas after introductory phrases such as "In the survey, respondents...."
- _____ No sentence begins with a numeral. Numbers less than ten are spelled out as words, unless part of a table/figure or other title.
- _____ The document has been spell-checked after the most recent changes have been made. (Spell check the document using the features provided in your software. However, re-read your document checking for the kind of errors missed by computer spell checkers "out vs. our" – "test vs. text" as well as any other misspellings.)

- ___ The document has been checked for the use of too many acronyms or jargon that is unique to a select group of readers only.
- ___ The document has been checked for phrases and terminology that are specific to a particular field or specialization. (If specific terms are not found in the dictionary, check prominent publications in the field and follow their lead for usage, spelling, etc.)
- ___ The document is well-organized and easy to understand. Points follow logically. There is a clear introduction and conclusion.
- ___ The document has been checked for consistency re: acronyms; abbreviations; capitalization; numbering/outlining; fonts; bullets; etc.
- ___ When using the exact words of another author, they have been enclosed in quotation marks, and the cited work's page number(s) on which the quote appears has been included in the reference.
- ___ Tables and figures reporting empirical results include the sample size.
- ___ The document has been reviewed to determine that the text accompanying a table does not just repeat the contents of the table, but it summarizes, synthesizes, and /or interprets the table.
- ___ Formatting, spacing before and after, and numbering of section headings, tables/figures, and bibliographic references are consistent throughout.
- ___ The article or chapter titles and subheadings have been checked against the table of contents to ensure consistent wording.
- ___ All references cited in this draft are included in the bibliography.
- ___ Every reference in the bibliography has been cited somewhere in the text.
- ___ An officially accepted bibliographic style has been used. (If you are writing for a specific publication such as a journal article or for a specific discipline, learn and follow that publication's style guidelines.)
- ___ When in doubt, the document has been checked (using the standard toolbar) for correct spacing regarding end of sentence punctuation and spacing following the use of a colon.

- ____ The final, printed document has been checked for widow/orphan protection. (Widow/Orphan Protection: A page should not begin with the last line of a paragraph, nor should a page end with the first line of a paragraph. The last word in any paragraph should never be hyphenated, with the last part of the word beginning a new line. Make sure the widow/orphan protection feature of your word processing program is “turned on.”)
- ____ The document has been checked to make sure that all illustrations appear in the right location in the text and with their own captions. (Tables must be proofread both for content and for alignment. If there are lists of illustrations and tables, all captions and titles should be checked against the lists, and page numbers must be added.)
- ____ Overall appearance: Pages have been numbered and checked for the position of running heads and page numbers.