

Essay Checklist and Response*

N.B. Generally speaking and in the lists below, **problems with writing** or expression are often directly related to, or indistinguishable from, **problems with thinking**.

Problems with Writing (grammar, style, organization, expression):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| ⑧ sentence fragments | ⑧ paragraphing |
| ⑧ structure of the essay | ⑧ convoluted sentence structure |
| ⑧ paragraph transitions | ⑧ run-on sentences |
| ⑧ overuse of passive voice (write in active voice) | ⑧ comma splice |
| ⑧ writing in the past tense (write in present tense) | ⑧ spelling or t/o (always proofread) |
| ⑧ noun/pronoun agreement | ⑧ misuse of apostrophe/possessives |
| ⑧ subject/verb agreement | ⑧ punctuation |
| ⑧ material is repeated unnecessarily | ⑧ diction (word choice) |
| ⑧ vague references (“This” is not a noun) | ⑧ ineffective use of tone |
| ⑧ faulty quotation integration (QI) or paraphrasing | ⑧ wordy |
| ⑧ your syntax isn’t matched with that of the citation | |

Problems with Thinking: (logic, focus, development of ideas)

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ⑧ thesis is a statement of fact, or no clear thesis | ⑧ lack of critical analysis |
| ⑧ overuse of plot summary or paraphrase | ⑧ lack of precision in thinking |
| ⑧ evidence not cited for generalizations | ⑧ under-developed argument |
| ⑧ quoting without commenting | ⑧ important ideas are buried |
| ⑧ examples not explained or linked to main idea | ⑧ introductory par. not focussed |
| ⑧ implications of argument not explored | ⑧ topic & approach needs focus |
| ⑧ ALL the evidence not considered/weighed | ⑧ contradictions in argument |
| ⑧ points not developed/supported | ⑧ flawed logic in argument |
| ⑧ value judgments offered instead of analysis | ⑧ conclusion weak/not drawn |

Problems with Presentation:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| ⑧ title conventions not observed (poems: “Anatomy”) | ⑧ vague or misleading title |
| ⑧ quoting conventions not observed | ⑧ essay not paginated |
| ⑧ parenthetical citation conventions not observed | ⑧ citation(s) misquoted |
| ⑧ essay isn’t double spaced throughout | ⑧ missing/flawed Works Cited |

* Adapted from a Rutgers University Composition Teaching Checklist