

## What this checklist is for

This checklist summarises all the things you need to make sure you have in your essay or assignment before you submit it. It is quite long because there are a lot of things you need to check you have done to make sure you get the proper reward for the effort you have put in. If you can tick all the things in the checklist AND you have actually answered the question you shouldn't have any worries. Remember, when you check things off, be honest with yourself. That way you can help to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

This checklist is like a summary of the information in many of our other Quick Guides. If you have a few boxes you haven't ticked on the checklist you will see that you have a few things you still need to work on. To revise the things you haven't been able to tick you can either go back to the appropriate Quick Guide or go to the appropriate tab on Assignment Navigator.

## Quick Guide

### What is in this guide

- Some notes on what this checklist is for
- A checklist to help you make sure your essay or assignment is ready to submit
- A link to Assignment Navigator: Putting it together
- Related Quick Guides

## Assignment/essay checklist

### 1. Have you answered the question that was asked

- Have you analysed the question? (see Analysing assignment tasks Quick Guide)
- Have you organised the information you have researched in a logical way? (Writing your essay so that you refer to each source in the order in which you found the information is NOT a logical way to organise information in an essay.) (see Organising information for your assignments Quick Guide)

### 2. Does the introduction

- Have a statement of position or thesis on the essay question?
- Identify the main points you are going to raise in your essay?
- Mention any boundaries you have drawn to set the context for the essay?
- Defined any key terms in the question? Or if the definition is longer, is it included in the first paragraph after the introduction?
- Consist of sentences that follow on from each other and which are in a logical order? (For example, when you list the main points you are going to discuss in your essay in your introduction you should expand on those points in the same order that they are in in the introduction.)

### 3. Does the body

- Consist of a series of well constructed paragraphs? (For example, does each paragraph have a topic sentence which is then developed in the paragraph? Do at least some paragraphs have a summary sentence at the end?)
- Have paragraphs that connect to each other in a logical order? (For example, do you use connecting words like moreover, however, furthermore, in addition, consequently?)
- Have paragraphs that each have a purpose and fulfil that purpose? (For example, does each paragraph introduce and develop one point?)

### 4. Does the conclusion

- Draw the ideas presented to a logical conclusion?
- Restate your position/ thesis/ answer to the assignment task?
- Give an overview of the main reasons for this position/ thesis/ answer?

- Not introduce any new points? (You shouldn't introduce any new information in your conclusion.)

## 5. Carefully check how each paragraph is organised

- Does the first/topic sentence state what the paragraph is about?
- Does the topic sentence connect with the previous paragraph AND predict what is to come in this paragraph?
- Do the following sentences develop this idea by explaining/giving examples/ providing justification?
- If appropriate, are the theoretical ideas linked to practical situations i.e. to explain the relevance of the theory to practice?
- If appropriate, is there a comment that indicates an alternate view? (Remember acknowledging different views makes your essay look more balanced and even-handed.)
- Are ALL the ideas/sources you have used in this paragraph appropriately cited?
- Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence i.e. a sentence that summarises what the paragraph has been about?
- Does each paragraph have around 4–6 sentences following on from each other i.e. in chunks. There is no 'proper' length for a paragraph but most paragraphs are around 4 to 6 sentences. It takes about that many sentences to develop an idea properly. You should have very few, if any, paragraphs that are only 1 or 2 sentences long.

## 6. Is your List of References:

- Presented on a separate page?
- Listed alphabetically?
- Compiled correctly according to the referencing guide recommended in the unit? For example: APA6 or Harvard? (Always refer to the Unit Information Guide for information on how to reference. If the information isn't there ask your lecturer or tutor.)

## 7. Overall

- Make sure that your writing is conveying what is expected of you. Remember that while descriptive writing has its place, it is generally ONLY used to provide a basis for subsequent critical analysis and/or evaluation. Most academic writing should be analytical.
- If you have used the first person, I, is it appropriate? Check with your lecturer if you aren't sure.
- Have you paraphrased (put the ideas into your own words) more than you have quoted? Remember paraphrasing is generally preferable to quoting.
- If your essay is too long ask yourself the following questions:
  - Does all the information you have included relate directly to the assignment question?
  - Is there any unnecessary detail? Could I say the same thing using fewer words? Have I used two or three examples when one would have done the same job?
- If your essay is too short go back to:
  - your paragraphs and ask yourself questions to see where and how you can develop ideas by giving more in-depth explanations and/or examples
  - the marking criteria and check that you have included everything that is required.
- Is your essay presented so that it looks professional? (Nobody ever lost marks for handing in a well-presented assignment and nobody ever gained marks for handing in a sloppy looking assignment.)
- If your essay has specific formatting instructions have you followed them? (If there aren't any specific instructions make sure you use a 'standard' font like Times New Roman or Cambria and a 'standard'

type size (12pt is about right). Use 1.5 line spacing and margin settings of around 2.5cm left and right and 3cm top and bottom unless other settings are specified.)

## Related Quick Guides

Analysing Assignment tasks, Organising information for your assignments, Writing paragraphs, Writing analytically and persuasively, Connecting your ideas: linking word