

# Checklist for the Formal Essay

## First Few Paragraphs

\_\_\_ Hook: Something to grab the readers attention: a statistic, a concrete example, an anecdote, a quotation, a paradox, a question. See the back for ideas.

\_\_\_ Thesis statement: A concise statement that states the argument that you will prove in the essay. Your thesis should be clear and precise, and appropriately qualified.

\_\_\_ Forecasting statement: A sentence or paragraph that lists the reasons supporting your thesis; this statement also provides a roadmap or outline for the reader.

## Body of Essay

\_\_\_ Topic sentences: A sentence that states main point of the paragraph. Think of this as a thesis for the paragraph. The topic sentence can be at the end of the paragraph.

\_\_\_ Evidence: Evidence can consist of personal experience, examples, statistics, and quotes from outside texts or articles and individuals qualified to comment on the issue. Consider the credibility and expertise of your sources.

\_\_\_ Counterargument: Often no more than a line or two, you first present an opposing position or alternative interpretation. You can simply acknowledge the position, accommodate the position and use it to sharpen your argument, or refute it with further evidence. For this essay, you will need to accommodate or refute.

\_\_\_ Focusing words or phrases: The best papers will use repeated words or phrases to focus the reader and connect the reader back to the forecasting statement.

\_\_\_ Transitions: Strong transitional phrases (e.g. Another reason...) that move the reader from one section of the essay to the next. Often focusing words or phrases help transition the reader from one part of the argument to the next

## Conclusion (options)

\_\_\_ Summarize your thesis and main points

\_\_\_ Return to the hook and provide a new or surprising twist

\_\_\_ Suggest new, provocative questions or areas for further research

## Proofread for:

\_\_\_ Fragments and fused sentences – remember you need a subject and verb for a sentence

\_\_\_ Missing commas – especially before the conjunction (and, but, or) in compound sentences

\_\_\_ Comma splices – unnecessary commas that separate off an **essential** part of a sentence

\_\_\_ Passive voice – When the object of the sentence **is put** first **by the** writer

\_\_\_ Misspellings