

A Final Checklist

Things to do after you have finished (or think that you have finished):

- Check your school handbook or guidance, to ensure that you have done everything they asked, and in the way that is required by your school.
- Ensure that you have formatted your essay in the required way, including (as set out by your school) things like headers, footers, page numbers, spacing.
- Ensure that you know how the marks are going to be awarded and that you have met all of the criteria.
- Check your word count.

Proofreading checklist: spelling, grammar and punctuation

1. **Spelling:** are all words spelt correctly and used in the correct context? (Remember spellcheck will not pick up correctly spelled words used in the wrong context.)
2. **Commas :**
 - You should use commas to separate clauses (sections) of complex sentences. For example: "After talks broke down, relations between the two countries became even more strained."
 - Words like 'However,' 'Consequently,' 'Instead' and 'Therefore' should have a comma after them if they are the first word in a sentence. For example: "However, there is evidence to contradict this approach."
 - Before the words 'and,' 'but' and 'because,' you can either use a comma or leave it out, but if the sentence is a long and complex one it is best to use a comma to make it easier to read. For example: "The talks were conducted against a background of increasing distrust between representatives from both sides, and relations between the two countries deteriorated."
 - Make sure you have used commas to separate items in a list. For example: "Relations between the two countries were characterised by distrust, hostility and caution."
3. **Full stops:** are there any commas that should actually be full stops? Have you missed out any full stops? Remember: never stick together two grammatically complete sentences with a comma! Comma splices are one of the most common errors I see in essays!
4. **Semi colons:** check that you have not used them excessively and that, where you have used them, you have done so correctly. Semi colons can be used to separate two complete sentences that are very closely connected. For example: "Talks were conducted against a background of increasing distrust; relations between the two countries consequently deteriorated."
5. **Clarity:** read your sentences aloud to check that they are clear and smooth, and that they communicate what you intend them to communicate.

6. **Paragraphs:** are there any paragraphs that are too long or too short? Very short paragraphs can be a tell-tale sign that you have not developed an idea fully, but excessively long ones can be hard work for a reader, and might suggest you haven't been succinct.
7. **Capital letters:** have you capitalised all proper nouns?
8. **Tenses:** have you used the past and present tenses appropriately? Have you managed to switch between them effectively?
9. **Missing words:** check carefully for these, as it is easy to miss out words and not spot that they are missing, even after several reads!

Are there any mistakes that you know you often make when writing quickly?

If so, write them down here and **remember to do a special check of your essays for these errors.**

A checklist for somebody else who has kindly agreed to read your work for you!

You may ask a friend or relative to read your essay before you submit it. Ideally they should be somebody who isn't on your course, who can look objectively at the way you have expressed your ideas. Remember that members of staff (including the ASC) cannot proofread for you – it is your responsibility. Remember, also, not to rely completely on somebody else's proofreading or editing – treat it as a second opinion, and make sure you do plenty of read-throughs yourself.

Questions you might want to ask a friend:

- Can you follow my argument?
- Is the writing clear even if you don't know anything about the topic?
- Did you feel as if you were being guided through the essay?
- Are there any parts that seem irrelevant, without a clear link to the question?
- Are there any sentences that are too long or hard to follow? **Anything you had to read twice?**