

The Writing Checklist (A Better Way to Proofread)

1. Begin a new sentence when in doubt.
2. Look for any statements made but left unexplained in your body paragraphs. A statement on its own is not persuasive.
3. Do not begin a sentence with “which” unless you are asking a question.
4. Do not sacrifice clarity for creative phrasing. You will end up having to explain what your phrase means.
5. Look for tense disagreement.
6. Be careful when using “this” and “that.” If it is obvious that you are referencing the previous sentence or idea, you may keep those words in your paper. It only becomes an issue when it makes the link you are trying to make unclear. Examples: This demonstrates that, that means that, etc. If you have too many of these types of sentences, the reader may lose the analysis.
7. Check for language that lacks assertiveness. Examples: I think, in my opinion, it is my belief, etc. The tone of your paper should be assertive/persuasive.
8. Check for colloquialisms/slang in your own writing. You may of course intentionally mention slang used by the author to perform your analysis.
9. The conclusion should not contain any new information. The purpose of a conclusion is to reinforce the key points you have already made.
10. Your analysis should not “jump around.” Try to stay linear with your analysis wherever possible. Structure is key when trying to persuade. Keep in mind that the artist has structured the song in a particular way in order to convey his message.
11. Reference where the lyrics appear in the song if you feel the reader would benefit from that information. Examples: The artist begins the song, we see a major shift in the middle of verse one, the emcee concludes the second verse with, etc.