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The 12-Point Final Paper Checklist

A focused review for argument, evidence, citations, clarity, process documentation, and submission details.

Use the rubric first.

This checklist is general guidance. Your assignment, instructor, discipline, and academic-integrity policy control. It cannot guarantee a grade or detector outcome.



HT

PHASE 1

Argument and evidence

Work from the assignment outward: policy and rubric, main claim, paragraph logic, then source support.

1

Re-read the prompt, rubric, and AI policy

Check: Mark every required element and any rule about collaboration, editing tools, citations, file type, length, and disclosure.

Why: A polished paper can still miss the assignment. When the policy is unclear, ask the instructor rather than guessing.

2

State the main claim clearly

Check: Identify the sentence that carries your central argument. Make it more explicit if a reader could mistake it for background or a topic announcement.

Why: A visible claim helps the reader understand what the paper is trying to establish. Thesis placement varies by discipline, so follow the rubric.

3

Check paragraph logic

Check: For each body paragraph, name its job in a few words. Confirm the paragraph's claim, evidence, and explanation all serve that job.

Why: This catches evidence lists, repeated points, and paragraphs whose conclusion does not follow from the material presented.

4

Verify every source-dependent statement

Check: Check names, dates, numbers, quotations, page references, links, and citation entries against the original source. Remove anything you cannot support.

Why: Citation formatting cannot rescue an inaccurate quotation or invented detail. Source fidelity matters more than surface polish.

PHASE 2

Clarity and flow

Revise for the reader. Do not force a formula or change correct meaning merely to make the prose look different.

5

Read the paper aloud

Check: Mark missing words, awkward phrasing, abrupt transitions, and places where you lose the sentence. Revise only after identifying the actual problem.

Why: Reading aloud can expose issues that repeated silent reading skims over.

6

Review long or overloaded sentences

Check: Look closely at sentences with several clauses, commas, or qualifications. Split or simplify them when the subject, action, or logic becomes hard to follow.

Why: Length is a prompt to review, not an automatic error. A purposeful long sentence can be clear; a short one can still be confusing.

7

Check transitions and repeated structure

Check: Read the last sentence of one paragraph with the first sentence of the next. Remove repetitive openers and add a transition only when the relationship is not already clear.

Why: Variation should serve meaning. Uniform sentence length or vocabulary is not proof of AI use.

8

Proofread after automated checks

Check: Run your editor's spelling and grammar tools, review each suggestion, then perform a manual pass for headings, capitalization, punctuation, and formatting.

Why: Automated tools can miss errors or propose changes that alter meaning. Do not accept every suggestion automatically.

PHASE 3

Process and submission

Preserve evidence of your work, confirm permitted tool use, and verify the exact file that reaches the submission system.

9

Keep drafts and version history

Check: Retain your outline, notes, sources, earlier files, and available revision history. Do not fabricate or alter process evidence.

Why: These materials can help document how the paper developed if your work is questioned, but they do not guarantee a particular institutional outcome.

10

Disclose tools when required

Check: Follow the assignment's rules for AI, grammar tools, peer review, translation, and citation assistance. Add the required acknowledgment or methodology note.

Why: Permission and disclosure rules differ across courses. A tool being publicly available does not mean it is allowed for a specific assignment.

11

Save and verify the final file

Check: Save a local copy and a separate backup. Open the final PDF or document and check pages, figures, citations, and filename before uploading. Confirm the submitted file can be downloaded and opened.

Why: This reduces avoidable file-version, formatting, and upload mistakes.

12

Review any phrasing-assistance output

Check: If your course permits an editing tool, compare every proposed change with the original. Restore altered facts, citations, scope, negation, numbers, and voice. Disclose the tool if required.

Why: Automated rewriting can introduce plausible but incorrect details. You remain responsible for the submitted text.

FINAL REVIEW

What this checklist can and cannot do

No grade or detector guarantee

This checklist supports a careful review process. It does not promise a stronger grade, prevent an AI-detector flag, prove authorship by itself, or replace your institution's procedures.

Study context

Liang et al. (2023) tested seven detectors on 91 TOEFL essays by non-native English writers and 88 U.S. eighth-grade essays. The average false-positive rate on the TOEFL set was 61.3 percent, and 19.8 percent were flagged by every detector. The sample was narrow and the study does not establish the error rate for every population or current detector. Source: [Liang et al., 2023, Patterns](#).

If your work is questioned

Read the course and institutional process, preserve the original notice, gather drafts and sources, and respond honestly. Ask what evidence and appeal steps are available. Do not alter files or invent a revision trail.

A QUICK FOUR-PART PASS

1. Requirements	Prompt, rubric, policy, disclosure
2. Substance	Claim, logic, evidence, citations
3. Readability	Read aloud, clarify, proofread
4. Submission	Drafts, backup, final-file check

If AI-assisted phrasing review is permitted, HumaText can propose edits to a short section. Review every change and keep only what remains accurate and sounds like you. humatext.com