

# SUCCESSFUL PAPER WRITING CHECKLIST

You have a great idea for an academic paper, but you don't know where to start? Use this 8-step process to write a paper that will impress your instructor and readers. And easily create a paper that showcases your skills and knowledge!



## 1. SELECT THE TOPIC

- ☐ Choose a topic that relevant and manageable for your paper.
- ☐ Narrow down your topic to a specific research question or hypothesis/thesis statement.
- ☐ Read and understand journal requirements and author instructions.
- ☐ Make sure your topic meets the requirements (length, scope, etc.).

## 2. CONDUCT COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH

- ☐ Find reliable and credible references that support your argument or answer your research question.
- ☐ Evaluate the quality and relevance of your references using criteria such as authorship, publication date, bias, accuracy, etc.
- ☐ Take notes of the main points, arguments and evidence from your references.
- ☐ Cite your references using a consistent citation style (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago etc.).

## 3. DEVELOP AN OUTLINE

- ☐ Organize your ideas and information into a logical structure that follows the standard format of an academic paper: introduction, body and conclusion.

- 
- ☐ Use headings and subheadings to divide your paper into sections and subsections.
  - ☐ Write down the main points and supporting details for each section in bullet points or sentences.
- 

#### **4. WRITE THE INTRODUCTION**

- ☐ Grab the reader's attention with a statistic, a question, etc.
  - ☐ Provide some background information on the topic and context of your paper.
  - ☐ State your hypothesis/thesis statement clearly and concisely at the end of the introduction.
- 

#### **5. WRITE THE BODY**

- ☐ Describe how you conducted your research and what your findings were.
  - ☐ Write one paragraph for each main point or argument that supports your thesis statement.
  - ☐ Start each paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
  - ☐ Provide evidence, examples, facts, statistics etc. from your references to support your point or argument.
  - ☐ Explain how your evidence relates to your point or argument and to your hypothesis/thesis statement.
  - ☐ Use transitions to show the connections and relationships between your paragraphs and ideas.
- 

#### **6. WRITE THE CONCLUSION**

- ☐ Restate your hypothesis/thesis statement using different words.
  - ☐ Summarize the main points or arguments of your paper without repeating them verbatim.
  - ☐ Draw connections between your arguments and show how they answer your research question or support your hypothesis/thesis statement.
  - ☐ Provide some implications, recommendations, suggestions, limitations or future directions for further research on the topic.
- 

#### **7. FOLLOW THE FORMATTING GUIDELINES**

- ☐ Apply the formatting guidelines of your citation style.
  - ☐ Include a title page with your name, course name, instructor name and date (if required).
-

- 
- ☐ Include a reference page at the end of your paper with full details of all your references.
  - ☐ Use page numbers, headers and footers as needed.
- 

## **8. PROOFREAD AND EDIT**

- ☐ Check your spelling, grammar, punctuation and word choice for errors and inconsistencies.
  - ☐ Read your paper aloud or ask someone else to read it for feedback and suggestions.
  - ☐ Make sure your paper is clear, concise, coherent and complete.
  - ☐ Revise and improve any parts that are unclear, irrelevant or redundant.
-