QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR PAPER

• Will your paper be the kind your instructor asked for?

• Do you have enough material for a sound discussion?

• If the subject is controversial, have you been careful not to ignore awkward facts that do not fit neatly with your ideas?

• If the subject is timely, is your material recent?

• Have you narrowed your focus so that you can discuss your subject in convincing detail?

• Are your bibliography cards complete and accurate?

• Are you sure you have not unconsciously plagiarized or misleadingly quoted material out of context on your note cards?

• Have you organized your notes in a logical order by content?

• Have you skimmed your notes again to refresh your memory on what you have to work with?

• Does this rereading indicate that there are no gaps requiring further information?

• Do you have a thesis that guides the organization of your material?

• Have you worked out the order in which the separate parts should be presented to develop a thesis?
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE DOING THE FINAL DRAFT

- Have you given enough evidence to support all generalities and conclusions?
- Have you discussed the subject objectively?
- Does your discussion move forward smoothly?
- Does it come to a convincing conclusion?
- Is the diction (choice of words) appropriate?
- Are the transitions into and after quotations smooth?
- Have you worked out unnecessary wordiness and awkward phrases?
- Have you checked the mechanics?
- Have you proofread the paper carefully?

QUOTATIONS

- Are they accurate?
- Are you sure you have not plagiarized or misleadingly quoted material out of context?
- Have you used appropriate ellipses, insertions, and square brackets?
- Have you used the correct forms for short and long quotations?

CITATIONS

- If you are using MLA or APA documentation, have you noted the author's or authors’ surname(s) and page number(s) in parentheses after the quoted or paraphrased information?
- Have you checked page numbers to be sure they are correct?
• If you are using Chicago or Notes-Bibliography documentation, have you footnoted for all quotations, facts, and ideas (even paraphrases) derived from your reading?

• Have you used the correct form: author's name in normal order (first name first)? titles of articles enclosed in quotation marks? titles of books and periodicals italicized? required publication facts included?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Are items alphabetized by author's last name?

• Is the name of the first author in each listing reversed, last name first?

• Are the facts of publication complete?

• Have you used proper spacing, punctuation, italicizing?

TITLE PAGE

• Does the title page include the title of the paper, the course number, the professor's name, and the date of submission?

TROUBLESHOOTER'S CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF YOU:</th>
<th>HAVE YOU:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—have no idea what to write about</td>
<td>—read your course text thoroughly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—checked references in the bibliographies of those texts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—asked the reference librarian for help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—read basic reference materials in the field (find these by asking your instructor, using computer data bases, consulting bibliographies)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Have a subject area and a general topic but no focus, no point of view, or no thesis | — Have you read primary and secondary material and noted your reactions?  
— Have you done any brainstorming?  
— Have you used a tape recorder to record ideas as they occur to you?  
— Have you asked probing questions about the material?  
— Have you written some tentative thesis statements which express a response to the material?  
— Have you stated the topic as a problem to be solved?
| Have a topic with a focus or a proposition but can't generate enough supporting material | — Have you honestly done all your reading and research?  
— Have you made notes on note cards?  
— Have you probed key concepts by describing, defining, explaining, analyzing, evaluating, looking for cause and effect, comparing, contrasting?  
— Have you supported generalizations with details: facts, illustrations, examples, analogies, incidents?
| Have a proposition with a lot of material that you can't organize | — Have you written down supporting ideas and grouped them into categories?  
— Have you eliminated all ideas that do not relate to your thesis?  
— Have you tried making a simple point-by-point outline?
| Have trouble anyway | — Have you signed up for help at the Reading/Writing Center?

Dr. Murray and Anna C. Rockowitz Writing Center, Hunter College, City University of New York