

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

Scholarly Writing Checklist

SUPPORT YOUR WORK

- Does the paper involve a sufficient/required number of resources?
- Have all sources utilized in the paper been properly cited? Do the citations in the body paragraph match with the references at the end of the paper and vice versa?
- Does the paper depend on long quotations to replace analysis?
- ✓ Remember to unpack a lengthy quotation, contextualize it, and demonstrate “why” you chose it.
- ✓ Do not use quotation marks unless they add value to the idea or they add something that cannot be said otherwise.
- Are broad or definitive statements clearly supported using reliable sources?
- ✓ For example, if you say, “Older adults fall when they do not eat properly,” support it with a source or demonstrate that this idea holds true for everyone (as not all older adults will fall).
- Do all stated facts, statistics, ideas, or phrases such as “research shows” include an appropriate citation/reference from corresponding literature?
- ✓ If you make a statement in a paper, stop and ask yourself: “*How do I know this?*” Then show, with a reference and/or other support, how you know.
- ✓ Do not copy phrases or parts of phrases from one or multiple sources without citing their source.

ORGANIZE YOUR PAPER

- Does the title describe the primary focus of the paper? Do not put “Scholarly Paper” or “Assignment 1” as your title (unless stated otherwise in assignment guidelines).
- Does the paper follow a logical flow and cohesive structure?
- ✓ For example: Introduction → Literature Review → Methodology → Results → Discussion → Conclusion.
- ✓ Use headings and subheadings to guide the reader through different sections (if applicable).
- Does the introduction paragraph set up the rest of the paper and provide background information on the subject? Ensure clarity in your writing and support your points with relevant literature.
- ✓ Ensure your thesis/purpose is concise and specific. Avoid vague language and be explicit about your main point.
- Does the paper do what it says it will do in the introduction?
- ✓ For instance, if the purpose of the paper (stated in the introduction) is to analyze the gender pay gap, do body paragraphs clearly relate to that central focus of the paper?
- Is the paper relevant to the course material (if applicable)?
- Are paragraphs focused on discussing one main idea per paragraph? Do not include new ideas in a paragraph as it can make the paper difficult to follow.
- Is there one thought/idea per sentence?
- ✓ Do not include multiple or different ideas in a single sentence. If you have multiple ideas, break sentences up.
- Does the paper follow a single citation style throughout? Does it align with the citation style specified in the assignment guidelines?
- Does the paper maintain a scholarly tone? Use third-person pronouns (if applicable) and avoid informal terms, slang, and controversial or biased words.
- Does your conclusion relate to the introduction and briefly summarize the main points stated in the body paragraph? This should be explicit.

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EDIT FOR GRAMMAR AND CLARITY

- Does the text rely heavily on empty signifiers, such as phrases like “in today’s society”?
- Does the text frequently employ dangling modifiers, using terms like “this” or “it”?
- Does the paper exhibit consistency in tense usage? (usually present tense)
- ✓ For example, “This paper describes” rather than “This paper will describe” since the paper is already written.
- Does the paper use active voice?
- ✓ For example, “Physicians collected data from 5,000 patients”(active voice) rather than “Data were collected from 5,000 patients by physicians” (passive voice).
- Does the paper employ proper comma usage, including separating items in a list within a sentence, before coordinating conjunctions or after an introductory element (e.g. phrases/clauses)?
- Have terms, ideas, acronyms, or other phrases necessary for understanding your argument been adequately explained for readers without prior knowledge? Do not assume that the reader knows the topic (unless assignment instructions state otherwise).
- ✓ For example, if a sentence mentions that “colonialism has detrimental outcomes”, explain how this occurred as if the reader does not know.
- ✓ Similarly, please do not attempt to get fancy with complicated thesaurus words, as they are often misused and may change the primary idea of the sentence. Maintain your word choice clear and simple.

GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Read your paper aloud to catch errors, identify awkward sentences, and ensure your writing flows smoothly.
- Eliminate Redundancy: Remove unnecessary and repetitive words or sentences to enhance clarity.
- Be Consistent: Maintain consistency in formatting, citation style, and tone throughout your paper.
- Seek feedback from the FCS Academic Support Centre (Writing Support) to enhance the overall quality of your work and improve your writing skills.
- Remember, this checklist is a tool to guide your writing process. Use it in conjunction with your assignment guidelines.

References

- Edmunds, M. W., & Waldrop, J. (2018). What is scholarly writing? *Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 14(8), 11–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2018.08.012>
- Ellaway, R. H. (2021). Language games and scholarly writing. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 26(4), 1187–1190.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-021-10069-4>
- Kojima, T., & Popiel, H. A. (2022). Proper scholarly writing for non-native English-speaking authors: Choosing active and passive voice, rewording, and refining texts. *Journal of Korean Medical Science*, 37(44), 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2022.37.e312>
- Rocco, T. S., Hatcher, T. G., & Creswell, J. W. (2011). *The handbook of scholarly writing and publishing*. Jossey-Bass.