# BASIC EDITING CHECKLIST

*One of the best ways to check your paper for errors is to read it out loud. As your read, underline or highlight areas where you stumbled over your words. Often the difficulty with reading is caused by an error in logic or grammar. Then, work through this checklist to find additional items for correction or improvement.*

## MEETING BASIC EXPECTATIONS

☐ Reread the assignment description. Did you do everything that was asked?

☐ Is your paper the requested page/word length?

## FORMATTING ERRORS

☐ Did you include a title page?

☐ Is the title page formatted as specified in the Term Paper Guide?

☐ Is your instructor's name spelled correctly?

☐ Does your paper use size 12, Times New Roman font?

☐ Is your paper double-spaced, with no extra space before or after line breaks?

☐ Do you have a header with page numbers and your last name? (not on title page!)

☐ Are your margins set to 1" or 2.54cm all the way around the page?

☐ Did you indent each paragraph?

☐ Is your Works Cited page on a separate page?

☐ Are the entries on your Works Cited page in alphabetical order?

☐ Have you used a hanging indent on your Works Cited page?

☐ Are your Works Cited page entries single-spaced with one blank line between them?

## AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

☐ Have you provided a citation for **each and every** paraphrased sentence and direct quote from your research?

☐ Do your in-text citations contain the right information?

☐ Have you included a Works Cited Page?

☐ Is each one of your cited sources included on the Works Cited Page

# THE BIG PICTURE

- [ ] Does your introduction paragraph engage the reader?
- [ ] Does your introduction provide the reader with the necessary background information or definitions required to understand your paper?
- [ ] If you are writing about a specific book, film, Scripture passage etc., have you been sure to provide the relevant information about it (author, director, verse reference, context, etc.)?
- [ ] Do you have a clear thesis statement? Does the thesis statement accurately reflect what you have written in the body paragraphs?
- [ ] Do your paragraphs have topic sentences?

- [ ] Does the information in each paragraph connect back to the topic sentence?
- [ ] Have you used transition words or phrases to cue your reader to prepare for each new paragraph topic? (First of all, furthermore, in addition, in conclusion – see Transitions Handout for more ideas)
- [ ] Does your concluding paragraph restate your thesis (i.e. summarize your paper's content)?
- [ ] Does your conclusion provide the reader with a call to action or a statement about the 'real world' significance of the paper topic?

# THE SMALL DETAILS

- [ ] Did you use the Spelling and Grammar check function to find errors?
- [ ] Look through your paper specifically for comma splices. Comma splices are two full sentences that have been joined by a comma. Change the comma to a period or semi-colon.

  - *Comma Splice:* The dining hall serves cinnamon buns on Tuesday, they are great with coffee.

  - *Correct:* The dining hall serves cinnamon buns on Tuesday; they are great with coffee.

- [ ] Look through your paper specifically for run-on sentences. Run-on sentences occur when full sentences are joined using a coordinating

conjunction (and, or, but, so) without a comma.

  - *Run-on:* I am going to the gym and I am going to the grocery store.

  - *Correct:* I am going to the gym, and I am going to the grocery store.

- [ ] Look through your paper specifically for typos. Spelling and Grammar check will not pick up errors where the incorrect word is an actual English word.
- [ ] Look specifically for changes in Point of View (I, we, one, you). Make sure to avoid second person voice (you) at all costs. Use first person voice (I) only if the assignment asks for personal reflection/application.

## STILL NOT SURE THAT YOUR PAPER IS PROFESSOR READY?

Book an appointment online to have the Academic Support Office meet with you to review your paper. (On the Columbia website under Current Students, Academic Support)

**Be sure to email a copy of your paper to the office the night before your appointment to**
Academic.support@columbiabc.edu