# First Draft Checklist and Grading Rubric

## Checklist for Research Paper

Your first draft will be graded on the basis of the checklist below.

* The purpose of the research paper—to inform the reader—is evident.
* The essay has an introduction with a thesis statement.
* The body paragraphs contain facts and quotations from research.
* The research paper ends with a conclusion.
* The paper is organized in a clear pattern and includes some transitions.
* The research paper includes internal citations.
* The language of the research paper is formal and includes domain-specific vocabulary and literary techniques or devices that help convey complex ideas.
* The language of the research paper is formal.
* The tone of the paper is serious and the voice is objective.
* The paper has 1,500–2,400 words.

Total possible points for first draft is 100 points.

### Research Paper Grading Rubric

The final draft of the research paper will be graded on the basis of the rubric below.

| **Criterion** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose and Voice** | The research paper does an outstanding job of fulfilling its purpose of providing substantial information on the chosen topic. The writer’s voice is clear and shows great interest in the topic. | The research paper does a good job of fulfilling the purpose of providing information on a topic. The writer’s voice is present although at times it is inconsistent. The writer seems interested in the topic. | The research paper does a fair job of fulfilling the purpose of providing information on a topic. The writer’s voice is hard to find, and it is difficult to determine whether the writer is interested in the topic. | The purpose of the paper is unclear because the topic is unclear. The voice of the writer is absent. |
| **Ideas and Content** | The topic of the research paper is narrow enough that it can be covered thoroughly, and a thesis statement provides a clear focus for the paper. The topic is fully researched and very well developed with facts and quotations from cited sources that include both offline and online sources. The research paper includes a comprehensive Works Cited page. | The topic of the research paper is appropriate, and the paper contains a thesis statement. The topic is researched, but more evidence is needed to fully support the thesis. Print and online sources have been cited, and there is a Works Cited page. | The topic of the research paper is appropriate, but the thesis statement is unclear. Because the thesis statement is unclear, the evidence cited is unfocused. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between cited material and the student’s own ideas. Citations and the Works Cited page are incomplete. | The topic of the research paper is too broad or too narrow to be covered thoroughly. There is no thesis statement. Research is minimal, and citations are mostly missing. |
| **Structure and Organization** | The research paper has a clear structure with an introductory paragraph that grabs the reader's attention. Each body paragraph contains evidence that supports the thesis. The conclusion tells the reader what the writer has learned or leaves the reader with something to think about. The writer uses an appropriate pattern of organization that fits the topic and thesis. Transitions are used to clarify ideas and to move smoothly within and between paragraphs. The paper includes thought-provoking and specific headings, interesting and informative graphics, and an instructive multimedia component that aids comprehension. | The research paper has a clear structure—introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion—although one part of the structure may not be developed well. The writer occasionally strays from the pattern of organization, but transitions are generally used effectively. The paper includes useful headings, most of which are specific, relevant graphics, and a multimedia component that aids in comprehension. | The structure of the research paper is somewhat clear. There is an introduction, body, and conclusion. However, there is only one long body paragraph. The pattern of organization is somewhat unclear, and the writer tends to jump around. Minimal transitions are used to connect ideas. The paper is either missing headings, graphics, or a multimedia component, or it uses one or more of these elements in ways that detract from the writing of the piece. | The structure of the research paper is hard to determine. Paragraphing seems random or nonexistent, and there are no transitions between ideas. The paper has neither headings, nor graphics, nor a multimedia component. |
| **Language and Word Choice** | The writer considers purpose and audience in the language, tone, and voice of the research paper. The writer uses formal language, several domain-specific words, and several literary techniques such as similes, metaphors and analogies to explain concepts and provide clear information. The tone is serious, and the voice is consistently objective, with no personal opinions offered. | The writer usually considers purpose and audience in the language, tone, and voice of the research paper. The writer usually employs formal language, uses at least one domain-specific word, and includes at least one simile, metaphor, or analogy to explain concepts and provide clear information. The tone is serious, and the voice is usually objective, although sometimes the writer might state an opinion. | The writer attempts to consider purpose and audience in the language, tone, and voice of the research paper. However, the writer sometimes loses sight of one of these aspects and includes inappropriate language or wording, misses opportunities to incorporate domain-specific words, or fails to use literary techniques such as similes, metaphors, or analogies to explain concepts and provide clear information. Imprecise language is sometimes confusing, but readers can usually figure out the meaning. The tone of the paper is serious, but some of the language is informal. The voice of the research paper is not consistently objective, and the writer’s opinions are present. | There is little consideration for purpose and audience in the writer’s choice of language, tone, and voice. The research paper lacks any domain-specific vocabulary and contains no literary techniques that might explain concepts or provide clear information to readers. The research paper contains personal opinions, comments, and exclamations. The research paper contains informal language, including slang and other inappropriate expressions.  |
| **Sentences and Mechanics** | Each sentence expresses a complete thought. Quotations contain the exact words of the source and are punctuated correctly. All citations within the research paper and on the Works Cited page are in proper citation format. There are extremely few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, and those that exist do not impede understanding. | Most sentences contain complete thoughts. Quotations are used for the exact words of a source, but sometimes they are not punctuated correctly. Most citations in the paper and on the Works Cited page are in proper citation format. There are few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, and they rarely interfere with a reader's ability to understand. | Sentences do not all contain complete thoughts. There are several unintentional fragments and run-ons. Some quotations are not punctuated correctly, and not all citations are in proper citation format. There are errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with the reader's ability to understand. | Many sentences contain errors in structure. Quotations, if used, are incorrectly punctuated. Most citations, if present, are in improper format. Multiple errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics make the paper difficult to understand. |