**Essay Checklist**

**Formatting:**

* If I am using APA documentation, I have a title page that includes a Running head (shortened version of my title, in all caps)
* If I am using MLA documentation, I have my name, instructor name, course, and date in the correct format (see MLA handout)
* My essay is typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt font
* My essay is double spaced
* My essay is printed in black ink
* My essay has 1 inch margins all the way around
* My essay has no extra spacing between paragraphs

**My Introduction Paragraph:**

* My introduction has an interesting “hook” that captures my reader’s attention
* My introduction has a strong thesis statement (topic + claim/argument)
* My introduction doesn’t speak in-depth or provide examples of my main points
* My introduction doesn’t include phrases resembling, “In this paper you’ll learn…” or “After reading this paper…”

**The Body of My Essay:**

* My essay transitions smoothly between my ideas (summarizes my main point in one section and then introduces the next main point for my next section)
* My essay makes clear connections between my ideas, and all the ideas presented point toward my thesis/claim/argument
* My essay’s organization is logical and cohesive
* My essay reads smoothly and doesn’t cause me to have to pause to decipher meaning
* When reading my essay I can “hear” my own voice
* My essay contains accurate information from credible scholarly sources (see CRAP test to determine this)
* The majority of my sources come from credible print sources, such as books, scholarly journals, and periodicals. Most of my non-print sources are NOT web based, but instead come from the online databases that the University of Toledo subscribes to (OhioLink databases)
* My essay contains timely and current information on my topic
* My essay is written in my own words, and when I use source material I cite it properly

**Paranthetical Citations In My Essay (In-text):**

* My essay includes in-text citations according to the following standards:
* The number of required secondary sources, cited parenthetically in the proper format: (MLA: Davis 60), (APA: Davis, 2015, p.60)
* My essay gives credit EVERY time that a secondary source is used, even if it is paraphrased and/or summarized information
* I introduces all quotes that I use in my essay, and I integrate my sources effectively by still maintaining my own voice and argument (I control my research, my research doesn’t control me)
* Each source listed on my Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA) page is cited at least one time in my essay

**My Conclusion Paragraph:**

* My conclusion has a logical closing that ties together the main points of my paper
* My conclusion contains a unique closing statement that does not repeat the opening statement and leaves the reader with something to think about
* My conclusion does not contain phrases resembling, “In this paper you have learned…” or “Now that you’ve read my paper…”
* My conclusion restates my thesis in a new and intriguing way, causing my readers to think or question, and, at the least, to see my argument/claim as valid
* My conclusion expresses the significance of my argument/claim/thesis (my readers know the answer to the “So What?” question after reading my essay)

**Works Cited Page/References Page:**

* My sources are listed on a separate page of my essay, titled “Works Cited” if I’m writing in MLA format, “References” if I’m writing in APA format; this heading of “Works Cited” or “References” is centered on the page (see examples on handouts)
* My sources are alphabetized according to the author’s last name (if no author is given, use the title of the source, and put it in quotation marks; example: (“Education and Powerful Minds”); your Works Cited/References page entry should match your in-text citation
* My sources are not numbered
* Text on my Works Cited/References page is double spaced, just like the rest of my essay
* My sources are formatted with a hanging indent

**Conventions (spelling and grammar):**

* My essay has been reviewed by a peer or the Writing Center
* My essay uses proper grammar usage, including commas, semi-colons, and complete sentences (no fragments or run-ons) \*\* Basic rules for Comma Usage: see handout
* My essay does not contain comma-splices (a comma-splice is where you combine two complete sentences using a comma instead of a semi-colon or period)\*

**\*If you have two complete sentences that are related and you want to join them, use a semi-colon or period.**

Example of a comma-splice: “Women are fascinating, I admire women for their contributions to society.” (incorrect)

 -This is a comma-splice because you have 2 distinct, complete sentences here that are joined by a comma—this is incorrect grammar

Examples on how we fix the comma-splice:

Example 1: “Women are fascinating; I admire women for their contributions to society.” (correct)

Example 2: “Women are fascinating. I admire women for their contributions to society.” (also correct)