

Checklist for Lab Reports & Scientific Papers

- Is the title concise and does it adequately describe the contents? For example, with the title “Substance Y Alters Blonial Structure of Elephant Bone Marrow,” researchers interested in substance Y, blonial structure, elephants, or bone marrow should recognize that the article may be of interest to them.
- Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included, in proper order? A typical scientific paper includes the following sections: title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references.
- Are tone and style appropriate? Scientific writing, for the most part, is intended to be more factual than entertaining and not embellished with descriptive language or anecdotes, humor, or dialogue.
- Does the writer use passive voice, the generally accepted convention? The writer of a lab report, for example should use the passive past tense: “Solution A was centrifuged,” not I centrifuged Solution A.”
- Are sentences short and to the point, expressing facts clearly and concisely? Does the writer answer all basic questions about the topic?
- Have conventions related to symbols and abbreviations been observed?
- Are figures and tables numbered and accompanied by explanatory captions? Are they introduced before they appear in the text?



Argument Papers

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Research Papers

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Lab Reports &
Scientific Papers



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Checklist for Argument Papers

- Is the claim or proposition – what the writing is trying to prove – clearly stated?
- Are all assertions supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence – facts, interpretations of facts, opinions – appropriate? Data should be accurate, recent, and sufficient. Sources cited should be reliable.
- Does the arrangement of evidence make sense? Does it emphasize the most important issues? Are there more effective ways of arranging the evidence?
- Are facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and expert opinions placed properly?
- Is the evidence carefully documented?
- Is the reasoning sound?
- Has the writer included any logical fallacies? (If you are unfamiliar with logical fallacies, refer to a writing textbook or handbook.)
- Are terms that might be controversial or ambiguous adequately defined?
- Have opposing arguments been considered and dealt with adequately?

Checklist for Research Papers

- If there is a title, is it informative and appropriate?
- Is the thesis clear? Is the organization logical? If headings and subheadings are used, do they consistently follow an accepted format?
- Are tone, voice, and diction consistent and appropriate?
- Are transitions smooth from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, section to section?
- Are credible sources and evidence used? Is the supporting material suitable and persuasive? Does it adequately support the thesis?
- Are quotations, paraphrased, and summarized passages properly introduced with a signal phrase?
- Are visual materials—tables, figures, charts, maps and the like—introduced with a signal phrase?
- Are long quotations off set from the text?
- Is proper credit given to sources throughout?
- Does the paper consistently adhere to the documentation style used (MLA, APA, CBE, etc.) in format and in documentation both within the text and at the end of the text?
- Were the instructions for the assignment—length, number, and kinds of resources, directions for the title page or documentation—followed carefully?