SELF-REVISING/EDITING CHECKLIST
WRITING

STEP 1: PREPARE
- Find a quiet space.
- Print your paper instead of revising on-screen.
- Let the essay rest between rough draft and revision.

STEP 2: REVISE FIRST
- Check the essay prompt.
- Revise for content and organization first. Look for a strong thesis, supportive topic sentences, well-integrated quotations, and a good flow from intro to conclusion.

STEP 3: EDIT NEXT
- Edit for sentence structure and word choice.
- Edit for grammar, usage, and style.

STEP 4: STAY ALERT
- Read out loud.
- Ask a friend (or Google) to read your paper to you.
- Craft a reverse outline.
- Start in the middle or at the end.
- Use the search function to find "weasel" words or repetition.
- Highlight or cut your paper into strips to organize.
- Notice patterns and pay attention to details.

CHECKLIST
CONTENT/ORGANIZATION
☐ **Hook**: Does it grab the reader's attention, and is it specific?
☐ **Thesis**: Is it clear? Does it offer both a topic that relates to the prompt and something to prove or argue?
☐ **Topic Sentences**: Do they all support the thesis?
☐ **Body Paragraphs**: Is there a good balance between evidence/details and explanation/analysis? Do you make strong arguments?
☐ **Documentation**: Are quotations and paraphrases cited properly and integrated with signal phrases? Can you paraphrase long quotations?
☐ **Concluding Sentences**: Do you finish off each body paragraph with a final thought?
☐ **Conclusion**: Does your conclusion leave the reader with a finished feeling? Does it contain no new evidence?
☐ **Essay Structure**: Have you paid attention to how each paragraph flows to the next—both in terms of ideas and transitions?
SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND WORD CHOICE

- **Fragments**: Check your paper for fragments. Consult the Fragments handout for help.
- **Run-ons**: Check your paper for comma splices and fused sentences. Consult the Run-ons handout for help.
- **Sentence Variety**: Use coordination and subordination to vary your sentence structure. Consult the Coordination and Subordination handouts for help.
- **Active vs. Passive Voice**: Improve your writing by changing sentences from passive to active voice.
- **Generic Words vs. Specific Words**: Use words that paint a picture in the reader's mind instead of general, bland words.
- **Strong Verbs**: Instead of weak verbs, such as "to be thinking," use strong verbs. "I think" is better than "I like to be thinking."
- **Wordiness**: Don't use ten words when you can use five, and find concrete words to say what you mean. Don't create wordiness problems simply to inflate word count.

GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND STYLE

- **Verb Tense**: Maintain verb tense consistency. If you're unsure, stick with the "literary present" tense.
- **Subject-Verb Agreement**: Your subjects and verbs should coordinate. Check your nouns to see whether they are plural or singular.
- **Articles**: Use "a," "an," and "the" in front of nouns that require them. Check the Articles handout for help.
- **Punctuation**: Use the correct pronouns to replace nouns.
- **Punctuation Usage**: Look up rules on using commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, semicolons, colons, and more. Don't be afraid to use more "sophisticated" punctuation once you get a grip on commas.
- **Citation Formatting**: Make sure you know whether you're using MLA, APA, or another citation style; punctuate citations properly.
- **Jargon and Cliches**: Know whether your assignment allows for a more casual style or if you're required to write with an academic voice.
- **Works Cited/Bibliography**: Double space, use hanging indents, and alphabetize your Works Cited. Check online style guides like OWL Purdue for more information.
- **Heading and Page Numbers**: Use a properly formatted heading in the upper left corner; in the header add page numbers and your last name.
- **Titles**: Come up with a creative but informational title that piques the reader's interest but doesn't repeat the assignment name.