

CHECKLIST FOR PAPERS ABOUT LITERATURE

Introductory Paragraph:

- Have you named both the work and the author in the first paragraph?
- Have you put quotation marks around the name of a story, article, poem, or song? ("SAPS")
- Have you underlined the name of a book or other major work?
- Is your thesis at the end of the first paragraph?
- Have you written in the present tense?

Body Paragraphs:

- Does each body paragraph have its own topic sentence?
- Does each body paragraph clearly support the thesis?
- Are you sure that you are not merely retelling the story?
- Are all body paragraphs reasonably the same length?
- Have you used quotations from the work to support your thesis?
- Have you punctuated quotations correctly? (See below.)
- Have you included words of your own in each sentence containing quotations? (See below.)

Concluding Paragraph:

- Is the conclusion clearly stated in a separate paragraph?
- Does the conclusion reflect the ideas in your thesis?
- Have you named the work in the concluding paragraph?

Overall:

- Are all sentences clear, complete, and smoothly structured?
- Have you used transitions between sentences and between paragraphs?
- Have you eliminated all unnecessary words?
- Have you used correct punctuation?
- Have you spelled words correctly?
- Have you proofread aloud? (Check carefully to make sure you have used present tense.)

Punctuation Rules for Quotation Marks

- Periods and commas always precede ending quotation marks:

The major character was considered a "healthy specimen of Southern manhood."

Although the protagonist "lived in mortal fear of Papa," she still manages to help her brother escape.

- A quote within a quote is enclosed in single quotation marks:

Matilda shows her resentment as she "stamped her feet and said, 'Get out of here, Harry!'"

- NEVER use a sentence that is entirely a quotation. Introduce the quote or otherwise include words of your own:

According to Patrick Connor, author of Men of the Nineties, "as recently as the 1980's, fathers were rarely given custody of their children after a divorce or separation."

[Glossary of Literary Terms](#)

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