

Revise your paper after your first draft. You are looking for CLUESS (from p. 288-289):

<b>C</b> oherence:	ideas flow smoothly, with helpful transitions and connectors
<b>L</b> anguage:	uses standard grammar, avoiding clichés, slang, and jargon
<b>U</b> nity:	there is a strong topic sentence, with strong & clear support
<b>E</b> mphasis:	important ideas are emphasized by location, repetition, and isolation
<b>S</b> upport:	writer “proves” the point systematically; uses examples, evidence, and details to justify; remains objective by avoiding judgment & generalizations, including vague labels like “good” and “bad”
<b>S</b> entences:	writing is free of sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices

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Use this checklist for every paper, which you should go through carefully (do not just go through the motions!) after *each draft*:

- I followed my outline (my road map), not adding any new thoughts unless I could fit them into the outline logically
- If appropriate, I have used organizing terms, like *first, second, third, finally*, etc.
- If appropriate, I have used transitional words and phrases, like *however, otherwise, therefore, similarly, for example, on the other hand, therefore*, etc.
- I have made sure that every time I use a transitional word or phrase, I use a semicolon or a period before it and a comma after it, if the transition separates two complete, independent clauses.
- I have moved through my paper in a logical order, not just randomly moving from topic to topic.
- I have written my paper in a manner appropriate for college, not using any slang, such as “drives me nuts,” “barrel of laughs,” “really stupid,” “totally awesome,” etc.
- I have avoided being judgmental unless the paper calls for it, and in that case, I have been specific, avoiding vague terms such as “bad,” “dumb,” “great,” “huge,” etc.
- I’ve used a thesaurus to improve my phrasing, checking a dictionary to make sure I’ve used words correctly.
- I have made sure that my word processor’s spelling, grammar, style, and proofing options are set to catch the maximum number of errors, and I compare its suggestions with my own knowledge.
- I have a strong topic sentence, in which I clearly state my position or what my paper is going to be about.
- I don’t waste words in the introduction by being too vague or general; I focus on the specific purpose of my paper.
- Every paragraph begins with its own topic sentence and relates back to what I laid out in my road map and outline.
- Each paragraph has a specific purpose related to my topic.
- Within each paragraph, each sentence has a specific purpose, relating back to the topic sentence of the paragraph.
- The most important points are at the beginning and end of my paper. I don’t “hide” important or new ideas in the body or wait until the very end to bring something up.
- I repeat key words and phrases that I really want the reader to remember.
- I isolate my most important ideas, placing them at the beginning or end or even just by themselves in a stand-alone paragraph.
- I have provided examples, details, and explanation for each major and minor idea; I don’t have paragraphs that contain very little “meat” and are just space-fillers.
- I have gone through and examined each comma to make sure it is not separating two independent clauses; in other words, I have made sure I do not have any comma splices.
- I have examined every sentence to make sure it has a clear subject and a clear verb and is not a fragment; in particular, I have made sure that I am not confusing a verbal (such as an –ing word) with a verb.
- I have made sure that I am not stringing two or more sentences together without any punctuation; this means that I have checked my paper for run-on sentences.
- I have rechecked everything after each revision of my paper, knowing that each time I revise or edit my paper, there is the possibility that I have made a new error.