

CHECKLIST TO REVISING WORLD LITERATURE PAPERS

Answer the questions below as they apply to your World Literature paper. Then revise your paper according to the responses to these questions. Begin with the first questions about content and organization, and save the proofreading until last.

1. Does the paper fulfill the objective or answer the question on the assignment sheet? Look back at your assignment sheet. Focus particularly on the verbs your teacher uses. Are you supposed to “compare,” “describe,” “discuss,” or achieve some other purpose?
2. Does your paper have a clear thesis statement? The thesis should announce the topic and what you intend to argue about this topic. Is your thesis an interpretation, an arguable assertion that does more than simply summarize the story?
3. Do the main ideas in your paper support your thesis? Does the paper include any material that is not related to the thesis? Is the terminology in your thesis adequately defined for your readers? Outline your paper and relate each section to the thesis.
4. Are your ideas supported with evidence from the text you are discussing? Look for details and examples, quotes and paraphrases. Be sure that each is related to the point you are trying to make in that paragraph.
5. Is the paper coherent? Does your own logic—rather than the chronological order of the story or play—determine the structure of the paper? Does each paragraph have a topic sentence—the most general statement that can be made about the paragraph? Is all the information included in a particular paragraph clearly related to the topic sentence? Write out a sentence summarizing each paragraph. Does this sentence cover all the information included in the paragraph? Do the body paragraphs end with some sort of conclusion being drawn on the topic discussed in each? Are the paragraphs linked to each other so that they seem to follow logically from one to the next?
6. Are the quotes and paraphrases incorporated smoothly into the paper? Are the quotes brief as possible? Do not use them as “padding.”
7. Does the introduction justify interest in your topic? The introduction should focus on your argument—not the story or play you are discussing. Does the introduction begin at a sufficiently specific level for such a short paper? (Avoid broad general statements. “Shakespeare was a great writer” is not a good introductory statement because it focuses on the author rather than your argument and it is much too general. Avoid terms like “great” because you are not writing a review, and evaluative terms are not specific.)
8. Does the conclusion tie up your argument and answer the question “so what”? Does it tell the reader what he or she should have learned from your paper? The conclusion should not summarize but instead be the final step in the logic of your paper.

Have you proofread your paper carefully? Have you checked your quotes for accuracy? Have you checked for spelling and punctuation errors? Be sure to use spell-check, but then proofread yourself as well. Do not rely on the grammar-check programs.