

# Odyssey Academy's Recommendations For Essay Assignments

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## Checklist for Proofreading

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- Is the first word of each paragraph indented?
- Do my sentences show variety?

### Sentence Variety

→ Sentences vary in the ways they are used:

*declarative* {statement}

*interrogative* {question}

*exclamatory* {exclamation}

*imperative* {command}

→ Sentences vary in word order

→ Sentences vary in type:

*simple*: {one independent clause}

*compound*: {two independent clauses}

*complex*: {one independent clause and one dependent clause}

- Have I used commas and end punctuation correctly?
- Have I overlooked any words that would be capitalized?
- Are any words misspelled?
- Reread each paragraph. Are any words left out?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Do my all my verbs agree and show unity?  
Are the verbs all past tense, present tense, future tense, etc?
- Do all of my pronouns agree?

### Examples:

*Incorrect:*

Every parent wants *their* children to go to school.

*Correct:*

Every parent wants *his or her* children to go to school

OR

All parents want *their* children to go to school.

*Incorrect*

The tennis team won *their* final match on Friday.

*Correct*

The tennis team won *its* final match on Friday.

- Have I avoided using the word “you” in reference to my audience?

### Examples:

*Incorrect:*

When taking care of small children, *you* should always be aware of possible dangers.

*Correct:*

When taking care of small children, *one* should always be aware of possible dangers.

OR (*more specifically*)

When taking care of small children, *babysitters* should always be aware of possible dangers.

- ❑ Have I omitted “dead” words which may distract my reader or detract from the flow of the paper?

Examples:

*Incorrect:*

Fishing is a pastime *that* many people enjoy.

*Correct:*

Fishing is a pastime many people enjoy.

- ❑ **VERY IMPORTANT!** When I read my paper out loud, is it easy to read? Does my paper flow smoothly as I am reading?
- ❑ **VERY IMPORTANT!** Have I cited my sources both within my paper and in the bibliography? Have I used M.L.A. formatting procedures?