

## *Checklists—Once More*

We know how valuable checklists can be. We have a tendency to create our own lists for a variety of reasons: groceries, do-to items, honey-do, and for other daily events. Checklists keep us organized, help us to remember what we need to do, and allow us to feel good about all that we complete.

Checklists work the same for our students!

A checklist is one method to help students and parents (and yes, teachers, too) to organize and plan projects. It is basically a list of steps that students must complete in order to complete a project successfully. Checklists can be long or short depending on the age of the student and the complexity of the assignment. It is best, however, to keep the list to one page. For extremely complex projects, break the assignment into parts and give students a checklist for each part.

*Checklists for our students have an additional benefit. When parents know what we are expecting from our students, they are more inclined to support our teaching rather than to criticize it. Parents are able to plan and organize life outside of school when they know how much their children are expected to do and when they are expected to do it.*

Making the checklist.

I find it easier to make the checklist *after* creating a rubric or writing the assignment. I try to think of the mistakes students have made in the past—even simple ones like putting their name on papers—and the important concepts that I have taught. The following might be helpful in creating checklists:

- ◆ What are the criteria that you decided to evaluate (look at the rubric).
- ◆ Break more complex criterion into parts for the checklist. For example, if the criterion is "use correct grammar,;" then you might want to break this down into correct use of verbs, pronouns, and troublesome words.
- ◆ Make sure that each criterion that you have on the rubric is represented on the checklist.

- ◆ Think about problems students have had in the past: Name, number, date—and add these to the checklist.
- ◆ Add special instructions—for example, if you have used peer revision activities and want these attached—say so. If you want all of the writing activities students have done—from prewriting to final copy—list the order on the checklist.
- ◆ Try to use positive statements—Name, instead of did you forget your name?
- ◆ Try to be as complete as possible. The more information you can give to parents the better. For young children, it may be more feasible to give the students a short list and the parents a separate longer one.
- ◆ *If you leave a criterion off of the checklist, it is difficult to defend why you evaluated or "took points off" for that item.* If you have decided to award points for the peer revision activity but do not list it on the checklist, you will have problems defending the grade.

Checklists must be given to students as they are working on the project. To wait until students have finished causes problems for you. Take for example peer revision activities from above; if students (and parents) are unaware that they are expected to have it at the end of the project then students may misplace or lose the activity. This defeats the organizational purpose of the checklist.

A great website to help create checklists:

<http://www.4teachers.org>

*I have attached an example of a student checklist. You need to carefully examine the units you have taught this year. Do you have a checklist you give to students? If not, then you need to create one for these units. If you have a checklist, then you need to make sure it is complete and accurate. Remember, these units will be in our exhibits for accreditation. We will need student examples.*

[abcteach](#) Student Writing Checklist :Use this check list to edit and evaluate your work.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

OK	Needs Work	Student Writing Checklist
		Indented
		7-up Sentence (7 or more words)
		Lead sentence( Quotes, ???, Excitement, etc.)
		Simile
		Punctuation (Watch apostrophes and ????)
		Capitalization (All names)
		Rich Vocabulary Words (Give me goosebumps)
		Neat
		Makes Sense
		Details