

Essay Writing Checklist

Writing in the
field

Ideally, you should go through the whole list; in practice, you may not have time, so you should pick the sections that are most useful to you!

grammar
vocab
mechanics

(how to
self-check
writing)

___ The essay is of the appropriate length

___ Everything is **spelled** correctly

___ All **verbs**...

___ **agree** with their subjects (remember e.g. Leute are plural, Familie is singular)

___ are **conjugated** correctly (**watch past participles, haben/sein** etc.)

___ are in the **correct position** in the sentence (watch for separable verbs, subordinating conjunctions (==> verb at end), coordinating conjunctions (remember that (1) coordinating conjunctions don't "count" as occupying the first position of a clause ==> don't require inverted word order; (2) when a coordinating conjunction coordinates two subordinate clauses, the verb comes at the end in both!)

___ are in the correct **mood (indicative vs. subjunctive)** and **voice (active vs. passive)**

___ All **nouns**...

___ are **capitalized** (including verbs and adjectives being used as nouns!)

___ have the correct **gender and number** (look up correct plural endings!)

___ are in the proper **case**. Remember to

- (1) **add -n in the Dative Plural,**
- (2) **add -(e)s in the masculine and neuter genitive**
- (3) **add -(e)n to masculine weak nouns** except in the Nominative Singular
- (4) **use Nominative, not Accusative, after sein and werden** ["Snoopy ist ein Hund," NOT "Snoopy ist einen Hund"]

___ All **pronouns** are in the correct **case, gender, and number**. Remember that even nouns for inanimate objects are referred to by their gender: only neuter nouns are referred to by *es* (e.g. Wo ist **der** Stuhl? **Er** ist hier.)

Note: If you use **man** [=one], remember that (1) you should not switch to er/sie in the same sentence ==> "Wenn **man** Hunger hat, soll **man** SPAM essen." (2) **man** is **nominative**; its accusative is **einen**, dative is **einem**, and genitive is **sein**. ==> e.g. "Wenn man sein Auto wäscht, wird es regnen."

_____ **Prepositions** and their cases are correct

_____ **Negations** are in the proper place (and remember to use "**kein**" instead of "nicht-ein"!)

_____ All sentences are **clear** and comprehensible.