Revision checklist for literature papers

Adapted from
The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors
Fourth Edition
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A literature paper analyzes, interprets, or evaluates a text, answering such questions as "What is the significance of the three scaffold scenes in *The Scarlet Letter*?" "What does the cherry orchard in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* represent?" "What is the significance of the setting in John Steinbeck's 'The Chrysanthemums'?" "How effective is the use of first-person narrative in John Updike's 'A&P'?" The writer of a literary essay should answer such questions with a meaningful and persuasive analysis that supports ideas and assertions with specific evidence from the text.

- ☐ Is the thesis clearly stated? Is the organization logical and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the writer use examples from the text to convincingly support his or her interpretation or analysis?
- ☐ Has the writer avoided giving a simple plot summary?
- ☐ Are parts of a work clearly and accurately indicated? Writers need to refer to parts specifically, for example, "the scene in which . . ." or "at the end of Chapter 3."
- ☐ Does the writer use the present tense when describing events in a work of literature, as is the convention? (This practice often confuses students. You might explain that the author is communicating to a present reader in the present time.)
- ☐ Are titles properly punctuated or underlined? Titles of short stories, essays, and most poems appear in quotation marks; titles of books, plays, epics, or other long poems are italicized or underlined.
- ☐ Has the writer referred to the author properly, using the full name initially and the last name in subsequent references?
- ☐ Is quoted material properly punctuated, indented (if longer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse), and documented according to the format specified by the teacher?

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