Writer’s Checklist

* Use active voice.
* Begin sentences with the initiator of the action (subject).
* Auxiliary verbs and past participles create passive sentences.
* MS Word tools can recognize, underline, and statistically count passive sentences by setting Proofing & Readability Statistics.
* Flesh Reading Ease displays the grade level of your work.
* When beginning a sentence with a modifying clause, the **next noun** should be its intended subject.
* Know the Style Guide of your institution.
* Tables and figures should be legible.
* Bulleted lists contain information of equal importance. Numbered lists contain information of graduated importance.
* A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences.
* Use plain, simple language, short words, and brief sentences.
* **Parataxis**: Simple sentences or phrases which hold an equal relationship to one another with minimal use of *coordinating conjunctions* or *subordinate clauses*.
* What comes in threes is perfect; the perfect combination of brevity and rhythm (three words, three clauses, three sentences. Our brains love it.
* **Asyndeton**: Constructing sentences or clauses without the use of coordinating conjunctions (fanboys).
* Minimal use of prepositions add clarity to your work
* Repair **Preposition** overdose by eliminating them or replacing them with adverbs or possessives.
* A preposition at the end of a sentence is dangling.
* Readers prefer plain language.
* **Logorrhoea**: The intentional use of long sentences or overly abstract wording.
* **Omit Needless Words** Every word must contribute meaning to the sentence.
* **Pleonasm**: The use of more words than those necessary to denote mere sense.
* Let me briefly summarize: Avoid redundancy.
* Avoid modal verbs: might, may, could, would, should, etc.
* A **noun stack** is a series of related words; some created from verbs.
* Know your homonyms.
* Use “that” if the sentence element is restrictive (vital to the meaning of the sentence).
* Use “which” if the element is non-restrictive, incidental information.
* Do not overuse of the word “that” in sentences.
* WOW! “There are” and “there is” are expletives and have no meaning in a sentence.
* **Nominalized Verbs:** Verbs that have been changed into nouns then coupled with weaker verbs.
* Write in the positive.
* **Anthropomorphism:** Human emotions and abilities assigned to non-living things.
* When the subject is presented as a unit (**collective noun**), it is considered a single entity that requires a single verb. Be care that antecedents agree.
* **Parallel Structure:** When elements of a sentence are similar, they should be presented in equivalent forms.
* The Oxford comma should always be used.
* **En dash:** Periods of time, inclusive dates & numbers, and between words of equal weight.
* Restructure sentences to avoid bias.
* Be professional when sending e-mails. They instantly become a permanent record.
* Vary your verbs.