Self-editing checklist

Content and Organization
- Make sure your topic is clear and specific.
- Develop a thesis (or purpose) statement that is a clear summary of your paper’s main point or argument.
- Present the main points in a logical and effective order.

Paragraphs
- Develop a single idea in each paragraph.
- Create a topic sentence for each body paragraph that summarizes all of the points the paragraph covers (claim).
- Use concrete details and examples to support your claim (evidence).
- Explain how your evidence supports your claim (analysis).
- Provide effective transitions between paragraphs.

Sentence Structure
- Vary sentence structure and length.
- Eliminate sentence fragments and run-ons.
- Replace unnecessary ‘to be’ verbs (be, been, is, are, were, was) with stronger (more active) verbs.
- Express parallel ideas in parallel form.

Grammar
- Make sure verbs agree with their subjects.
- Make pronoun references clear and correct.
- Eliminate confusing shifts in verb tense.

Format
- Format the margins, page numbers, titles, line spacing, headings, etc. correctly as specified by MLA, APA, or a style indicated by your instructor.
- Cite all of your quotes and paraphrases properly in the assigned citation style (both in-text and in a final Works Cited, Reference, or Bibliography page).

Style
- Know your audience. Use an appropriate and consistent level of language.
- Avoid unnecessary and vague words. Simplify and be precise!
- Stay away from clichés, jargon, and slang expressions.
- Eliminate contractions.