



Writer's Web

Some Warning Signs of a Rushed Paper

This checklist notes some characteristics of writing done in one draft and at the last minute. Watch for symptoms of hurried writing; your professor will certainly notice!

- Not following the assignment: When you read an assignment, use the same tactics you would for analyzing a question on an essay test.
- Glaring factual errors: Use your cites to check your facts again.
- Failing to cite sources: Every direct quote, fact, and paraphrase must be cited. If it's not your idea, you must cite it, even if it's a paraphrase.
- Incomplete thesis: Include your topic, the opinion you are trying to prove, and the main arguments or main points. Put on first page of Introduction.
- Thesis isn't followed through in the paper: Make sure you addressed all of the main arguments or points stated in the thesis statement.
- Several paragraphs with nearly identical topic sentences: List the main arguments or points and make sure to address them all.
- Last page or so is incoherent and sloppy: The end isn't on the level with the paper's beginning.
- Lack of paragraphing at the end of your paper: Were you racing to finish?
- Incomplete argument: If you said you were going to prove four points or discuss four books and you only got around to two of them, add the two or don't mention them initially.
- Conclusion that gives new information. Summarize, but don't add.
- Verb tense and agreement problems: Check to make sure that your tenses don't shift from the past to present. APA style requires past tense, as in "Reseachers stated..." Be sure that your subjects and verbs agree.
- Spelling errors: Even after using a spell-checker, proofread again.
- Sloppy presentation: Be sure that your paper looks as polished as possible; Add appropriate cover page and staple.
- Proofread four times: first for meaning, next for organization, then for grammar/spelling/punctuation. Take a break, then proofread as you read aloud.

Adapted from <http://www.richmond.edu/~writing/wweb/rushed.html> by Maida Tilchen, Project Manager for Library Services, Cambridge College, © 2002