Eighth Grade English Paper Checklist Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT

* Do you have one-inch margins on all sides of your paper?
* Is there a correct MLA Heading on the top left side of your paper?
* Are pages after the first numbered with your surname in the upper right corner?
* Is there a centered, interesting title to your paper?
* Is your paper printed in a standard, 12-point font?
* Does your paper have MLA citations for someone else’s words or ideas?
* Does your paper have an MLA Works Cited page?

STYLE

* Does your paper use standard, formal English (without contractions, slang, or colloquialisms)?
* Do you start a new paragraph each time you have a new idea or point to make?
* Do you start a new paragraph when you wish to contrast your last idea with another?
* Do you start a new paragraph to conclude your paper?

CONTENT

* Does your **first** paragraph adequately introduce the idea of the paper and include a thesis?
* If the paper is about another work, does the first paragraph include the title and author of that work?
* Does your introduction prepare the reader for the coming thesis and argument?
* Do**each** of the paragraphs in the body of the paper
  + have a topic sentence?
  + have adequate discussion to develop the topic? If not, try these tips:
    - use examples and illustrations
    - cite data (facts, statistics, details, and evidence)
    - examine testimony (what other people have said in quotes and paraphrases)
    - compare and contrast
    - evaluate causes and reasons
    - examine effects and consequences
    - analyze the topic
    - offer a chronology of an event
  + have coherent information relevant to the topic?
  + maintain unity, in discussing only one topic or idea?
  + relate to only important points on the topic, rather than wandering too far from the main idea?
  + contain sentences that lead smoothly into the next sentence to come?
* Does your **last** paragraph
  + summarize your paper’s main idea without sounding redundant?
  + bring the entire paper to a neat and logical conclusion?
  + Leave a final impression on your reader?

COMMON MISTAKES

* Does your paper use pronouns such as “it,” “this,” “that,” or “there” without referring to a specific antecedent?
* Do your pronouns agree with their nouns in number (singular/plural)?
* Does your paper contain sentence fragments?
* Does your paper use repetitive language?
* Does your paper overuse modifiers such as “very,” “really” or “so?”

GRAMMAR

* Do your sentences string together too many prepositional phrases?
* Do your sentences end with prepositions or linking verbs?
* Do your sentences ask rather than answer questions?
* Are your sentences consistent in tense and tone?