Kent’s Writing Checklist

1. Is there a clear thesis? Do each of my topic sentences relate directly to my thesis?
2. What type of evidence do I have in each paragraph to support my thesis? Have I cited the evidence?
3. Does each paragraph conclude with a sentence that brings the reader back to what I stated in the topic sentence? Even better, does it link my topic sentence in the paragraph to my topic sentence in the next paragraph?
4. **TENSE**. Is the entire piece in the same tense? If it is past tense it must remain in **past tense**, if it is **present tense** it must remain in present tense.
5. There, Their. It’s, its. Your, you’re. Conjunctions are not used in formal writing.
6. “This”. Reread your essay for the word “This”. Remove it, replace it, rewrite. It is a vague word and does not make you sound assertive.
7. Watch for colons and semicolons. Know which one you want to use.
8. The title of the book is always underlined, even if it is used in citing a quote. Use the author’s name when citing.
9. Colloquial. Avoid colloquial sayings. Avoid sayings like “it could be said”. Use transitions like, “however”.
10. Focus on the author’s purpose. Ex: 1. Describe the symbolism, metaphor, irony, etc. that the author uses. 2. Explain what it means. 3. Then state what the author’s intended purpose was for the aforementioned symbol, metaphor, use of irony, etc.

Reread your essay on paper and get another’s perspective as well. Do not trust grammar and spell check. Read the following paragraph that doesn’t have any grammatical errors according to spell and grammar check.

Education for the Renaissance women attributed much less to her individual worth. It was thought necessary for different reason than the renaissance man. Subjects like History, Literature (especially poetry) and Religion are thought proper for women. Women where to study history to receive a knowledge of events which helped for her society. “For the careful study of the past enlarges our foresight in contemporary affairs.”

*This paragraph has 21 grammatical mistakes*.

**Education for the Renaissance woman contributed little to their individual worth (*a fairly brazen statement. You better hope your marker is not of the female gender*). It was thought necessary for a woman for a different reason than the Renaissance man. Subjects like history, literature (especially poetry) and religion were thought proper for a woman. A woman was to study history to receive (can you “receive a knowledge”? Gain or acquire are better words to use) knowledge of events that helped for her society, (if you use the period here the quote is a “hanging” quote. Use a comma to link the quote to the preceding idea) “For the careful study of the past enlarges our foresight in contemporary affairs.”**