

## A CHECKLIST FOR STORIES

Here are the elements of writing that I'll be looking for you to demonstrate in your essays. Make sure to check these out before you turn in your final draft.

- Is the narrative written in present tense?
- Is there a focus on writing sentences in active voice? Active voice is the preferred voice for magazine and news writing.
- Are you using dialogue when characters speak?
- Are there helping verbs that can be cut (is, are, was, will be, etc.)?
- Do you have a creative title on the essay?
- Is the first sentence interesting, surprising, or captivating enough to pull the reader into the narrative?
- Are there clichés? Cut them and use your own creative similes and metaphors.
- Have you checked and double-checked grammar and punctuation? Have you taken your paper to the Writing Center to have them look it over? If not – go now!
- Are you using indefinite pronouns (it, they, them, etc.) as the subject of the sentence? If so, replace the indefinite pronoun with the name of the person or thing.
- Have you cut out all of the adjectives and adverbs and replaced with concrete descriptions?
- As the narrative progresses, do you continue to describe surroundings using concrete nouns and verbs, and all five senses (what you see, hear, smell, taste, feel)?
- Is the format of the essay in Associated Press or Chicago Style?

If you can check off all of these, you'll have a good start on getting a better grade on the assignment.