How The OWL Checks For Paper Structure

When we review a paper for structure or citations, we check these areas and ask these questions to help develop content.

1. the 1st paragraph:
   o What’s the topic of this paper? Can you add a sentence stating that?
   o What main point (thesis) did you want to make? What position are you taking?
     • Remember – a thesis may not be a strong argument, but it should be a position, not a statement of fact.
   o Does the point you’re making answer the question raised in the assignment?
   o Not every paper will, but can you hint at the supports for your point that you’ll explore further in the paper?

2. the body paragraphs:
   o Do you have examples? How can you illustrate this point? What evidence do you have to support this?
   o Can you explain this further? Who or what was involved? How was who or what involved? What was the result? What was the lesson learned?
   o Is there a contradictory example or counter-argument? What does that involve? How does it compare to your example? Which is stronger and why?
   o How does this information support your main point?

3. When we come across a fact, figure or idea:
   o Where did you get this information? What is your source?
   o Do you have both an in-text citation and an end reference for this fact, figure, or idea?
   o Are you working in MLA, APA, or Chicago – footnote or endnote?
     • Need an end references for every citation in alpha order with handing indent
   o Have you seen the AARC Formatting & Reference Guide? - http://libguides.sfasu.edu/aarc/formref

4. Flow and transition between body paragraphs:
How does this next support relate to the one before it?
Is there another support or contrasting support for further explanation?
Where are the words that indicate what is coming next? For example, 'by contrast', 'in addition'?
You mentioned X earlier. Does this information belong here or there?

5. the conclusion:

What is the main point you were trying to make in this paper?
OR – the main point you make in the conclusion is X. Is that idea also in your introduction?
Can you summarize your supports briefly?
Have you answered all the questions in the assignment?