Check Your Paper: Some General Expectations for Papers

At the discourse level
- For research and reaction papers, there is a clear thesis/theme stated and is all of the information presented is explicitly connected to the thesis
- For an assigned question, the paper clearly responds to the question posed
- Each paragraph contributes to the topic or question and all of the sentences in each paragraph are related to the topic of that paragraph
- Uses transition words/phrases/sentences to mark the flow of ideas
- Uses section headings for longer papers to contribute to clarity of organizations
- Doesn’t repeat ideas or words

At the word choice and sentence level
- Uses concise language; avoids excessively wordy phrases
  - e.g. Wordy: The researchers did a study to examine the effects of
    Concise: The researchers examined the effects of....
  - e.g. Wordy: The reason that people like bright colors is that...
    Concise: People like bright colors because....
- Uses active rather than passive voice
  - e.g. Passive: The questionnaire was completed by 20 respondents
    Active: Twenty respondents completed the questionnaire.
- Refers to people or groups as “who”, not “which” or “that”
  - e.g. Incorrect: People that like vanilla ice cream also like ....
    Correct: People who like vanilla ice cream also like...
- Avoids vague pronouns such as “this”; “these” without adding the referent
  - e.g. Not: This is why people with a growth mindset were more persistent
    But: Because they believe people can change, respondents with a growth mindset were more persistent.
_ Uses parallel sentence structure
  o e.g. Not: *The client enjoys reading and visiting friends as well as to ride his bicycle.*
  But: *The client enjoys reading, visiting friends and riding his bicycle.*

_ Uses consistent verb tense throughout a paragraph
_ Subjects and verbs agree in number; data is plural
  o e.g. *The data are gathered…*

_ Avoids jargon and defines technical terminology
_ Uses commas to contribute to clarity and to separate clauses but not before every “and” or “which”
  o e.g. Incorrect: *She was working in a hospital, and going to school at night.*
  Correct: *She was working in a hospital and going to school at night.*
  Correct: *She was working in a hospital, and she was going to school at night.*

_ Does not overuse direct quotes and does not paraphrase by changing a word or two but, rather, summarizes the ideas in one’s own words.
  http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/

**APA Style** (a few of the rules…for more, see the APA manual or Purdue OWL)
_ Correct use of level headings (see p. 62, APA Manual, 6th edition)
_ Correct APA format of citations in text and references (Examples: Ch. 7, APA Manual, 6th edition)
_ Quotes of >40 words get block format with no quotation marks (p. 92 APA Manual, 6th edition)
_ Numbers <10 are written in words; ≥10 in numerals; numbers written as words at the beginning of sentence (p.111, APA Manual, 6th edition)
_ Refers to previous authors or research in the past tense (p. 77 APA Manual 6th edition)
  o e.g. Incorrect: *Blank and Blank (2014) assert that high achievers are motivated by….*
  Correct: *Blank and Blank (2014) asserted that high achievers are motivated by….*
  o e.g. Incorrect: *Frank’s theory states that…*
  Correct: *Frank theorized that…*

_ Only capitalizes proper names, not generic nouns, names of diseases, theories (see more rules of capitalization (great source: http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/02/do-i-capitalize-this-word.html)
- Uses an ampersand (&) in citations but when “and” when listing authors within the body of the text (p. 175-177, APA Manual 6th ed.)
  - (e.g. “Abercrombie and Fitch (2002) found that style is important” but “Style is important (Abercrombie & Fitch, 2002).”)
- When listing citations in text, lists citations alphabetically by first author’s name
  - (e.g. Baker & Barista 2001; Moan, Groan & Whine, 2012; White & Black, 1998)
- In the reference section, cites the DOI number of articles obtained online (p. 188 APA Manual 6th ed.)