EDITING CHECKLIST

HIGHER ORDER CONCERNS: "THE BIG PICTURE"

Main focus:
[ ] Is the main point clearly stated?
[ ] Does my main point relate to the assignment, the question, the project goal? Does it fulfill the needs of my audience?
[ ] Does each section relate to the main point?

A favorite way to check for organization: review a draft section-by-section and note the main point of each one (you can even write it down!), as if you were creating an outline. Think of your draft like a puzzle: all the necessary elements are there, but they need to be placed in the right way to form one picture or message.

Organization:
[ ] Does each part flow in logical order?
[ ] Does each section transition smoothly into the next?
[ ] Do the introduction and conclusion match?
[ ] Do the introduction and conclusion sum up/relate back to the main point?

LOWER ORDER CONCERNS: "THE DETAILS"

A favorite technique for micro-editing: reading backwards. Start with the last sentence on the last page and work slowly back to the beginning, reading each sentence on its own.

Sentence structure:
[ ] Do I vary the sentence length and structure to create flow/rhythm?
[ ] Are the sentences clear and concise?
[ ] Do I avoid passive voice unless it's necessary or appropriate?

Word choice:
[ ] Do I avoid repetition of words/phrases?
[ ] Do I use strong/vivid words?
[ ] Does my word choice add style and rhythm?

Punctuation:
[ ] Does each sentence end in the appropriate end mark (period, question mark, or exclamation mark)?
[ ] Am I using commas in the right places?
[ ] Are other punctuation marks used correctly (colons, semi-colons, quotation marks, hyphens, dashes, parentheses)?
[ ] Do I utilize different punctuation marks to add style (colons, semi-colons, dashes, parentheses)?

Spelling:
[ ] Is everything spelled correctly? (Don't trust spell check to catch everything!)