

Editing & Proofreading

Your Own Written Work

Tips & Tricks

- Take a break after writing before you start editing and proofreading (take at least a day away if possible).
- Do editing in a quiet and distraction free location.
- Always read your paper out loud.
- Try altering the font to assist in making the document look novel and easier to see the errors. This may include; increasing font size, increasing spacing, changing colours of background or font, changing the font type, etc.
- Try reviewing your work both on screen and in printed form.
- Try chunking, perhaps reviewing a paragraph at a time. But also ensure there are times when you review the whole document.
- Review old graded written assignments for individualized feedback and use that to help guide your current writing in the right direction.
- Have someone else read it to you.
- Use text-to-speech software to have your paper read out loud to you. Check out the [ALC Accessibility Features webpage](#) .
- If reviewing in print form, try using another paper, a ruler or some other screening tool to only allow you to read and view one line at a time.

Below are ordered categories of editing and proofreading your own writing.

1. Content & Clarity

- a. Carefully review the assignment outline again. Did you meet the requirements, purpose & directives?
- b. Is your information supported and accurate?
- c. Do you keep a consistent message?
- d. Is your message clear?
- e. Is your paper logical?
- f. Do you have enough evidence and support for your claims?

2. Structure

- a. Do you have all required pieces for your written work including the thesis, introduction and conclusion?
- b. Do your paragraphs and sentences feed off each previous one?
- c. Do you have seamless transitions between paragraphs and ideas?

- d. Have you omitted any information?
- e. Have you added unnecessary information, sentences or words?
- f. Does anything sound “off” or awkward?
- g. Do you have a compelling and logical title?
- h. Do your paragraphs each focus on one topic only?
- i. Does your paper “flow” nicely?

3. Citations

- a. Check back to your assignment guidelines (or ask the professor if it is not indicated) for which style guide you are writing by (ex: MLA, APA, etc.).
- b. Ensure any direct quotes are exactly as they appear in the source.
- c. Ensure that any quotes or information summaries are cited according to the appropriate style you are using.
- d. Ensure all sources are referenced in your Works Cited/ Bibliography.
- e. Check the formatting of your Works Cited/ Bibliography against your style guide information.
- f. Make use of [Purdue OWL - Citation](#) (includes MLA, APA and Chicago).
- g. Make use of the [University of Lethbridge Library - Cite Sources](#) (includes APA, MLA and Chicago).
- h. Check out the [University of Lethbridge Library - Understand Plagiarism](#).

4. Spelling & Grammar (Proofreading)

- a. Check for one error at a time.
- b. Keep a list of common mistakes.
- c. Make use of spell and grammar checkers, but don't rely on them to catch everything.
- d. Make each sentence a new line. Go through one-by-one.
- e. Circle all punctuation to help focus in on if it is used appropriately.
- f. Make use of dictionaries.
- g. Make use of [Purdue OWL - Grammar](#).
- h. Make use of [Purdue OWL – Punctuation](#).
- i. Review sentences for; comma splices, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, etc.
- j. Check for tense. Is it consistent throughout your written work?
- k. Check for repetitious words. Try to mix things up (but be cautious of using synonyms that you have never used before).
- l. Check for homonyms that may be mixed up (ex: their, they're, there).
- m. Check for appropriate use of capitalization.

References

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