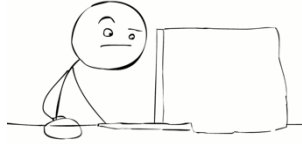


# Short Guide to Editing and Proofreading

Created by: Abigail Villa

## Step 1: Editing



Reread your first draft to see if your **paper is organized, has smooth transitions, and has evidence that supports the argument**. Look out for **patterns of errors**; you can identify and correct them when going forward with your paper.

### Important questions to consider and what to do if you are missing something:

- **Content**
  - *Did you follow the prompt?*
    - If not: Refer back to the assignment. Follow the directions and the question(s) being asked.
  - *Are the claims accurate and consistent?*
    - If not: Your claims should be valid and logical. Stay on topic!
  - *Is each point supported with enough evidence?*
    - If not: Go back to your source material and find sufficient evidence. Having convincing evidence to support your points will make your essay stronger.
  - *If you are writing an argument, is the argument clear and complete?*
    - If not: See where you could strengthen your argument. Make a thorough, clear stance, and ensure that you are supporting your position.
- **Overall Structure**
  - *Is there an introduction and conclusion?*
    - If not: Create them! (**Introduction:** Introduce the topic, subject, and thesis; **Conclusion:** Wrap up your ideas, and close the essay).
  - *Is the thesis in the introduction clear?*
    - If not: Revise and answer the prompt; give readers an idea of what you will discuss in your essay.
  - *Do the body paragraphs support your thesis?*
    - If not: Modify your paragraphs so they are on topic and support the thesis.
  - *Are there clear transitions between the paragraphs?*
    - If not: You can use transition words to show that the paragraphs are connected. (Ex. The author also uses ethos to convince the readers that dogs are better than cats.)
- **Paragraph Structure**
  - *Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?*
    - If not: Make topic sentences for each paragraph. Topic sentences should show readers the main idea of the paragraph, and should connect back to the thesis (Ex. Companies can use solar panels in order to practice clean energy).
  - *Does each paragraph focus on one main idea?*
    - If not: Focus on the main idea. You can remove extra ideas that are not related to the main point you are trying to make.
  - *Are there extra sentences or not enough sentences in the paragraph?*
    - If there are: Remove sentences that are not needed, or include more to provide additional support for your points.

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- **Clarity**

- *Did you define key terms that could be unclear to readers?*
  - If not: Briefly discuss what they mean, and cite when necessary.
- *Are the sentences clear?*
  - If not: See if you missed any details, or if there are ideas you can explain further.
- *Do your word choices accurately express your ideas?*
  - If not: Find word choices that DO express your ideas! If you cannot find the exact word through a thesaurus, try to briefly explain the idea. Do not use words through a thesaurus if they do not match the exact meaning of the word, sometimes just explaining the idea in simple terms can make your idea clear.

- **Style**

- *Did you use an appropriate tone (ex. Informal, formal, persuasive, etc.)?*
  - If not: Change the tone so it is appropriate for your essay. Typically, college writing calls for a more formal tone, so avoid 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person point of view: (ex. *I found out that the death penalty does not deter most crimes*).
  - You want to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view (ex. *Findings suggest that the death penalty does not work as a deterrent to crime*). However, there are still instances where informal writing is called for, so remember to match the tone to the assignment criteria, and ask your professor if you are not sure.
- *Is there a variety of length and structure of your sentences?*
  - If not: Vary the length and structure of your sentences so there is a mix of short, long, and medium sentences. Sentence variety will help the paper flow.
- *Are you using an active voice or passive voice?*
  - If you are using a passive voice: Change the voicing so it is active! You can show the action that is going on instead of making the sentence wordy and passive. (**Passive Voice:** The book was written by her; **Active Voice:** She wrote the book.)
- *Are there unnecessary phrases that are said often (ex. "Like this")?*
  - If so: Find the patterns. You can remove unnecessary phrases or change them so that they are relevant. Your words should hold meaning, so make sure that the words in your essay support your ideas.

- **Citations**

- *Are your quotes, paraphrases and ideas cited correctly in their respective formats?*
  - If not: Include proper citations. You can refer to [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) for help with citations or seek help when necessary from outside resources.



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## Step 2: Proofreading



After the editing process, you can proofread! When proofreading, you'll want to start focusing on **surface errors** (ex. **Grammar, punctuation, spelling**).

### Process and Tips:

- **Do not just rely on spelling/ grammar checkers**
  - Even though these are useful, you also want to make sure you are looking over your work to ensure that the spelling/grammar checkers do not change the meaning of your words
- **Read each word slowly**
  - This allows you to hear how the words sound together, and you can hear the flow of your paper
- **Separate the text into separate sentences to read each one carefully**
- **Circle each punctuation mark to keep track of the punctuation**
- **Read the paper backwards**
  - This is helpful for checking spelling because the grammar will not make sense when it is read backwards; this allows you to focus on spelling
  - This is helpful for checking grammar because it will be difficult to focus on content when reading backwards; this allows you to focus on grammar
- **Proofreading is a learning process**
  - You may find errors that are new or unfamiliar, so it is important to have resources such as Google to look up errors that you are not sure about
  - You will continue to learn and improve!

Proofreading and editing can be a difficult task, but it's a vital part of the writing process. If you would like additional help with either of these stages, the SCAA offers peer-to-peer tutoring, as well as other services such as the Online Writing Lab and eTutoring.

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Reference:

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/editing-and-proofreading/>

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)



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