

Editing and Proofreading

General Tips

- Take a break after writing before you start editing.
- Determine if a printed copy or reading your paper on a screen best works for you.
- Edit before you proofread. Proofreading should be your final stage of editing (you don't want to fret over the grammar and punctuation in a sentence only to change or delete that sentence later because it doesn't fit in your paper).
- Take note of errors you make frequently so that you can learn from your mistakes and watch out for those specific errors in future papers.

Editing

After you write your first draft, reread and revise it. Save and improve upon the strong parts of your paper, and either delete or revise the weak parts.

In particular, look at:

Content: is your thesis clear, did you fulfill the assignment, are your claims accurate and consistent, do you provide adequate evidence to back up your argument

Overall structure: introduction, clear thesis, each paragraph relates to the thesis, logical sequence, conclusion; is your paper well organized; are the transitions between paragraphs smooth

Structure within a paragraph: do you focus on the main idea and provide adequate evidence

Clarity: are your meaning and terms clear, is it clear what your pronouns refer to, do you use proper words and phrases

Style: do you use appropriate tone and (un)gendered language, various sentence length, not a lot of repetitive phrases/long words

Citations: have you done them properly in your text and on the bibliography/works cited page

Proofreading

Check for surface errors such as: misspellings, grammar, and punctuation mistakes. While you should use spellcheck and grammar checkers, don't rely on them.

It may help to:

Proof for one kind of error at a time.

Read each word slowly and out loud.

Read each sentence separately.

Circle every punctuation mark and check it.

If you struggle with subject verb agreement, circle each subject in a sentence and then check to see that the verb matches it in number.

Sources and Useful Resources

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

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/proofreading/proofreading_for_errors.html

<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/proofreading-tips>