

Editing and Proofreading Checklist

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have I read the entire paper aloud, one word at a time?
2. Have I eliminated unnecessary words?
3. If quotations have been used, have they been smoothly integrated into the text with my own sentence both before and after the quote?
4. Have I documented paraphrases and quotations appropriately?
5. If the paper is about a literary text, have I named the author and work in my introduction?
6. If the paper is about a literary text, do I refer to the writer by full name the first time and by last name thereafter?
7. Does the paper have an original, meaningful title?
8. Have I maintained consistent use of verb tense?
9. Have I used strong verbs?
10. Have I minimized the use of passive voice?
11. Have I checked the grammar and punctuation of the paper thoroughly?
12. Have I checked for spelling errors and typos (Especially these words: to/too/two; their/there/they're; your/you're; its/it's; past/passed; except/accept; effect/affect)?

Check for varied sentence structure and length: With a pen in your hand, read your paper out loud. At the end of each sentence, make a slash mark (/). Look at your sentences: are they very long? very short? You may need to combine some very short sentences, and/or break up some very long sentences.

Check for complete sentences: Starting from the last sentence in your paper, read it backwards, one sentence at a time. This helps you focus on a single sentence. Double-underline the subject and underline the verb for each independent clause. Make sure each subject has a verb. If the sentence starts with *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so*, or *which*, it isn't a complete sentence. If it starts with *because*, it probably isn't a complete sentence. Be on the lookout for misplaced or absent commas that result in run-on sentences or comma splices.

Check pronouns' referents: Draw a small square around each pronoun. Draw an arrow to the pronoun's antecedent/referent. Check for clarity (does the reader know who *they* are? what do you mean by *it*?) and singular/plural consistency (*someone* did *his* or *her* homework, not *their* homework).

Check transitional words and phrases: Draw a wavy line under each transitional word or phrase (*moreover*, *in addition*, *on the other hand*, etc.). You should have *some* transitions but not *too many*. Is each transitional word being used appropriately?