
Self-Editing your Grammar

Take a break from writing before editing your work.

Come back to your editing after an hour or even a day. Giving yourself a bit of time away from the writing will help you see your work from a fresh perspective.

Read your writing out loud.

Hearing it aloud will make awkward phrasings and redundancies more apparent to you and will help you catch missing or repeated words. You may be quite surprised to hear how different your writing sounds when spoken than what it looks like on the page.

Ask a friend or tutor to read your writing.

A new reader can ask you what you are intending to say when your writing is unclear. When you explain it to them, you can see what might be missing. They can also offer insight on your content, and often see mistakes that you have overlooked.

Revise the main information first.

Consider ways you might revise and re-structure your essay to make your argument more logical and effective. Have you provided enough description so that the reader understands the whole point of your story? Do the ideas flow easily from one point to the next? When you're confident in the essay's content, move on to editing grammar and spelling. This way you will use your time most efficiently.

Personalize your proofreading.

Review your instructor's comments and any notes from your Tutor appointments at the Learning Centre, paying particular attention to errors you commit frequently. Learn to recognize and fix them, and then proofread with a specific eye toward these types of errors.

Checking your Sentence Structure

- Have you varied sentence structure and length?
- Have you reviewed each sentence to eliminate run-ons, fragments, and comma splices?
- Are parallel ideas expressed in parallel form?
- Have you eliminated dangling, unclear, or awkward modifiers?
- Have you tried to eliminate wordiness by removing unnecessary words such as *a lot*, or *really*?

Grammar and Usage

- Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Particularly check long, complex sentences.
- Have you eliminated any unintentional or incorrect shifts in verb tense?
- Do pronouns have clear and correct referents?
- Are all quotes and paraphrases properly introduced and explained? Are they correctly cited both within the text and in a Works Cited or References page?
- Is all spelling correct? Be especially careful of homonyms such as *your/you're*, *to/too/two*, *write/right*, and *there/their/they're*.
- Is your paper properly punctuated? Review usage rules, especially for semi colons, ellipses, dashes, etc.

More Self-Editing Resources

Self-Editing in Five Steps: http://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Learning%20Centres/Write_Self-Edit_LA.pdf
KPU Virtual Writing Centre <https://courses.kpu.ca/course/view.php?id=594>
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