



STUDENT NOTES FOR SUCCESS

No 2

Editing and Proofreading

To edit academic writing means to change (redraft) and revise your ideas and therefore improve them.

You often need to edit (redraft) an assignment a number of times before you submit it. Proofreading is the final stage of the editing process and focuses on surface errors: typos, spelling, and punctuation. You do this once all your content revisions are completed.

An important part of essay or report writing is the ability to edit (redraft) your work so as to improve the logic and clarity of your ideas. Proofreading is the final opportunity to make minor corrections to your work before your lecturer reads it. Proofreading is best done 24 hours after you have completed your final draft – you can then see any errors more easily.



Is there a clear distinction between your ideas and words from the sources you have cited? Are you evaluating and analyzing the ideas of others or are you just describing them? Can all your in text references be found in your reference list?

Read for grammar and style

Check your grammar carefully. Check verbs, plurals, tenses, articles, nouns, passive versus active sentences, and sentence fragments. Punctuation is also important because it tells the reader how to read your work. Punctuation often allows the reader to differentiate between a statement and a question and can make a huge difference to the meaning of the sentence and to the overall argument of the essay.

Read for wordiness

Are your sentences too long and too complicated? Check that the information given in your essay is correct. Remember: you are writing the essay or report to give information to someone – the reader. The reader is your audience and your writing must be specific. Use clear and concise language and focus on your topic for your reader. If the reader needs to re-read your work to fully understand it, then you, as the writer, have not done your job well. It is your responsibility to make sure you communicate your ideas clearly to your reader.

Check your connectors

Look at your connectors or linking words. Appropriate linking words between paragraphs and between sentences are a must, because they tell the reader where the essay is going and what it is going to do next. Linking words also provide

Where did the word go?

When we read from a screen, we sometimes read words into a text that are not actually there. Words such as 'the', 'a', 'is', are read in our minds but sometimes do not appear on the page. Reading aloud and from a printed text can give you time to pick up errors and to analyse your work.

Revising for content and logic

Read your thesis statement and argument carefully. Ask yourself: does it make sense? Is it logical? Have you included all the evidence you need to back up the points you are making? Are you correctly using the Chicago 17 referencing style?



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cohesiveness in an essay. They ensure the work flows well. Linking words and phrases include: therefore, however, consequently, in contrast, as previously mentioned.

Good connectors are the reader's road map, signalling where the reader should go, indicating possible transitions and outcomes.



Checklist:

- Have you answered the question?
 - Is your introduction focused on the topic? Is the thesis statement clear and direct?
 - Do your sentences flow logically from one to the next?
 - Does your writing answer any questions the reader may have?
 - Do your pronouns (they, it, he) clearly refer to your nouns or should you repeat the noun to make your meaning clear?
 - Are all your articles (a, an, the) and punctuation in place?
 - Have you used five words when one word would do? (Is your essay too wordy?)
 - Do each of your paragraphs fully develop one idea and include examples or evidence to back up the point you are making?
- Are there too many quotes?
 - Should you be paraphrasing more?
 - Does your information flow clearly from your bullet points?
 - Have you eliminated abbreviations such as etc., doesn't, won't?
 - Have you used appropriate connecting words (connectors) to achieve cohesion, and link your essay together?
 - Do your arguments provide a logical and clear conclusion?
 - Have you followed the assignment guidelines for margins, font, spacing and cover page?

Revise your essay carefully. You may find you need to do more reading, more writing and more analysis. Your argument may need further evidence and further research. You may also need to re-draft a section of your essay many times. All writers do this. Redrafting for the best and most effective word for the space is a constant exercise. Take the time and make your essay or report the best that it can be. You will be pleasantly surprised with your results.

Finally, when proofreading, always take a break. Proofread for no more than 20 minutes at a time. You can then come back to your work with 'fresh eyes'.



Redraft and Proofread for better marks!

Find out more at the CBS Academic Communication Development website:

<https://businesslaw.curtin.edu.au/study/student-experience/academic-communication-development/>

You might also be interested in *Handy Handout 4. Cohesion and balance in writing.*

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