Academic Skills and Development

Quick guide to

Editing and Proofreading

# Editing your work

Editing means revising your writing thoughtfully. It is a very important part of assignment writing. The foundations have been laid for your essay but now you have the chance to clarify and fine-tune your work so as to impress your marker.

# Editing includes the following processes:

* rewriting sections to make points clearer
* deleting weak or irrelevant points and adding new, stronger ones
* changing the order of sentences or paragraphs in order to improve the flow/organisation
* adding linking words and phrases to improve logical flow and show the relationships between your ideas.

Some people prefer to edit on paper, marking up the document with a pen or pencil, rather than editing directly at the computer. Choose the method that works best for you.

# Editing tips:

The following editing techniques will help you to improve the quality of your work:

1. Remove clumsy expressions and inappropriate language: take out any unnecessary or repeated words or phrases. Remove informal words and expressions and substitute with more academically acceptable ones. See the Academic Phrase bank at [*http://www.*](http://www/) *phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/*
2. Support your points: make sure all your points are supported

either by citing the ideas of others (quotation, paraphrase or summary) or with examples.

1. Insert signposts/linking words or phrases: e.g. in addition, furthermore, consequently, however, on the other hand,

thus, for example, in other words, therefore, to sum up.

These words and phrases improve the flow of your arguments, (please refer to the SPLASH guides on Writing for more examples).

# Proofreading your work

By now, you may have produced a well-argued response to the question, but spelling and grammar mistakes will leave a poor impression on your marker. Therefore, proofreading is an essential stage in the assignment writing process.

Most students find proofreading very difficult as it is the last stage in a long and involved process. You are probably very tired and fed up of reading the same piece of writing over and over again. In addition to that, you know your essay so well by now that you may be unable to spot errors easily.

# Proofreading tips:

Use some of the following strategies to help you proofread more efficiently:

* Allow plenty of time for proofreading. Put your essay to one side for a day or two so that you can look at it with fresh eyes.
* Print your work and make corrections by hand. You may find this easier than proofreading on the computer screen.
* Check your department’s guidelines for the presentation of writ- ten work. This includes line spacing, font size, page num- bering, margins and style of referencing.
* Read your essay aloud, slowly. You can **HEAR** your mistakes more easily than you can see them.
* Read your essay to someone else, slowly. You could listen to their essay in return. You will be able to HEAR each other’s mistakes.
* Ask someone else to read your essay to you.
* Spell-check your assignment. But be careful as this program will identify misspelled words, but it will not identify the wrong use of words (e.g., affect/effect; principal/principle; their/there/ they’re).
* Proofread thoroughly at least **TWICE.**

Further advice and larger text guides can be found online: [**www.surrey.ac.uk/splash**](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/splash)

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