

Editing Checklist

The following are important questions to ask yourself in the editing process. The first section lists questions related to the ideas and subject content. The second lists questions related to use of language in expressing these ideas.

Editing for Content

Introduction

- Can the reader easily recognize the topic or question your essay is addressing?
- Can the reader easily identify your essay's thesis statement, its main point, or its answer to the question that you have chosen to address?
- Will the reader know what to expect from your essay?

Body

- Does each paragraph have a clear connection to the overall goal of your essay (as seen, for example, in your thesis statement or in the question that you have indicated in the introduction)?
- Does each paragraph focus on a main point, and is each sentence of the paragraph clearly related to that point in some way?
- Have you fully explained the point you wish to make in the paragraph so that readers will be satisfied that you have answered their questions: "What?" "Why?" "How?" and "So what?"
- Are the transitions between paragraphs smooth so that the reader understands how one idea is related to the next?

Conclusion

- Does the conclusion summarize concisely the main argument or idea of the essay and the most important points supporting it?
- Does the conclusion offer some insight into the implications and significance of the ideas presented in the essay?

Documentation

- Have you checked all in-text citations or footnotes to ensure they are formatted and documented accurately and appropriately according to the system you are using (MLA, APA, etc.)?
- Have you checked your list of sources to ensure that they are in proper order and formatted accurately and appropriately according to the system you are using (MLA, APA, etc.)?



Editing for Expression

Language

- Is the language in the essay appropriate to your audience?
- Have you incorporated key terms and concepts from the course correctly?
- Have you removed any slang, abbreviations, and contractions that do not contribute specific meaning to your essay?
- Have you checked a dictionary to ensure that any unfamiliar words you have used accurately convey the meaning you intend?

Sentence Structure and Grammar

- Are all your sentences complete and appropriate in length?
 - Does each sentence have a subject and a verb?
 - If sentences are combined, have you used a conjunction or a semi-colon between them?
- Does each subject agree with its verb (e.g., “the girl works”; “the girls work”)?
- Is the tense of your verbs appropriate and consistent within each paragraph?
- Can each pronoun (he, she, they, it, etc.) be easily traced back to the person or thing to which it refers?

Punctuation

- Have you checked each sentence for appropriate punctuation – especially use of commas, apostrophes and quotation marks?
- Have you capitalized all proper nouns, titles and headings?