

EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Is editing and proofreading the same?

Editing and proofreading are two different stages of the revision process. Both demand close and careful reading, but they focus on different aspects of the writing and employ different techniques.

Tips for editing and proofreading:

- **Distance-** Put the paper aside for a few hours, days, or weeks. Go for a run. Take a trip to the beach. Clear your head of what you've written so you can take a fresh look at the paper and see what is really on the page. Better yet, give the paper to a friend—you can't get much more distance than that. Someone who is reading the paper for the first time, comes to it with completely fresh eyes.
- **Medium-** Some people like to work right at the computer, while others like to sit back with a printed copy that they can mark up as they read.
- **Change appearance of document-** size, spacing, color, or style of the text may trick your brain into thinking it's seeing an unfamiliar document and gives you a different perspective on what you've written.
- **Quiet-** Don't try to do your proofreading in front of the TV or while you're chugging away on the treadmill. Find a place where you can concentrate and avoid distractions.
- **Prioritize-** Editing begins as soon as you finish your first draft.

Editing

Reread your draft to see whether the paper is well-organized, the transitions between paragraphs are smooth, and your evidence backs up your argument.

Levels of Editing:

- **Content**
 - Have you met the assigned requirements?
 - Are claims accurate?
 - Is it consistent?

- Is it clear?
- **Overall structure**
 - Introduction and conclusion?
 - Clear thesis?
 - Each body clearly related to thesis?
 - Logical Sequence?
 - Clear transition?
- **Structure within paragraphs?**
 - Topic sentence?
 - Each paragraph stick to on idea
 - Anything extra or missing from paragraphs?
- **Clarity**
 - Important terms defined?
 - Meaning of each sentence clear?
- **Style**
 - Use of appropriate tone? (formal, informal, persuasive, etc)
 - Variation in length and structure of sentences?
 - Repetitive?
- **Citations**
 - Appropriately cite quotes, paraphrases, and ideas?
 - Citations in correct format?

As you edit you will usually make significant revisions to the content and wording of your paper. Watch for patterns of error; knowing what problems you tend to have will be helpful, especially if you are editing a large document like a thesis or dissertation. Once you identify a pattern, you can develop techniques for spotting and correcting these in the future. For example, if you notice that you often discuss several distinct topics in each paragraph, you can go through your paper and underline the key words in each paragraph, then break the paragraphs up so that each one focuses on just one main idea.

Proofreading

Proofreading

- Final stage of editing
- Focus on spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Proofread only after editing

Why proofread?

- Content is important.
- The way a paper looks affects the way others judge it. You do not want careless errors distracting your reader from what you have to say.
- Paying attention to details helps you to make a good impression. Most people devote only a few minutes to proofreading, hoping to catch any glaring errors that jump out from the page. A quick and cursory reading usually misses a lot. It is better to work with a definite plan that helps you to search systematically for specific kinds of errors. This takes a little extra time, but it pays off in the end.
- Having an effective way to catch errors when the paper is almost finished, allows you to worry less about editing while you are writing your first drafts. This makes the entire writing process more efficient.
- Keep the editing and proofreading processes separate. When you are editing an early draft, you don't want to be bothered with thinking about punctuation, grammar, and spelling. If you're worrying about the spelling of a word or the placement of a comma, you're not focusing on the more important task of developing and connecting ideas.

Proofreading Process

- **Do NOT rely on spellcheck**
 - They may be helpful, but not always perfect
 - Turn off spellcheck
- **Do NOT rely grammar check**
 - Grammar check operates within certain rules
- **Check for one error at a time**
 - Doing everything at once increases chance of missing errors
 - Focus first one spelling then on another single issue
- **Read carefully**
 - Read aloud
 - Pay attention to every word and how words sound together
 - Do not rush
- **Focus on individual sentences**
 - Read each sentences separate from the paper
 - Check for grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- **Circle punctuation**
 - Forces you to focus on each punctuation mark
 - Ask yourself if this punctuation is correct
- **Read paper backwards**
 - Allows you to focus on each individual word
 - Helps you catch spelling errors
- **This is a learning process**
 - Use a dictionary or handbook
 - You will learn to recognize errors the more you practice