

The Writing Process Checklist: Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

Revising for Coherence

- Does the thesis statement make sense and answer the question?
- Does the thesis indicate the topics of the body paragraphs?
- Are the body paragraphs in the right order?
- Are they approximately the same length?
- Is there a topic sentence for each body paragraph?
- Do the body paragraphs address the thesis?
- Does the conclusion revisit the main points of the essay?
- Does it restate the thesis?
- Does the conclusion avoid new content and evidence?
- Does the paper flow?
- Do you use transitional words and phrases within moderation?
- Does the title capture the essence of the paper?

Revising for Voice

- Is there a balance between your writerly voice and the voices of the sources?
- Is the evidence followed up by analysis, interpretation, and/or discussion?
- Are all quotations integrated into your sentences or introduced with a prompt?
- Are there block quotes (4+ lines)? Can I keep them to a minimum?
- Are paraphrased sentences adequately altered to not copy the original text?
- Do I see any passive verbs: is, was, were, are, be, to be, being, been? Can I find a creative way to convert them to active verbs?
- Is the language in this paper scholarly, or do you use informal and conversational phrasing? Do I see idioms, cliches, adages, slang, expletives?

Revising for Presentation

- Does the paper have a title page / first page formatting?
- Are all paragraphs indented without any gaps between them?
- Do the subheadings follow the documentation hierarchy?
- Is the whole essay in the same font, same font size, and all black?
- Do I have page numbers?
- Are all quotes and paraphrases accompanied by appropriate in-text citations?

- Do I have a Works Cited/References/Bibliography in place with properly formatted citations?
- Have I reviewed the assignment instructions to double check that the paper has met the expectations?

Editing

To start...

- Have I consulted the Write Site's "Common Sentence Faults"?
<https://www.athabascau.ca/write-site/english-grammar-handbook/sentences-grammar/common-sentence-faults.html>?
- Have I consulted the Write Site's English Grammar Handbook for help?
<https://www.athabascau.ca/write-site/english-grammar-handbook/index.html>
- Have I reviewed my error log?

Grammar

- Subject-verb agreement—are singular subjects paired with singular verbs and plural subjects with plural verbs?
- Is the verb tense consistent?
- Clear pronouns?
- Gender neutral pronouns?
- Am I using the correct prepositions?

Sentence Structure

- Are the sentences clear?
- Do they go on for too long?
- Sentence fragments—are the sentences complete thoughts?
- Comma splices?
- Run-on sentences?
- Is there a variety of sentence structures?
- Are the sentences short and choppy?

Style

- Any instances of repetition and redundancies? Any frequently or over-used terms to replace with a synonym?
- Is the word choice academic or informal?
- Is the proper perspective used? (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person?)

- If 3rd person, did you double check the introduction and conclusion for the use of first-person pronouns like “I”, “we”, or “us”?
- Do I overuse adverbs (words describing verbs) and adjectives (words describing adjectives)?
- Are the sentences overcrowded with words making it unclear?
- Am I avoiding generalized language like “many”, “things”, and “stuff”?
- Have I deleted empty modifiers (huge, very, greatly, etc.)

Proofreading

- How is punctuation? Have I checked for missing or misplaced:
 - Commas
 - Colons
 - Semicolons
 - Apostrophes
 - Periods
 - Capitalization
- Have I expanded all contractions, e.g. don't > do not?
- Have I used Spell Check to locate mechanical, spelling and grammatical errors?
- Have I checked for spelling errors that Spell Check may have missed?
- Have I read the paper out loud and/or used a text-to-speech tool to hear mistakes?
- Have I left my paper for ideally 48 hours so that I can give it a final review with fresh eyes?
- Did I review the assignment instructions one final time?