Editing & Proofreading Techniques
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**Editing** – begins while you are still working on your first draft. It has to do more with revising the logistics of the paper than grammar and surface-level errors.

**Proofreading** – takes place when editing is finished. Focuses on surface-level errors like misspelling and grammar errors.

**Editing Techniques:**

**Content**
- Are all parts of the question answered?
- Is there an argument?
- Do all of the paragraphs support the thesis?

**Overall Structure**
- Is there a clear introduction and conclusion?
- Is the paragraph order logical?
- Are there clear transitions between paragraphs?

**Structure within Paragraphs**
- Does each paragraph have a clear topic sentence?
- Does the paragraph follow the thesis?
- Are there any extra or missing supporting paragraphs in each paragraph?

**Clarity**
- Are all terms easily defined for the reader?
- Is the meaning of the sentence clear?
- Have you chosen the best words to express your ideas?

**Style**
- Is the tone appropriate for the audience?
- Have you varied sentence length throughout the paper?
- Are there any unnecessary phrases, such as “due to the fact that”?

**Citations**
- Are your citations in the correct format?
- Have you appropriately cited all paraphrasing and quotations?

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Proofreading Techniques:

- Read your paper aloud. Sometimes writing sounds different in your head than it sounds on paper.
- Make a list of errors that you commonly make and keep an eye out for them.
- Read the text backwards. Sometimes the brain automatically corrects written mistakes.
- Proofread for only one type of error at a time.
- Double check everything:
  - Proper names
  - Citations
  - Punctuation
  - Page numbers
  - Header/footer material
  - Fonts
  - Read slowly and carefully.

Other Helpful Tips:

- Concentrate. Get rid of noise and other distractions. You will catch more errors if you are focused.
- Don’t edit your paper in the same sitting you wrote it. Leave it for a while, even a few days, and then come back to it. This will give you fresh eyes and allow you to catch more errors.
- When you have gone over it as much as you can, get someone else to read it. A second pair of eyes can see twice as much.
- Don’t only rely on spell check or grammar check. Sometimes they miss things too.
- Know if it’s easier for you to edit on the computer or on a printed page.
- Have your resources close to you so you can easily look up anything that you are unsure of. Helpful resources include:
  - Dictionary
  - Thesaurus
  - Handbooks
  - Handouts

Examples of Twenty of the Most Common Surface Errors:

1. missing comma after introductory phrases
2. vague pronoun references
3. missing comma in a compound sentences
4. wrong words
5. missing comma(s) with a nonessential elements
6. wrong or missing verb endings
7. wrong or missing prepositions
8. comma splices
9. missing or misplaced possessive apostrophes
10. unnecessary shifts in tense
11. unnecessary shifts in pronouns
12. sentence fragments
13. wrong tense or verb forms
14. lack of agreement between subject and verb
15. missing commas in a series
16. lack of agreement between pronouns and antecedents
17. unnecessary comma(s) with a restrictive or essential elements
18. fused sentences
19. dangling or misplaced modifiers
20. *it's*/*its* confusion (*it's* is the possessive case of the pronoun *it*; *it's* is a contraction of *it is* or *it has*)
   *It's* a wise dog who knows *its* limits.

(Lunsford, 2011)

Reference List


