

Editing and Proofreading Tips

Look for Specific Errors

Referring to an instructor's feedback comments on your previous papers will help you identify specific errors you are repeating. These errors can be fragments, comma splices, word choice, etc. Make a list of the errors and proofread each one separately. Also, if you are marked down on clarity, make sure to go over organization and comprehension. Always make sure to double check formatting as well if you have been marked down previously for it.

Create Psychological Distance

Give yourself a break from your paper after completing it. You want to give yourself time between the writing and proofreading process before the due date. Then, you can return to your paper with a clear mind and identify errors more easily. You also will have more time to carefully proofread.

Read your Printed Essay

Reading your essay in print form can help to process the writing more and prevent brain fatigue from the computer screen. Errors may be more visible in physical format than on the screen. You can also use a ruler or another sheet of paper to cover the lines beneath the text you are reading. This method can help you concentrate more.

Read Aloud

If you find yourself struggling to scan the text, try reading the text aloud slowly. Hearing the text aloud can help you catch mistakes more easily. Make sure to read the text exactly as you wrote it because you are likely to correct it as you read aloud. This strategy can help correct typos, misuse of words, sentence structure, and more.

Point to Individual Words while Reading

Carefully read each word and check for misspelled words, typos, and proper punctuation. Also, make sure to pay attention to fragments, subject-verb agreement, comma splices, and other grammatical rules. You may also notice awkward phrasing, use of redundant words, and inconsistencies in tone.

Reading Paragraphs in Reverse

Read from the last sentence to the first sentence of a paragraph. This technique helps focus more on grammatical errors, proper citation, and other surface levels than the paper's content.

Using Spell Checkers and Grammar Checkers

These tools can be resourceful to identify misspellings, typos, and other grammatical errors. However, spell checkers and grammar checkers can also make inaccurate suggestions and erase the initial meaning of your work, so use your best judgment to evaluate the suggestions given. Do not rely too much on Grammar checkers as they are not fully accurate for pinpointing more complex grammatical errors, and avoid using Grammarly altogether since it will be flagged as AI-generated text.