



Editing

You might be thinking, ‘Why is there an editing page AND a proofreading page? Aren’t they the same thing?’ No, my friend, they most certainly are not. Nor can you do one and not the other – both are vital parts of the finishing process.

Note: This section assumes you are working solo. If you have a group assignment, see also [Writing together](#) (PDF, 60 kB), but you might also find the information below useful for your group.

Editing includes redrafting, revising, and rewriting. Yep, lots of words beginning with ‘re’. That’s because ‘re’ is Latin for ‘back’ or ‘again’. Editing is about doing it again, and doing it better.

But how do you do it?

Suggested process

1. If time allows, set your first draft aside for a day or two and focus on another piece of work.

→ That way you will return to your draft with fresh eyes, ready to spot what’s wrong.

2. Read your draft through more than once, focusing on different aspects. First you might focus on the content:

- Do you address the task?
- Do you have a clear argument or thesis statement?
- Do you use evidence to support your claims?
- Is it clear which ideas are yours and which you have taken from sources?
- Is every source appropriately cited?
- Does your argument follow a logical path?

3. Then perform another read-through, concentrating on the ideas presented:

- Does what you’ve written make sense?
- Do you provide evidence for your arguments, and citations for that evidence?
- Compare your use of evidence with your notes from your readings, or with the original sources in front of you: have you accurately paraphrased the sources in your own words?
- Where you have quoted directly from the source, have you done so accurately?

- Have you integrated information from sources within your own ideas?
- This might be a good point to submit your assignment to [Turnitin](#) if possible, and use the resulting Originality Report to shape your revision.

4. Your next revision might be for structure.

Look at the macro (overall) structure:

- Does the assignment flow?
- Does it follow the appropriate structure?
- Does the introduction adequately outline the essay, and does the conclusion provide a solid summary of the arguments?

Then move down to the micro, or smaller, structure:

- Is each paragraph appropriately structured? (See [Paragraph structure](#) PDF, 85 kB)
- Is each sentence grammatically complete? (See [Sentence structure](#) PDF, 150 kB)

5. Compare with the marking standards and criteria:

- Have you addressed all parts of the task?
- Have you done everything asked of you and followed any directions?
- What mark would you give yourself (have a go using the rubric)?

Once you're happy with the content and structure, it's time to proofread See [Proofreading](#) (PDF, 40 kB).

More information

- [UNSW: Editing Checklist](#)
- [University of Minnesota: Editing and Proofreading Strategies](#)
- [The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill: Editing and Proofreading](#)
- [Indiana University Bloomington: Proofreading for Common Surface Errors](#)