# Editing and Proof-reading

## Editing your work

Editing means revising your written work thoughtfully and thoroughly to improve its content, structure and use of language.

## Editing includes

* Adding supporting evidence or more balanced viewpoints where arguments/discussions are weak.
* Deleting weak or irrelevant points and adding new, stronger ones.
* Rewriting sections to make points clearer.
* Changing the order of sentences or paragraphs to improve the flow.
* Adding linking words and phrases to show the relationships between ideas.

## Editing Tips

* Ensure the content is clearly responding to the assignment brief or question.
* Make sure all your points are supported by citing the ideas of others (whether quoted, paraphrased or summarised) and using examples.
* Ensure the order of discussion is progressive and flows from one point to the next.
* Take out unnecessary or repeated words or phrases. This will make your argument flow more succinctly and allow more space for key evidence.
* Remove informal words and expressions and substitute with more academically acceptable ones.
* Insert linking words or phrases to improve the flow of your argument, e.g. ‘in addition’, ‘furthermore’, ‘consequently’, ‘however’, ‘in contrast’...

## Keep track of your changes

* You can either edit directly onto a hard copy of your document or ‘track changes’ digitally – working digitally is quicker but not always effective for everyone. If you prefer to work offline you will need to carefully transfer amendments digitally.
* Label each draft (e.g. Version 1) before editing, then save each new draft (e.g. Version 2, Version 3 etc) as you proceed. This way, you will never lose the original and can keep track of changes in your thought process.

## Proof-reading your work

Although you may have produced a well-argued response to a question, errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, referencing and presentation will hinder how it is understood. Proof-reading, to identify and correct mistakes before submission is, therefore, essential.

## Proof-reading tips

* Allow plenty of time for proof-reading.
* As with editing, you may find it useful to print out your work and make corrections by hand, before transferring them to your digital version.
* Check your department’s guidelines for presenting written work, including line-spacing, font size, page numbering, margins and referencing style.
* Read your essay aloud. Often you can hear mistakes more easily than you can see them and, if you run out of breath mid-sentence, you’ll know the sentence needs shortening or requires a comma to break it up.
* Spell-check your assignment, but with care. Spell-check programs will identify misspelled words but will not identify the wrong use of words (e.g. affect/effect; principal/principle; their/there/they’re).
* Proof-read more than once to focus on different aspects of your work, such as content, grammar and referencing.
* Finally, check that you have the most up-to-date document before submitting it. Your course teams will mark the assignment you submit.

If you need help or advice with any issue raised in this study guide, please book an appointment with the Skills for Academic Success team (S.A.S.).

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