

Academic Support, Student Services

Editing and reviewing checklist

Editing, reviewing and proofreading your work will likely to involve working through several stages. Some of the 'editing' process can be addressed quite early by looking at planning strategies. This can help avoid writing too much, or focusing on aspects that are not crucial to the question. Use marking criteria to guide writing your assignment wherever possible and do make use of feedback on previous assessments.

To address...	Strategy	Explanation/method
Structural issues	Check back to your plan/outline	If you had a plan at the start, look at it again. Did anything change? Think about why changes may have happened – did your writing lose focus or did you intentionally change focus? Does the order of your paragraphs need reviewing to add clarity?
	Reverse outlines and retrospective plans	Go through your draft and summarise each paragraph using keywords / short phrases. Create an outline plan of what you have written. If you did a plan before you started writing, how does your outline compare? For more tips on using reverse outlines, see http://explorationsofstyle.com/2011/02/09/reverse-outlines/
	Visual overviews: Mind-mapping, coloured 'Post-Its'© or index cards	Remember mind-mapping can help create more visual plans http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/documents/hulluni-how-to-mind-map.pdf You can also create visual overviews of your keywords / paragraph summaries by using Post-Its© or index cards to lay out on a table or the floor. Using colour coding, you could maybe re-group material on the same topic in more effective paragraphs, and minimise repetition or contradictions in your writing. Digital photographs of mind-maps and visual overviews can help in reviewing plans.

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Paragraph length	Use show/hide to see hard returns in your text	 The Show/Hide button in Microsoft word will identify wherever you have hit the 'return' / 'enter' key (←).  This will usually be at the end of a paragraph. Do you have lots of very short or long paragraphs? There are no strict rules on paragraph length, but two lines of text is probably too short, and more than a page of double-spaced text is probably too long. Think about focus and clarity.
	View two pages to a screen	Go to the View tab and select 'Two Pages'. This allows you to see where a paragraph may straddle two pages of text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the impact of spacing: single, 1.5 or double line spacing. • Have you included any indented quotes? (Longer quotes, over 40 words in length, are usually indented but avoid using too many in assignments unless specifically advised to include them).
Paragraph links	Connecting words and starting your sentences	Connecting words can make relationships between paragraph topics clearer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you making an additional point or pointing out similarities? (and) • Is it a contrast? (not) • Are you pointing out a consequence? (so) • Or are you identifying a sequence of events? (time) Avoid over-using connecting words. For examples for starting your sentences, see http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

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Sentence structure	Reading aloud	<p>Hearing text read aloud can often identify errors in phrasing that are missed when reading silently – especially when you are familiar with the material [we read what we want/expect to read].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud yourself • Get a friend or family member to read it aloud to you • Use assistive software such as 'TextHelp Read&Write Gold' – the University has recently updated to version 11
Sentence length	Control + F key ('Find')	<p>Search for full-stops. In Microsoft Word 2010, anything searched for using 'Find' will be highlighted so you can see how many lines of text are in each sentence. Anything four (4) lines of text or longer should be reviewed and can probably be edited/revised into being two sentences.</p>
Spellings, mistyping and homophones	Identify a checklist of your own easily misspelt words, typing errors and homophones	<p>Some words in English can easily be misused: check our 'Choosing your words' handout for some examples. Remember some errors can be caused by mistyping e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of/off • an/and • from/form <p>There are also lists and quizzes about homophones (words that sound similar but which are spelt differently) that are available online e.g.</p> <p>http://www.uefap.com/writing/exercise/spell/homoph.htm</p> <p>Assistive software such as 'TextHelp Read&Write Gold' includes a 'Sounds alike and confusable words' checker, to identify possible homophones. The University has recently updated to version 11.</p>

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Spellings, mistyping and homophones	Control + F key – check the Options for ‘Sounds like [English]’	<p>If you do not have access to software such as ‘TextHelp Read&Write Gold’, then you can instead identify a checklist of common homophone errors. Using this checklist, use ‘Find’ in Microsoft Word 2010 to search for each homophone in turn. For example, searching for ‘their’ will also highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there (location) • they’re (they are – contraction) • three (often a typing error) • theory (auto-correct or spelling suggestion) <p>Looking at each word in context may help you think about whether you have the right word.</p>
<p>Grammar – subjects and verbs</p> <p>Grammar – tenses</p> <p>Grammar – adjectives and adverbs</p>	Review sentence structure – read each sentence in turn starting at the end of the draft assignment	<p>Reading sentences in reverse order means that you focus on the individual grammatical clarity of each sentence, rather than contextual meaning.</p> <p>Has every sentence got a subject and a verb?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it clear who/what is doing something (subject)? • Is it clear what the action is (verb)? <p>Are the verbs the right tense (present, past, future)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When is the action happening? <p>Are adjectives and adverbs used correctly? Do you use too many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjectives describe nouns (things) • adverbs describe verbs (actions)

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To address...	Strategy	Explanation/method
Punctuation	<p>Develop a checklist of your common errors</p> <p>Use Control + F key to 'Find' each use</p>	<p>Review your writing and especially any feedback/comments on coursework to identify errors you may commonly make e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • missed commas • comma splices • mis-used/unused semi-colons <p>http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/STELLA/briantest/web/aries/ - the ARIES project includes advice on spelling and punctuation</p> <p>There are many examples of grammar, punctuation and style guides taking you through common errors and also how to use punctuation effectively. Be aware there can be style differences between US/Canadian and UK guidance. Aim to be consistent e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/style-and-editing/hit-parade-of-errors • http://www.sussex.ac.uk/informatics/punctuation/toc