# Editing

Editing your essay ensures that it is coherent and presentable.

Editing has two stages: reviewing and proof-reading. It is essential that you leave enough time for this stage of the writing process.

## Reviewing

This step involves seeing the essay as a coherent whole and assessing whether it reads as a polished, clear piece.

- Can the reader follow your thinking?

- Are the paragraphs correctly formatted?

- Can you summarise the key point of each paragraph and why it is relevant to your essay title? If not remove or rewrite it.

- Is your language confident? ("This essay will …. It argues that...")

- Have you signposted your argument in the introduction? In addition, have you used connecting phrases and words in the main body?

- Is it properly referenced (using the system your School requires)?

## Proof-reading

Now take a closer look at the spelling, grammar, punctuation, missing words, misused words, and the referencing format.

- **Leave some time** after finishing your draft before proof-reading; it is easier to be critical about your work if it is not fresh in your mind.

- **Print it off** as it is difficult to closely read your work on-screen.

- **Read your work aloud.** It helps catch mistakes like small errors of expression and punctuation. Take time to ensure that every sentence and paragraph makes sense. You may need to read it over several times to catch all the errors. Each reading could be focussed on a different possible error and could use a particular technique that helps you to catch that mistake.

- For instance, use a blank sheet of paper to **cover up the lines** below the one you're reading. This technique keeps you from skipping ahead of possible mistakes.

- It might also be helpful to **use the search function** to find likely mistakes. Search for 'it', for example, if you confuse 'its' and 'it's'; or quotation marks if you tend to forget to include closing ones etc.

- You can **get Adobe to read the work aloud**: convert the word document into a pdf, then in Adobe Reader go to view, then read out loud, and activate read out loud. A robotic voice will then read your work aloud for you! As it reads your essay, follow it on the page and make notes of any required changes.

- Be aware of your **punctuation.** Punctuate your reading; take the appropriate length of pauses for commas and full stops etc. to help you notice any issues. Double check the punctuation rules to make sure you know how to use commas, apostrophes, colons and semi-colons. See below for a guide to punctuation.

- Use the **spelling check** in Word. Remember that the spelling checker won't catch mistakes with homonyms (e.g., "they're," "their," "there") or certain typos (like "he" for "the").

- Use a **dictionary** to double check unfamiliar word meanings and to ensure you are using them in the correct context.

- The **grammar check** tool in Microsoft Word can help to prevent some grammatical errors.

- **Ask a friend** to read through your work and offer to read over their work in return. Fresh eyes will often be able to spot additional mistakes.

- Carefully check your **referencing,** and follow the preferred style of your School. Ensure that the various types of sources are **consistently formatted.**

- **Use previous feedback** to learn where you made mistakes before and to ensure they are correct.

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