

Writing Handout 07 - Editing and Proofreading

Question: Why is it necessary to edit and proofread your work?

Most people hate proofreading and editing their work. However, it is important to learn by looking at your own mistakes and seeing if there are typical errors which you can avoid making in the future.

Question: What is the advantage of having someone else look at your work?

Another person may not be a better writer than you, but he or she might see something to improve in your work. We often unconsciously skip over some errors that might look right to us but which do not look right to others.

Question: How can I edit and proofread other than just reading it through?

Check your work slowly and carefully for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary errors. Try proofreading your essay twice: once the usual way and once reading it from the end to the beginning – that way you can sometimes pick up things that might be missed reading it in the regular way from the beginning to the end.

Editing and Proofreading:

Here are some notes to help you review your work. Add your own points to the list if you have other personal writing problems or common mistakes.

- ✓ Use a spell checker when you use a word processor. It is the easiest way to correct common errors and to spot problems such as two words running together. However, once you have finished with your spell checker, read your paper out loud. The spell checker will not pick up wrong words that are spelled correctly. Did you mean tap or tape? Which or witch? There, they're, or their? Desert or dessert?
- ✓ Always plan your essay (which means do prewriting and make sure that you have the necessary support). The plan will help to remind you where you are going. If you do not know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?
- ✓ Always write a second draft of your essay. There is no such thing as the perfect essay. However, the more drafts you produce, the closer you will get to perfection.
- ✓ After you finish a draft of an essay, don't look at it for a few days. When you come back to it, you are more likely to see it with a fresh eye and will find it easier to make changes. However, this does not mean you can wait until the last minute to work on a writing assignment!!!

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