

Editing and proofreading your work

As your studies progress it is important to become more independent with editing and proofreading your own work. The following points may be helpful in guiding you through this process.

Editing	Notes
Structural aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: does it clearly state the topic and how it will be dealt with? • Paragraphing: does it have clear topic sentences? Do the ideas 'hang together' cohesively? • Are there links between paragraphs and sections (implicit / explicit connectors)? • Conclusion: does it refer to the topic, based on evidence provided? 	
Coverage of your topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you answered the question? • Have you covered the topic in sufficient depth? 	
Analysis and argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you provided adequate analysis? • Have you demonstrated an independent, original approach? • Is your argument thorough, with evidence and supporting information? 	
Citations, quotations, paraphrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there too many or too few quotations? • Are the quotations and citations all from reliable, representative sources? • Are the paraphrases in your own words? • Do the quotations fit grammatically and add meaning to your writing? 	
Coherence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the thought relationships clear? • Are headings clear and concise? • Are there signposts throughout to indicate where you have come from within the argument, and where you are going next? 	
Logical development and flow of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it in a consistent style, appropriate to an academic audience? • Is the flow of ideas logical and smooth? 	

Proofreading	Notes
Formatting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for consistency of heading levels, diagrams and tables, margins and indentation, bibliography and footnotes (if used). • Is your table of contents consistent and accurate? 	
Referencing information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all sources listed in the bibliography or list of references? • Are all reference details complete? • Are all references presented in the required style? 	
Sentence-level language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check grammar, word choice, sentence fragments, punctuation (<i>see next page</i>) 	

Other useful references

Fox, L 1992, *Focus on Editing*, Longman, New York.

Language and Learning Online: <<http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/>> and <<http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/grammar/>>.

Purdue On-line Writing Lab: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/02/>>.

Available online at <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/quickrefs/>

Style Manual for authors, editors and printers 2001, 6th edition, Canberra Ausinfo.

Checklist	Examples and comments
Subject-verb agreement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do subjects and their verbs agree in number, particularly when a long or complex subject precedes the main verb? 	<p><i>Incorrect</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lecturer, as well as some of the tutors, <i>are</i> planning a test for next week. <p><i>Correct</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lecturer, as well as some of the tutors, <i>is</i> planning a test for next week.
Tenses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your tenses consistent? Is there a logical reason for you to change the tense? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The present tense is used for stating main points, stating a scientific fact, reporting the position of a writer, and for making your own statements. The past tense is used to report or describe the contents, findings or conclusions of past research.
Sentence fragments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used complete sentences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence fragments lack a subject, a verb or both.
Run-on sentences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you divided run-on sentences into two by using either a full stop or a semi colon? 	<p><i>Incorrect</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can see changes but not learning itself, the concept is theoretical and hence not directly observable. <p><i>Correct</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can see changes but not learning itself; the concept is theoretical and hence not directly observable.
Articles (a/an/the/zero article)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the noun countable or uncountable, specific or general? Does the noun require an article, and if so, which one? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normally, uncountable nouns cannot be pluralised in English: eg information, evidence, advice, knowledge.
Parallel structures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are components of your sentence grammatically equal? 	<p><i>Incorrect</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following actions were taken: <i>advertising</i> the product, <i>improve</i> quality control and <i>bring the</i> retail price down. <p><i>Correct</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following actions were taken: <i>advertising</i> the product, <i>improving</i> quality control and <i>bringing</i> the retail price down.
Logical connectors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you over-used or under-used linking words? Do they provide clear links between sentences and paragraphs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, <i>however, although, thus, as a result of, in comparison</i> are some common linking words. Language and Learning Online has a very good tutorial on how to use transition signals (coordinators, sentence connectors and subordinators) in your writing. See http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/llonline/grammar/engineering/transitions/index.xml
Pronouns	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do pronouns refer clearly to an antecedent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you leave the book on the table, you can take <i>it</i> after the class. Does the <i>it</i> refer to the table or the book?
Punctuation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you used apostrophes correctly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apostrophes show possession. For example: The <i>company's</i> after-tax profit fell in the second quarter of 2006. Contractions such as <i>it's</i> are not usually used in academic writing.
Spelling and capitalisation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you spelt the same word in the same (correct) way throughout? eg <i>targeted</i>, <i>operationalise</i>, <i>honour</i>. Have you used capital letters consistently throughout? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the spellcheck on your word processor, but be warned: it will not find everything, and it will give you American spelling unless you set it to UK or Australian spelling.