

EDITING

What is Editing?

Editing is **a process which we use to improve a piece of writing's standard or content.** We also edit **to help the work fit within the set guidelines.**

The editing process can be daunting: it can feel a little like starting again and you may feel nervous that it will result in parts of your work being cut or changed. You may have already spent so long writing an essay that you feel that you cannot improve on it.

But editing is worth doing; even **a short amount of time spent editing can bring about a great improvement in your work and increase your marks.** If you have already spent a long time writing the essay, **consider if you could maybe spend less time on writing the original draft and edit the whole piece at the end?**

Time

TOP TIP

It is important to allow some time to pass between writing the essay and editing it, (ideally at least a week) to create a little distance.

The aim is to be objective about what you read and **see your writing from the reader's point of view.**

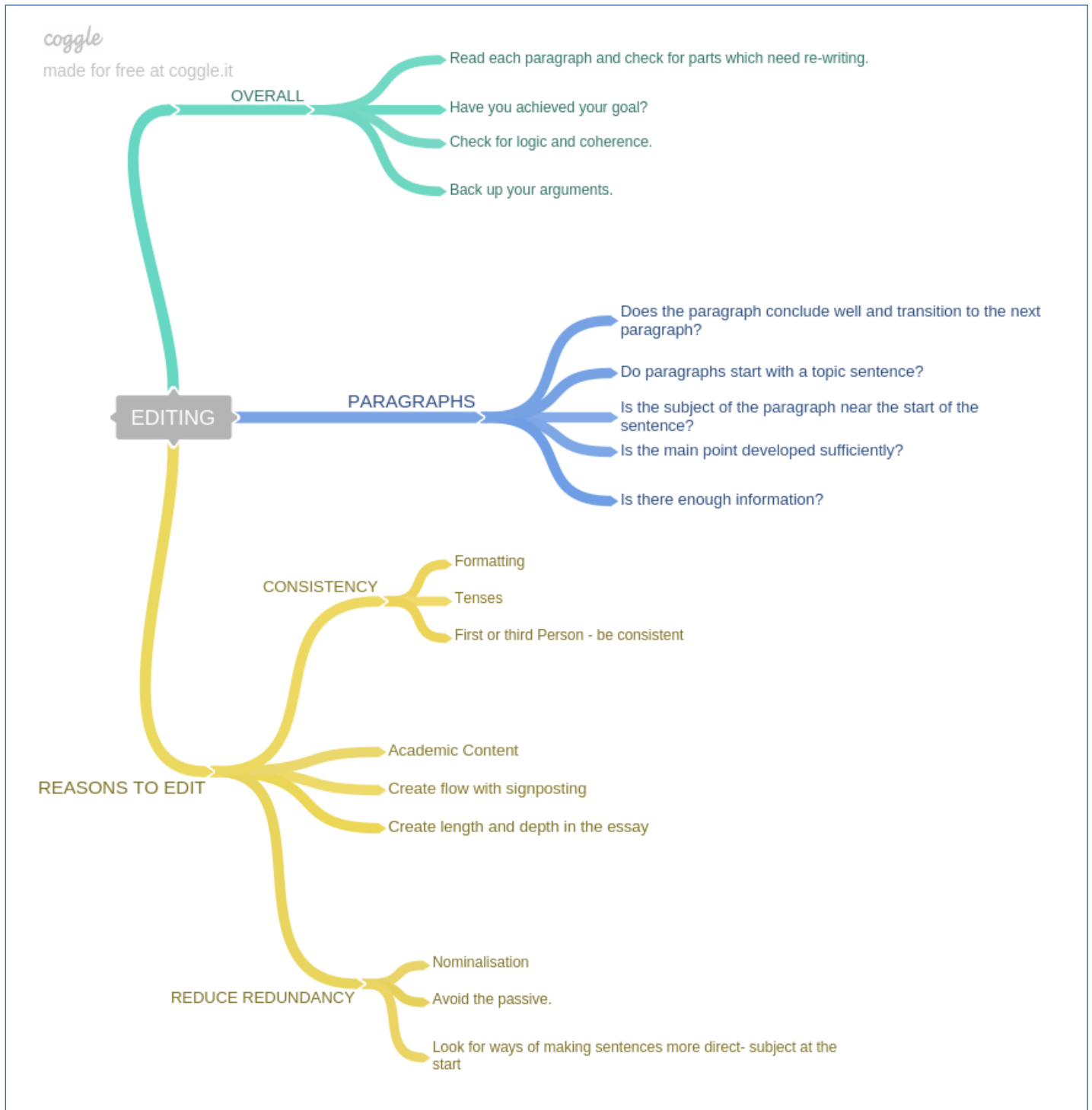
Print a Copy

You will see mistakes much more easily on a hard copy and you can focus on different aspects of the writing with each new draft.

TOP TIP

Read your essay out loud, it will help you identify overlooked mistakes. Microsoft Word and Google Docs can convert the text to speech (see the Sentence Structure PDF).

How to Edit?



Multiple Reads

You should understand that **the first draft is not the final draft** and your work should go through several reads before you submit it. For example, **read it yourself several times, but also consider getting a friend or colleague to read through it for you.**

Academic Content

The basic question you should ask yourself is “**what am I trying to say here**”, and “**have I succeeded in getting all my ideas down on paper**”?

When you are editing or proof-reading, check the following:

- ✔ Have you **included all the necessary content**?
- ✔ **Is the text logical?**
 - Have you **avoided logical fallacies**? (These are arguments which are not logically sound.)
- ✔ Have you **sufficiently backed up all your claims**? Imagine a reader asking you to justify your argument.
 - Is all **the material focused on this argument**?
 - Do all the details have **relevance and help to further or explain** your argument?

Reduce Redundancy

De-cluttering or **simplifying the language** can help reduce the word count and make the writing more concise and focused, and it will improve its flow.

🔍 TOP TIP

You can eliminate almost any word that ends in “ly”. For example, “stumbling awkwardly”.

Consider deleting the following words:

- that do NOT add useful or relevant information.
- descriptive rather than adding value to your academic argument
- repetitive or synonyms (have the same meaning)

Avoid the Passive Tense

Changing sentences from passive to an active tense will help to reduce redundancy.

For example, “the results were collated daily by the students” can be “the students daily collated the results.”

Nominalisation

The **process of nominalisation turns verbs (actions or events) into nouns (things, concepts or people)**. The verb in the sentence is replaced by a noun. It can make sentences **more academic and focused on concepts rather than actions**, e.g.

- “The Student can **choose** which course to take.” (VERB)

can become

- “The **choice** of course is the student’s.” (NOUN)

Create Flow

This will **help the reader navigate easily through your essay, and constantly remind them why they are reading the information**. There are two main types of signposting:

1. **Major Signposts**: introductions, conclusions and outlining main arguments/ the direction of the argument in paragraphs/opening phrases.
2. **Linking Words/ Short phrases**: connecting words help guide the reader through the argument by linking ideas, sentences and paragraphs.

1. Signposting

These are **key words which are reiterated throughout each paragraph**.

TOP TIP

Topic sentences at the start of paragraphs sum up what the paragraph will be about. The subject of the sentence is moved to the start of the sentence, so that the reader is prepared for what they are about to read.

2. Linking

Transitions and conjunctions can create a logical flow between sentences and sections and lead the reader through the piece. Linking phrases **connect two individual sentences to create one more complex and elaborate sentence**, e.g.

“She is a student, whereas he works in a museum.”

TOP TIP

You should only use determiners, such as ‘this’ or ‘that’, if it is very clear what you are referring to.

Tips to add Length and Depth to the Essay

You should consider the following aspects:

- ✔ Can your **ideas be expanded?**
 - Use questions to inform your writing. Ask yourself potential questions a reader might have. For example: ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’.
- ✔ Can you add more **signposting, linking, or summaries?**
- ✔ What are **the implications of your research area**, and do you need to expand on this section?
- ✔ When you review your **methodology**, could you have carried it out differently or expanded on it?

Consistency

Consistency is important in an essay. It can be very confusing to the reader if there are different styles of writing, tenses etc. Are you consistent with the following elements of your assignment?

- Use of **tenses**, (unless you have a specific reason for using another tense).
- Use of **first person or third person**, (unless you have chosen to change voice for a specific reason).
- Use of **formatting**, such as: headings, underlining, bulleting, labelling, and referencing styles.
- Use of **space and spacing**: make sure you use the correct spacing (1.5 or 2), watch out for empty lines and spaces in your document.

TOP TIP

You should refer to the guidelines from your department. These are marks that are easy to gain!

Editing: The Finish

There comes a point where you may feel you can do no more. **This would be a good time to ask a friend to read it, or re-visit it yourself with fresh eyes after a few days.**

Useful Links

- <https://slideplayer.com/slide/5266655/>
- <https://fddocuments.in/document/essay-writing-and-proofreading-ucc-dss-academic-skills-programme-1-j-amberson.html>
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/revising/revising-and-editing/>
- <https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/writing-resources/editing>
- <http://217.64.17.124:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/863/academic-writing-handbook-international-students-3rd-ed%20%282%29%20%281%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- <http://www.qub.ie/directorates/sgc/learning/FileStore/Fileupload,628191,en.pdf>

Other Relevant Online PDFs

- Proofreading
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Sentence Structure
- Paragraph Structure