

How to edit your work effectively

Here are some strategies that will help you to edit your assignments efficiently and effectively:

1. Take a break before you start editing. After you have finished your draft put your assignment away for a day (assuming you have a day to spare). When you edit, fresh eyes help.
2. Give yourself sufficient time to edit. If you rush you will miss things.
3. Try to read your work as if you were a reader who has not seen it before. When you have been working hard on something for a long time you often fill in gaps and skip things that could be clearer.
4. Start by skimming to see if anything jumps out at you. Then read in more detail.
5. Read your work aloud. This is an effective way to check punctuation.
6. If you can, have someone else read your work or read your work to them.
7. Stick to the word limit. Don't go too far over or under. If you are over check to see if you have too many long-winded explanations or too many examples. If you are under you can add words by adding more examples.
8. Make sure you reference your sources of information. Check to find out which referencing style you are required to use. Refer to [Referencing guides](#) on the SCU Library website.

Academic Skills Quick Guide

What is in this guide

- How to edit your work effectively
- Three phases of editing
- Editing for content checklist
- Editing for style and structure checklist
- Editing for spelling, grammar and punctuation checklist

The three phases of editing

Editing is an important part of the process of writing an assignment. Editing helps you to fine tune your work, pick up errors and probably improve your mark. You can divide editing up into three phases: editing for **content**, editing for **style and structure** and editing for **spelling, punctuation and grammar**. When you edit your work, it is a good idea to concentrate on each of the following three phases separately.

Editing the content checklist

Check to make sure your writing is clear, logical and concise. Use this checklist to help you:

Editing for content checklist		
Have I?	Yes/No	Notes
Answered all parts of the question.		
Made sure my introduction is clear and identifies explicitly the main points I am going to be writing about.		
Made sure my position/viewpoint is clear.		

Editing for content checklist

Made sure my response shows that I have engaged with the concepts/topics/theories within the unit.		
Demonstrated a critical analysis of these concepts/topics/theories (not just a description).		
Checked that each paragraph includes a clear topic sentence, supporting information and evidence.		
Given sufficient and appropriate evidence and examples.		
Shown a clear and logical line of reasoning.		
Addressed ALL the marking criteria.		
Included unnecessary details and/or irrelevant information.		

Editing for style and structure checklist

Use this checklist to help you check that your writing is coherent and fluent and that your assignment's structure is appropriate for the task.

Editing for style and structure checklist

Have I?	Yes/No	Notes
Used the appropriate format/style for the assignment (e.g. essay, report, case study).		
Included page numbers and followed font/line spacing/margin formatting requirements.		
Avoided using informal language or slang.		
Presented my ideas in a logical order.		
Used linking words within paragraphs effectively.		
Used linking words between paragraphs effectively.		

Editing for style and structure checklist

Made sure all quotes and paraphrases are cited correctly in the text and then in the reference list.		
Correctly referenced every source I have used in the reference list.		
Made sure I have used the required referencing style or, if no style is specified, made sure that I have used a standard referencing style such as APA 6th or Harvard.		

Editing for spelling, grammar and punctuation checklist

Use this checklist to help you check carefully for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

Editing for spelling, punctuation and grammar checklist

Have I?	Yes/No	Notes
Checked my spelling and not just relied solely on my computer's spellchecker.		
Double checked to make sure that I have spelled the specific technical terms of the topic correctly.		
Used appropriate vocabulary that does not distract the reader.		
Avoided using very emotive or discriminatory language.		
Checked that punctuation has been used correctly.		
Checked my grammar and sentence structure.		
Reflected on my own writing to see if I can find patterns of errors I typically make.		
Double checked my reference list and in-text citations to make sure that I have spelled authors' names correctly.		
Made sure that I have double checked any words I have chosen from a thesaurus to make sure they have the right meaning I need.		