

Essay writing:

Revising and editing an essay

Revision and editing should be done on a hard copy. Before printing your draft, read through it to pick up any obvious typing or spelling errors, and use the spell check facility on your computer. Be aware, however, that the spell check facility will only pick up misspelled words. If you have used a wrong word, it will not identify the error.

Check your essay for structure, content, mechanics and presentation. You can cover all of these by asking the following questions.

Structure

The Introduction

1. Is the topic clearly indicated?
2. Are essential definitions provided?
3. Is the direction of the argument clear?

The Body

Check each paragraph.

1. Is there a clear topic sentence?
2. Do the support sentences fit the topic sentence?
3. Is there enough support?
4. Is there any irrelevant material?
5. Are the paragraphs presented in a systematic way?

The Conclusion

1. Does the conclusion fit the introduction?
2. Is the topic re-stated without being repeated?
3. Is the line of argument re-stated?

Content

1. Has the question been answered?
2. Are the points relevant?
3. Is the evidence convincing?
4. Is there sufficient evidence?
5. Are all quotes and references accurately recorded?

Mechanics

Sentence level

1. Does each sentence have a subject and a verb?
2. Is there agreement between the subject and the verb?
3. Does one sentence lead on smoothly to the next?
4. Is each sentence punctuated appropriately?
5. Are the sentences varied in type and length?

Word level

1. Are the words chosen carefully?
2. Are there any spelling errors?
3. Is the language non-discriminatory?
4. Are transitional words and phrases used appropriately?

Presentation

1. Is a title page included?
2. Does it include your name and student number, the name and code number of the subject, the title of the essay and the assignment number?
3. Does the title of the essay appear at the top of the first page?
4. Are the pages numbered?
5. Is double spacing used for the text?
6. Is single spacing used for longer quotes which are indented?
7. Is a list of references or a bibliography included?
8. Is it complete?
9. Is it on a separate page?
10. Does it conform to the conventions of the referencing system used?