

Editor in charge

Writing papers is difficult for some, easy for others. But editing your own writing – that's hard for everyone. Here are some methods to help you clear out the errors and make sure you've stated your points clearly.

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Editing one's own writing is a challenge for everyone. We're simply too close to it and view our own words in a much different manner than we do others.

One of the most difficult parts of editing your own essays is knowing when to do it – and when to stop. It's natural for a writer to want to write well the first time. But your first draft should never be your final draft. And your final draft needs to be just that – final. Here are some tips to help you successfully edit your work so that you turn in the best essays possible.

Write first – edit after

Don't try to edit as you write. It's much easier to weed out extraneous sentences or words after you've written out your entire essay. It actually slows down, and impedes your creative flow, if you try to reword sentences or correct grammatical errors as you write. In order to serve as both a writer and an editor, separate the two functions. Be the creative writer; then put on your visor and step into your editor role with a fresh perspective.

Soft copies are for writing; hard for editing

Often students want to edit their work from the computer screen and edit as they go. Unfortunately, this habit can slow the editing process down. When you print out your work, you can mark corrections and notes more quickly as you read.

Shout it out loud

Well, don't actually shout. But read your words out loud. Our brain tends to fill in gaps automatically when reading; but the gaps are obvious when talking. If you are missing word somewhere, especially in your own writing, the mind will automatically fill in the blank. Reading aloud solves this problem and allows you to look at your work more objectively.

Get 'er done

Don't take too much time between writing and editing your paper. It is important that your eyes and mind are fresh about the topic. Taking too much time between the writing and editing processes can make you lose interest in your own work. It is easy to feel like you are done once you have words on a page and perhaps lose yourself in another project. The more time you let go by, the more likely you are to let it go and hand in a paper that is not your best work.

Put yourself in their place

You know your opinions and intentions for your essay, but try to see your work from an outside perspective. Consider how your professor or classmate might interpret your essay.

Reverse order

Often students become too familiar with their work. This makes it more difficult to catch simple mistakes and even glaring errors. A good trick to overcome this common problem is reading each sentence as a separate entity, in any order. Starting with the last sentence and working your way backwards is a good way to edit grammar, spelling and sentence structure.

Another pair of eyes

Once you feel you've done all you can on your own, it is still helpful to have an outside perspective. Letting a peer read your work will not only help you with the project at hand , but your future endeavors as well.