# Editing and Proofreading

## What is the difference?

While most people use the terms interchangeably, editing and proofreading come at two different stages of the revision process and focus on different aspects of your essay. **Editing** is the process of making sure that your content, style, and citations are correct and everything makes sense. **Proofreading**, on the other hand, is the process of ironing out your grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes.

## Tips for both Editing and Proofreading

- Get some distance. Take some time away from your essay. It is hard to do either editing or proofreading after you have finished. To get some serious distance, give your essay to a friend to read.
- Try changing the way your essay looks. Sometimes, altering something about your essay (text size, color, or style) can help trick your brain into thinking it is looking at a different essay.
- Do your editing and proofreading in short bursts. This way, you won't get bored rereading your essay a bunch of times.
- If you are short on time (like the average procrastinating college student), prioritize parts of your editing and proofreading tasks to make sure that the most important ones are completed.

## Tips for Editing

- Make sure that you answer the prompt appropriately and that your claims are accurate.
- Is your thesis clearly stated? Does the sequence of your paragraph make sense? Do you have good transitions? Does each paragraph have a clear topic sentence? Is there only one main idea for each paragraph? These are good questions to ask while you are looking at the structure of your essay.
- Be sure to define any important terms that could be unclear for your reader. Also, double check that each pronoun that you have used is clear about what is refers to.
- Try avoiding words you find in a thesaurus because you may misuse them. However, if you really want to use a new word, look it up in the dictionary to see if the meaning matches your content.
- Make sure your in-text citations are correct and that your work cited or reference page is also done correctly.

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## Tips for Proofreading

- ➢ Even though content is what really matters in an essay, the way an essay looks will determine how your professor judges it. Careless mistakes with spelling and grammar takes away from a well-organized and thoughtful essay.
- ➢ Do not entirely rely on grammar and spell check. Sometimes they are wrong.
- ➢ Try to read as slow as possible. This reduces the chances of missing mistakes.
- ➢ Try reading the paper backwards. This isn't something that will help you with editing, but it could potentially catch spelling and grammar mistakes you might miss otherwise.
- ➢ If something looks wrong but you can't figure out why, ask someone! Like a SCAA tutor!

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**References -** The following works were referred to during the creation of this handout:  The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC) Writing Center Editing and Proofreading Handout.