



SELF-EDITING CHECKLIST

First of all, read your final draft aloud (but slowly) to catch errors you may overlook while reading silently.

For organization:

- Every paragraph should develop a separate central idea; i.e. every paragraph should have its own topic sentence and the paragraph should only develop or explain that central idea.
- Do not make a new paragraph just because your current one seems too long. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs; each paragraph should ideally have at least three sentences.
- Follow your thesis throughout your paper. Is your thesis clearly stated at the end of your introduction?
- Check transitions.

Do the transitions (both between sentences and between paragraphs) help connect ideas?

Does every sentence in each paragraph flow logically into the other?

Is there a more appropriate connector that may be used?

Do your paragraphs flow into each other, one following the other in a logical way?

For language:

You should focus on typical mistakes. Find out what errors come up more frequently and/or repeatedly and learn how to fix those errors. Following are some points to focus:

- **Tense agreement:** Check if you have used the appropriate tense for your writing. Consult a tutor if necessary. Avoid changing tenses (unless it is really necessary). For instance, if your writing requires present tenses, you should alternate between present simple, present continuous and present perfect-but mostly present simple.

- **Subject / verb agreement:** Find the main verb in each sentence. Then, match the verb to its subject. If the subject is singular, your verb needs to be singular too. If the subject is plural, your verb needs to be plural too.
- **Pronoun reference / agreement:** Skim your paper. Stop at each pronoun. (Look especially at: *it, this, they, their, and them.*) Search for the noun that the pronoun replaces. If there is no noun, change your pronoun or insert a noun prior to the use of the pronoun. If there is a noun, check if it agrees in number and person with your pronoun.
- **Parallel structures:** Skim your paper. Stop at key words that signal parallel structures (especially; *and, or, not only...but also, either...or, neither...nor, both...and*). Make sure that items (adjectives, nouns phrase etc.) are in the same grammatical form (except: *Not only* + sentence in question order, *but also* + sentence in sentence order)

For mechanics:

Another point to be aware of while editing you paper is the mechanical aspect of your writing; that is, any possible spelling or punctuation mistakes. Here are some points to revise:

- Check if you have ended every sentence with a period (.), question mark (?), or exclamation point (!).
- Check if you have used a period after abbreviations.
- Check if you have separated compound sentences with a comma (,). If not, skim for conjunctions (*and, but, for, or, nor, so and yet*). If there is a complete sentence on each side of the conjunction, place a comma before the conjunction.
- Check if you have *capitalized* names of *persons, cities, countries, streets* and *titles*.
- Check if you have capitalized a quotation according to the original and according to the needs of your sentence.