

WHAT IS EDITING?

Editing can take a paper from good to great. The goal of editing is to improve aspects of your writing such as clarity, style, sentence structure, and word choice. Edit after revising (when you address content, organization, and other global concerns) but before proofreading (when you correct sentence-level issues).

<u>Revising</u>	<u>Editing</u>	<u>Proofreading</u>
content	clarity	spelling
paper structure	style	grammar
paragraph structure	sentence structure	punctuation
source integration	word choice	typographical errors (“typos”)

WHAT TO ASK WHEN EDITING

Clarity

- Is each paragraph’s main idea easy to identify? *TIP: Read about topic sentences on our [MEAL Plan handout](#).*
- Is each sentence’s subject and verb clear? *TIP: Limit words/phrases separating a subject and its verb.*
- Have you written concisely? *TIP: Avoid multiple (ideally no more than two) prepositional phrases in a row.*

Style

- Are your tone and language appropriate for your purpose (i.e., to describe, analyze, persuade, narrate, etc.)?
- Have you included transitional comments or words to link your ideas, sentences, and paragraphs logically?
- Did you intentionally use active and passive voice appropriately according to the discipline’s conventions?

Sentence Structure

- Are your sentences varied in length? *TIP: Find two consecutive short sentences; combine them.*
- Have you varied the structure of your sentences?
- Does sentence length impede understanding? *TIP: Consider breaking up sentences longer than 3 lines.*

Word Choice

- Is your language understandable and appropriate? Do you need to define any specific terms?
- Have you eliminated wordiness? *TIP: Look for two-word verbs (“are going” vs. “go”); expletive constructions (“this is,” “there are”); repetitive modifiers (“eliminate entirely,” “new discoveries”).*

STRATEGIES FOR EDITING

1. **Read aloud, slowly.** Hearing your writing helps you identify the areas where your meaning is unclear. As you read—preferably from a *printed* draft—mark places that sound awkward or cause you to hesitate or reread.
2. **Edit in intervals.** Instead of trying to edit your whole paper in one sitting, break up the work so that you periodically step away from the paper to “refresh” your eyes/mind.
3. **Know yourself.** Consider feedback instructors or other readers have provided about your writing. Being aware of the errors you make consistently means you will more easily find and correct them in your current draft.
4. **Recheck your use of source material for accuracy and correct style and citation format.** Remember that citation generators are not always 100% correct; use a handbook or online style manual when you edit.
5. **Schedule a KSU Writing Center appointment.** Our Writing Assistants and Graduate Writing Coaches will help you master these and other editing strategies.