

EDITING

Editing is changing a work at all levels, including sentence, paragraph, and page levels, to ensure style, tone, conciseness, and relevance of ideas. At this level, there is a focus on sentence structure and variety, integration of information from sources, and the style of each page. Editing establishes suitable integration of sources, precise and respectful language, and smooth transitions between sections.

Editing is the second level of altering a work: 1) Revising, 2) Editing, 3) Proofreading. See also our handouts on Revising and Proofreading.

EDITING STRATEGIES

When editing a work, confirm that your content is comprehensible and cohesive. Here are editing strategies to guide you:

Highlight or zoom in on the first and last sentences of each paragraph. Ensure that you guide the reader from the idea in one paragraph to the idea in the next paragraph through transition statements or phrases

Look for generalizations, such as "all people know" and "every woman believes." Sometimes, generalizations are wrong, offensive, and weak. Instead, use may/might, occasionally, some, and typically. It is also helpful to make it known that these are your opinions or based on observations from your experience

Look for vague words, such as very, a lot, big/small, good/bad, weak/strong, sad/happy, do, get, and things/stuff. Use a thesaurus and dictionary to find more precise synonyms

Be clear whether quotes are allowed or if paraphrasing and summarizing are more often used

QUESTION CHECKLIST

To help you focus at the editing level, it may be helpful to ask yourself these questions:

Does each sentence flow and make sense when read on its own and in the context of the sentences around it?

Do your paragraphs transition well between each section?

Are my word choices specific or general?

Are my sentences concise or wordy?

Is my tone respectful and inclusive?

Do I credit my sources? Do I summarize, paraphrase and quote an appropriate amount?

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