

[MUSIC PLAYING]

INSTRUCTOR: Editing.

Editing is different from revision. When you revise your draft, you make sure paragraphs are well organized and that they contain all the information needed to support your main point. When you edit, you check your words and sentences for effective style and correctness in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You also check for proper use of sources.

When editing to improve the style of your writing, remember your audience. Most college writing assignments call for a formal writing style. Check your word usage to be sure you haven't used any slang or sexist language. Check for dull or choppy sentences and improve them with coordination, subordination, and other sentence variety techniques. Check for wordy constructions. If you can say something more simply without any loss of meaning, use the shorter version.

Of course your writing should be grammatically correct and it should not have any punctuation or spelling errors. Even experienced writers have trouble with certain grammar rules and word spellings. A good strategy is to keep track of the skills you need to work on in an error log. By keeping an error log, you can see any recurring mistakes in your writing, and you will know to watch for them when you edit.

Your instructor may assign you a pretest to see which areas you need to focus on. You can practice grammar skills by completing exercises. To apply the skills you've learned through study and practice, approach your draft as if it were a grammar quiz. Slow down and read each sentence individually.

One strategy is to zoom in on the type and increase the margin so you can read only a small amount of text at a time. Or you can separate each sentence with a paragraph mark so it stands by itself. Then read each individual sentence to see if anything needs fixing. One more strategy is to read your sentences in reverse order. Read the last sentence, then read the previous sentence, then read the

sentence before that and so on. Reading backward lets you focus on the small details of each sentence and errors become more obvious.

Using grammar and spell checkers is usually an acceptable way to catch some mistakes. But these programs don't catch all mistakes, and they sometimes suggest incorrect changes. Be prepared to overrule your grammar checker, and be sure to review your work on your own as well.

If you worked with other sources to write your paper, edit to make sure that you have properly incorporated other writers' words into your own. Any time you use another author's words or ideas, you should build up to the borrowed language with a signal phrase that includes the author's name. All direct quotations should be enclosed with quotation marks. In addition, any borrowed words and ideas should include both an in-text citation of the source as well as an entry in the Works Cited list. Finally, the source should be appropriately connected to your own writing.

Remember, when you edit, you check the words and sentences of your final draft for correctness in style, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You also check for proper use of sources.