

Self-Editing Checklist

Use this guide to edit your writing for grammar and sentence-level concerns.
Click on underlined text for links to resources on grammar and writing topics.

1. Check for clarity

- Is there a clear take-away message? Consider the purpose or function of the sentence / paragraph.
- Can I identify the grammatical subject and verb?
- Are there any unclear modifiers? Consider the placement of words, phrases, and clauses and their connection to the sentence's main action.

2. Check for structure

- Does every sentence have an independent clause?
- Are my subject and verb close together and, if possible, near the front?
- Is there agreement between: subjects and verbs, nouns and pronouns, nouns and articles, and verb tenses?

3. Check for connectors

- Are my transitions between sentences logical and do they show my thought process?
- Am I using conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs appropriately to connect phrases and clauses?
- Have I been intentional with punctuation and followed the rules?

4. Check for vocabulary

- Are there opportunities to eliminate wordiness?
- Am I using conventional academic phrases to communicate ideas?
- Do I show concision with scope markers, like geography and time words, and a balance of hedging and boosting?
- Have I avoided vague pronouns and weak, value-laden language?
- Did I use: idioms, clichés, similes, metaphors, or other rhetorical devices? Are these the choices I want to make?