Making It Perfect

These tips and tricks will make your writing as polished as it can be before turning it in. However, they work best with a completed draft.

Know The Difference Between Editing And Revising

Editing focuses primarily on small mistakes that only impact the sentence they are found in, like typos, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

On the other hand, revising focuses on larger mistakes that impact the entire paper such as the argument, organization, and use of research and sources.

Although editing is a quicker process, make sure to still revise your paper before turning it in! Revisions are more likely to improve your writing than small edits.

Check Citations

Whether you are using MLA or APA style, most teachers will require you to have both a works cited page and in-text citations.

They work hand-in-hand so readers can use the in-text citations to find the full works cited entry at the end of your paper for more information on a source. They serve two different purposes in your paper!
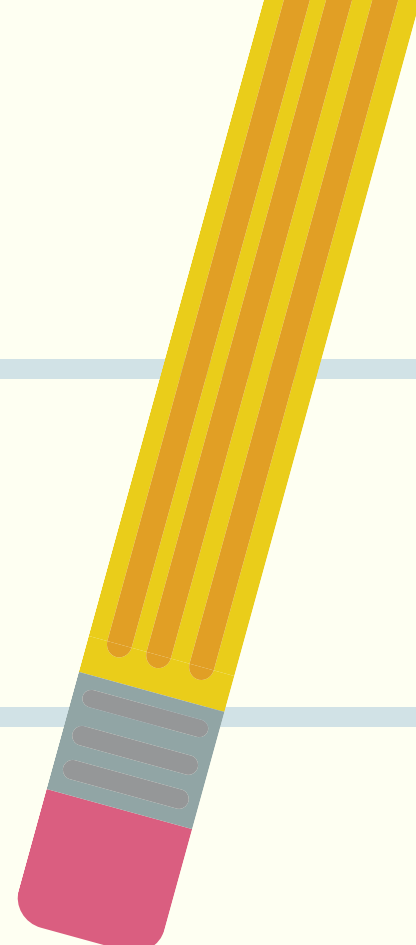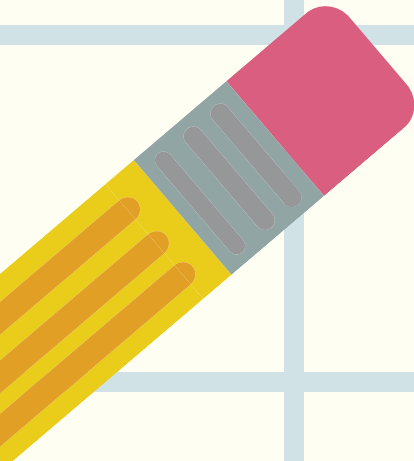
Now that you have both, what should you do?

Ask Yourself...

- Do I have the correct amount of sources according to the assignment?
- Does my works cited or references page have a corresponding entry for each in-text citation?
- Is it clear to my reader where my information is coming from?
- Can my reader use my sources to find the exact information I found?

Additional Tips For Formatting Citations

- Ask your teacher for help with any unclear formatting questions.

- Visit your Writing Center for help!

- Include as much information about a source as you can.

- Use templates to make sure your citations are formatted correctly; each type of source (book, website, database article, etc.) will be cited differently.

- Templates can be found in some writing textbooks or online at owl.purdue.edu.
  - Plug your source information into the template to create your citation!
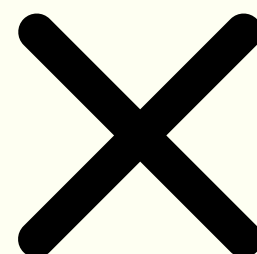
Tone

Making sure you are using the correct tone in your writing will make it feel more polished and complete!

Most essays will call for a formal tone. To check if your tone is formal make sure you are only using third person perspective and not first or second person perspective.
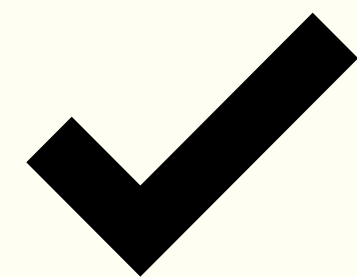
1st Person - I, we ✖
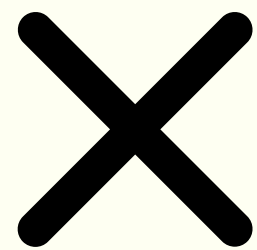
2nd Person - you ✖

3rd Person - he, she, they, it, one ✔

In addition, make sure you avoid slang, contractions, colloquialisms, exaggerations, and overuse of exclamation marks.

If you find yourself writing the way you talk, that may be a sign your writing is too informal. Plan out what you want to say before writing to avoid the spontaneity often associated with spoken language.

Tip: Writing formally may feel strange at first but with some practice it will come more naturally.

Word Choice

Word choice is also important for maintaining a formal tone and for gaining credibility as a writer. Variety in word choice is also more interesting for your reader, making them more likely to keep reading.

For stronger word choice try the following:

- Avoid redundancy.
- Stick with words you are comfortable with rather than using overly complicated words to sound smart.
- Use strong nouns and verbs.
- Check to see if you can rephrase longer phrases into fewer words to make ideas clearer.
- Watch out for misused words or words with unwanted connotations or possible misunderstandings.

Vocabulary

Improving your vocabulary is a small change that can make a big impact in your writing. Use a dictionary and thesaurus to learn new words and purposefully include them when you write. Read more often to find word inspiration and learn how to use words in context.

Peer Review

Have a peer read your work, and offer to do the same for them!

Peer review can:

- Provide a second set of eyes to catch mistakes.
- Be a source of inspiration. Incorporate the things you like about your peer's writing and avoid the things you don't.
- Help you better understand a confusing assignment.
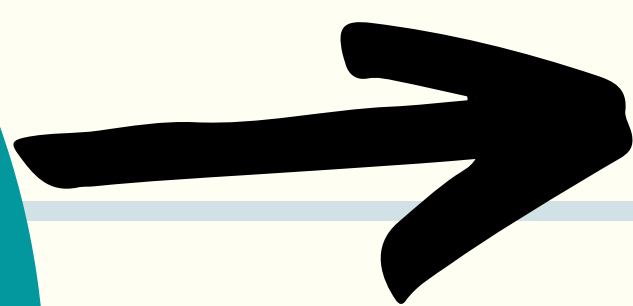- Make you a more critical reader and writer.

Read It Out Loud

Read the paper out loud for a new perspective! Your brain often skips over small errors as you read silently, but reading out loud helps you to catch errors in grammar, tone, punctuation, wording, and organization.
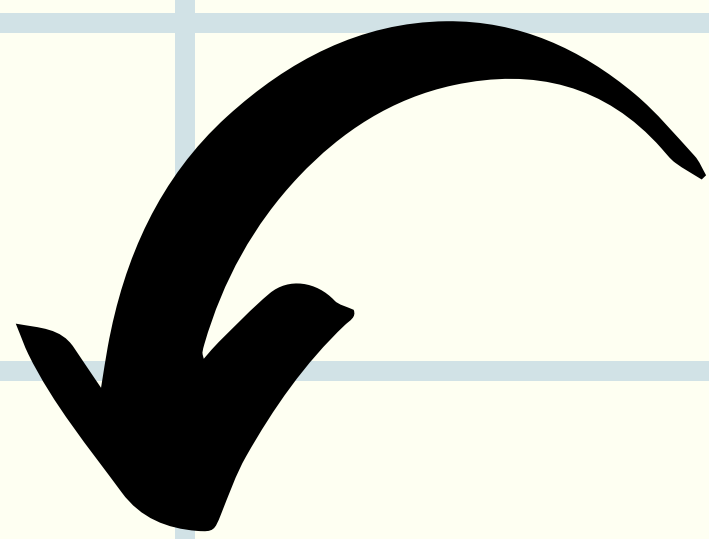
TIP

Read from a printed copy and follow the lines slowly with your finger while reading.

You're ready to turn in the paper!