Step 7: Editing and Proofreading

When it comes to editing and proofreading, there's no one correct way to do it. However, there are various techniques you can use that will help you to pick up any errors in your writing. When you proofread the final draft of your essay, your goal is to make sure that your ideas connect in a logical way, and that there are no issues with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Know what you are looking for:

The first rule of thumb is to only look for one type of problem at a time. This will mean you need to proofread your essay multiple times, but it will make it much easier for you to identify any mistakes you may have made in the writing process.

Computer says 'No':

Believe it or not, computers aren't always right! While the features on programmes like Word are handy, they shouldn't be relied upon as the voice of wisdom for all things spelling and grammar. There are two very important things you need to do when using Word as a tool for finding errors in your writing: Firstly, make sure that your spellcheck is set to Australian English (not American). Secondly, double-check the mistakes it finds, particularly with grammar, as they are often inaccurate.

Tips for successful proofreading:

Follow these basic principles, as they will help you to achieve the best results possible in the proofreading process:

✓ Give it a rest – Walk away from your assignment for as long as possible before you start proofreading. This will help you *forget* what you have written, which means you have to pay more attention to your final reading of the document.

✓ Make a list of all the things you need to look for (e.g. spelling, correct referencing, capitalisation of names) and work through them consecutively.

✓ Work from a print out, not the computer screen.

✓ Double-check facts, figures, and accuracy of referencing/direct quotes.

✓ Read it out loud.

✓ Use a ruler, or a sheet of card, to cover up the lines below the one you are reading.

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Checklist:

Make a list of things you will need to look for when you proofread your essay:

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References

Wong, L. (2015). *Essential study skills* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

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