Study Skills-Proof Reading & Editing

Proof reading and editing are essential components of the practice of writing. When you write an assignment, essay or report, you are busy trying to put your ideas and knowledge into the document and you are often concentrating so hard on the content that you do not concentrate so well on the quality of the writing.

Proof Reading in Practice

Proof reading is the practice of reading a document and actively looking for errors, mistakes, duplication, poor grammar or sentence structure. It is a simple way to ensure simple errors do not find their way into your final presentation. For example, spelling errors are often highlighted using a spell checker. However, occasionally you type the wrong word but it is spelled correctly, like using “fit” when you meant to use “hit”. Proof reading your document will help minimize these errors. Students are often tired of looking at their assignment so a good tip is to have a friend, family member or fellow student read your work for you. It will only take them a couple of minutes but they might find plenty of errors and be able to give you valuable feedback and advice that will improve the overall value of your assignment. For Higher Education students in particular, proof reading references and ensuring they are all well written can often be worth up to 10% of the total mark allocated by the lecturer. Realistically, if you follow the BIITE style guide and proof read, you should be able to maximize this mark.

Things to look for include:

- **Spelling** (use your spell checker but also read the document yourself)
- **Grammar** (using the correct word in the right context or order)
- **Punctuation** (make sure your use of symbols like . , ? : ; ’ ” ! are correct)
- **Consistency** (make sure you use the same font, size, colour, spacing, headings)
- **Page numbering** (make sure you number your pages and identify new sections)
- **Headings** (use headings where appropriate and make sure they are consistent)
- **Bullets and Dot points** (keep using the same style. The same applies for numbering)
Editing in Practice

Editing your written work is the next step after proof reading. Obviously you should try to correct any errors like spelling mistakes or poor punctuation but that is a simple process of deleting and rewriting. Editing is the more advanced skill of critiquing your written work, adding and removing sentences or words or even whole sections with the aim of improving the overall quality and standard of your work. You need to be fairly objective and view your written work not from the emotional position of the writer (you) but from the detached position of the reader (your lecturer).

Often it is best at this stage to have a friend, relative, colleague or even another student read your work and give you honest feedback, as they are that objective person and will read it from the perspective of your lecturer. Do not be hesitant to let people read your work and be truthful with their response. This is a valuable way for you to improve your work and to learn from the process. Editing will ensure that you produce a refined product that should be the best that you can really do, as opposed to a document you wrote in haste and did not take the time to improve, which will only be a shadow of your true knowledge. Remember, you have just that one chance to impress your reader with your knowledge and you should do your best to ensure the document you submit is your best work.

Things to consider include:

- Do not assume that your reader will know what you are writing about. You need to explain things in detail and make sure your explanation is logical, well-structured and forms a convincing argument.
- The use of acronyms like BIITE is acceptable as long as you have first clearly identified what BIITE stands for.
- Use headings or clearly written topic sentences to let the reader know what to expect and make sure you have a clear, logical thread running throughout your writing. This makes it easier for the reader to follow where you are going with your writing.
- Back up all claims and interpretations with references, facts or figures.
- Identify and remove unnecessary duplication, explanation or interesting but irrelevant material (including “padding” where you are just trying to reach a word count!).
- Try and use simple, plain language as opposed to overly complicated words and language.
- Never use slang words or statements.
- Maintain a consistent use of tense (past tense, present tense) and voice (active or passive)
- Do not be afraid to summarize what you have written to solidify your argument.
- Finally, check that you have covered all of the areas that you intended to do or were asked to cover in the assignment brief, which again should mean you are heading towards a good overall result.
Editing activity: read the following section by Nemasetoni and Rogerson (2005) and edit it using a pen to circle the words, sentences or punctuation that is incorrect, missing or wrong. Write in the margin or under the words your correction or notes on what is wrong.

The tourism and hospitality industry contains a mixture of firms of different sizes and development potential (Thomas, 2014). Although the commanding heights of tourism economes are controlled by the activities of large, vertically integrated and often multinational enterprises, numerically, tourism is dominated by a range of small enterprises (Thomas, 1998). In recent surveys conducted in Australia and the United Kingdom, between 95–101 percent of all tourism enterprises were found to be small independently owned firms, which include guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments, travel agents, ground operators and so on. Until recently, the themes of entrepreneurship and small enterprise development in tourism could be described variously as “terra incognita” for researchers (Page et al., 1999) or “a research lacuna that warrants further examination” (Ioannides, 2003: 43). In the international context many tourism scholars have responded to the challenge of expanding dog's knowledge of the dynamics of small tourism and hospitality farms and of how they articulate with the economy and society as a whole. Indeed, within the past year, it is significant that 3 edited collections have been published of international research that focuses on small firms in tourism (Keller and Bieger, 2004; Thomas, 2004a; Morrison and Thomas 2004). Looking at the research the research tribulations made during the last decade, Thomas (2004b: 1) could conclude that there “has been a flourishing of interest in a variety of issues relating to small businesses in tourism”.

Reference