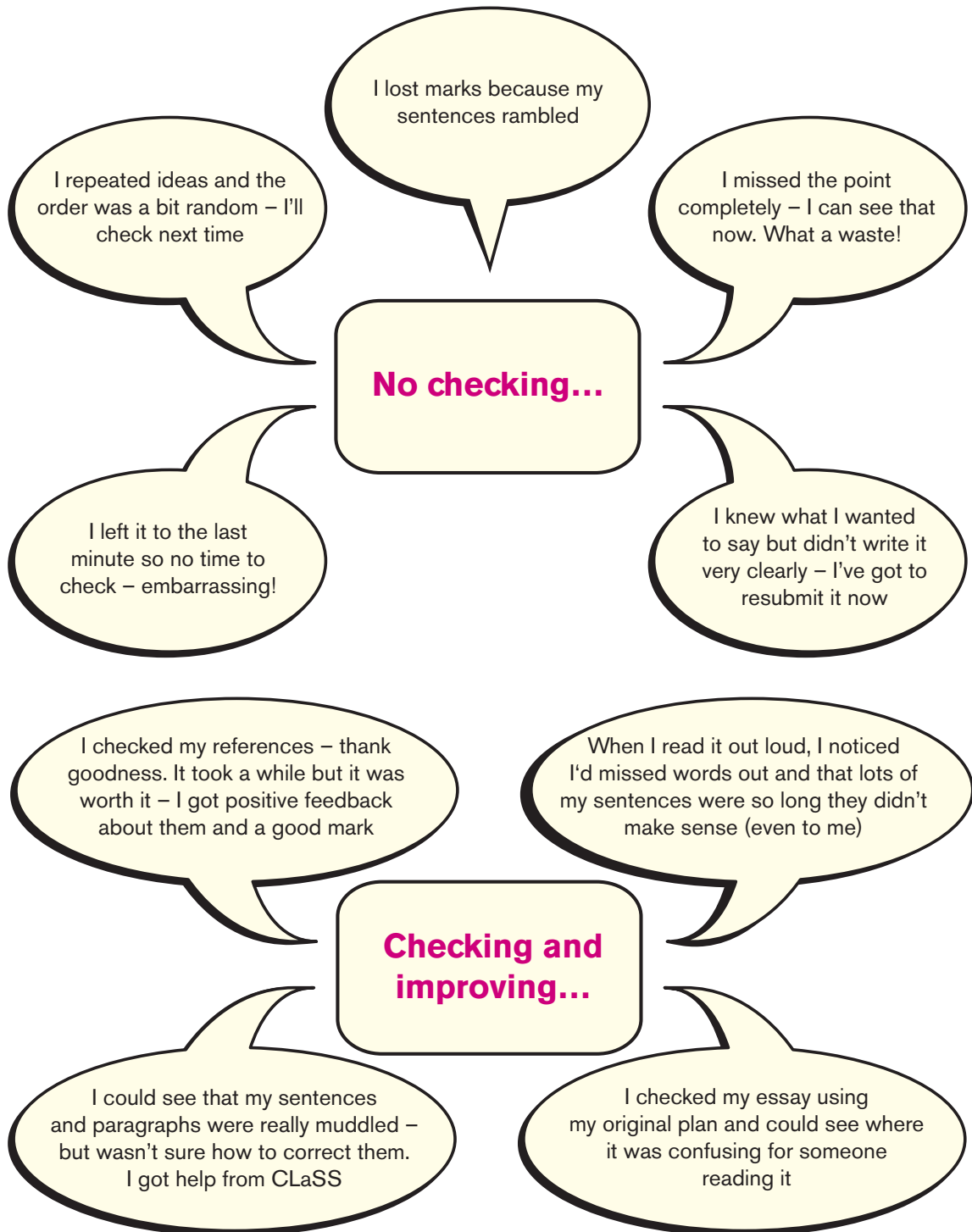


Why write several drafts? Why not just write it one go?



This section will help to:

- **Organise the process of editing and proofreading**
- **Edit your first draft**
- **Proofread your final draft**

How to edit and proofread your writing

What's the difference between editing and proof reading?

- **Editing and proof reading are not the same!** Editing happens as you write your assignment while proof reading is the last part of the writing process.

Aim for 3 drafts of your writing:

- **First draft:** Focus on getting your main ideas and information down.
- **Second draft:** Take a cold hard look at your first draft and edit it for content, structure, style, evidence and referencing .
- **Third draft:** This is the proof reading stage when you check carefully for errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is the final refinement of your writing.

Editing your first draft

Now's the time to take a good hard look at your first draft

- **What's your main point?** Is it clear to someone reading the assignment? Could you write it in one sentence?
- **Have you provided convincing evidence to support your main point?** Have you acknowledged opposing views?
- **Will your structure make sense to a reader?** Does it follow the conventions for academic essays or reports?
- **Check that all your information and ideas relate clearly to the assignment title** and your main point.

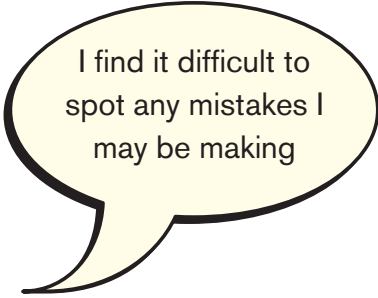
Proofreading your second draft

Now check for misspellings, mistakes in grammar and punctuation

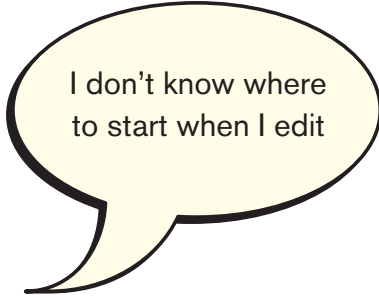
- **Read for only one error at a time, separating the text into individual sentences eg. check for spelling first, then grammar, then punctuation.** Find out the sort of errors you make and learn how to correct them.
- **Read every word slowly and out loud.** This lets you hear how the words sound together.
- **Read the paper backwards, working from the end to the beginning.** The focus then is entirely on spelling.

Note: You might need to do more than two drafts!

Checklists to help you edit and proofread your assignment



I find it difficult to spot any mistakes I may be making



I don't know where to start when I edit

Editing your essay can seem tedious but is a necessary part of the writing process. Editing something you have written invariably makes it better. It is actually a simple task if tackled in an organised manner.

Top Tip: take it slow and check for one thing at a time.

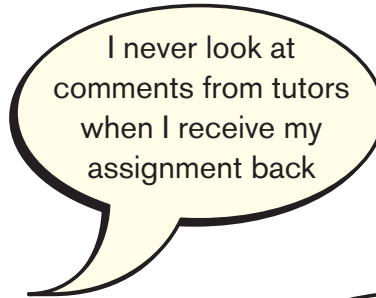
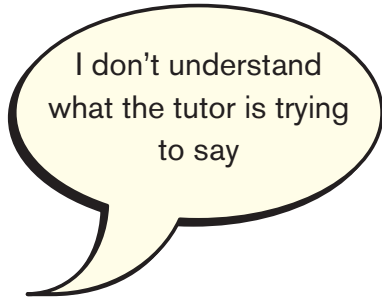
1. Print a copy of your essay and begin by looking at the content:

Begin with the introduction	Does it state your intentions and the structure of the essay?
Look at each paragraph	Does it contain relevant information and have clear links to the next one?
Look at the conclusion	Does it sum up your argument and answer the question?

2. Read your work out loud or get someone to read it to you. If you hear something you don't like, change it and see if it sounds better.

Pause in your reading as punctuation indicates	This helps you determine how your essay flows and sounds and whether your punctuation needs changing.
Check for spelling errors	Read the work backwards as it will not make sense and so the spelling will be easily noticed.
Set your essay aside for a few days	This will allow you to go back and critique it with a fresh pair of eyes.

Understanding feedback from tutors



It is important to look at feedback from your tutor in order to improve on your marks. Here are some comments from tutors and questions to ask yourself in order to improve on your next assignment.

Feedback from tutor	Questions to ask yourself
Failure to answer the question	Did you interpret the question correctly? Did you look at the action words? (e.g. compare, contrast, evaluate)
Too long or unfocussed	Have you kept to the point? Did you refer back to the title?
Too short or lacks sufficient content	Did you explain your points fully? Did you use examples? Did you research the question thoroughly?
Inclusion of irrelevant information	Did you understand what the question required you to do? Did you answer it and not just give information you were comfortable with?

Top Tip:

Could those questions relate to the fact that you did not read the question properly or plan your essay with questions for reading?

Feedback from tutor	Questions to ask yourself
Badly organised, rambling	Have you used an essay plan? (eg. Thought mapping or spider diagram?) Did you check for repetition?
Lacks fluency, poor style or presentation	Did you link your points/paragraphs? Did you check your spelling and grammar?
Poor introduction	Did you introduce the topic and explain what you were going to do?
Poor conclusion	Did the conclusion indicate how you answered the question? Did you avoid including new information?

Top Tip:

Could those questions show that you need to organise your structure, proof read your work or remind yourself what introductions and conclusions are for?

Feedback from tutor	Questions to ask yourself
Unbalanced answer	Have you presented both sides of an argument? Is it objective?
Reaching conclusions without good evidence	Have you presented the evidence for your conclusion? Have you proved it?
Too descriptive	Were you critical and evaluative of information you found? Did you have a theoretical background and examples to support your points?

Top Tip:

Was your reading focused on the aims and objectives, different points of view and linking theory to practice?

Proofreading (checking your work)

This is the final stage of the editing process (revising your work) and is done when you have completed your assignment.

Proofreading is important as you will be marked on your style, content, structure and presentation.

<p>Proofread for only one error at a time eg. spelling</p> <p><i>If you try and identify too many things at once, you lose focus and proofreading becomes less effective.</i></p>	<p>You may have some idea of the sort of mistakes you make so you may want to prioritise spellings for example, and then reread to check for another error such as punctuation.</p>
<p>Read slowly and read every word</p> <p><i>You pick up errors that you miss when reading silently.</i></p>	<p>Try reading out loud, which forces you to say each word and also lets you hear how the words sound together.</p>
<p>Separate the text into individual sentences</p> <p><i>Read each sentence separately looking for grammar, punctuation or spelling errors.</i></p>	<p>If working with a printed copy, try using a ruler or a piece of paper to isolate the line you are working on.</p>
<p>Circle every punctuation mark</p> <p><i>This helps you to clearly focus on any mistakes.</i></p>	<p>This forces you to look at each one. As you circle, ask yourself if the punctuation is correct.</p>
<p>Read the paper backwards</p> <p><i>Start with the last word on the last page working your way back to the beginning, reading each word separately.</i></p>	<p>Helps check spelling. Content, punctuation and grammar won't make any sense; the focus will be entirely on spelling.</p>

Useful Tips:

When you've just finished it put it aside for a while; decide whether you are going to work from the computer or a printed copy; alter the size, colour or font to trick the brain into thinking it's a different text, allowing you to see it from a different perspective; find a quiet place to work and do it in blocks of time rather than in one go to enable full concentration.