

Lesson Six: Editing and Revising

Even the best writers need to edit their work. Their first drafts might be very strong already, but they can always get better. You too will find aspects to improve during the editing process, from broad content issues down to basic word choice.

Try to write a complete first draft before you worry too much about editing. Otherwise you might find your creativity hampered by your analytical side. Once you have a first draft finished, set it aside for a few days or more if you have that luxury. When you return to it with a fresh perspective, you will probably notice many problems that did not occur to you before and recognize better ways of handling various points.

Do not hesitate to edit at all levels, even if it means you'll be doing a lot of rewriting. Throw out entire paragraphs if you can't recall what purpose they were serving. Replace boring passages with vivid details, banal generalizations with sharp insights. Cut and paste until you've achieved the optimal structure. Fine-tune every sentence until it is clear, concise, and graceful.

Is there such a thing as over-editing? If you begin to lose sight of your goals and can no longer distinguish between constructive and unconstructive changes, then you may begin to detract from the freshness and strength of your essay. At that point, the only course you can take is to set the essay aside again until you can read it with a clear mind.

EssayEdge provides significant help with the editing and revising process. Having edited tens of thousands of admissions essays, our Harvard-educated editors can take a poor, boring essay and make it a powerful personal essay. We will carefully edit the essay to improve the impact of the introduction and conclusion, the logic and transition, the content, and the grammar. For more on our services, please visit our editing section.

 **Select One:**

- [Editing Checklist](#)
- [Final Steps](#)

EssayEdge Extra: Soliciting Feedback

All writers rely on outside feedback. You may want to use friends, family, and teachers as an initial resource before submitting your essay for more hands-on editing by EssayEdge. While the people you know can give you valuable suggestions based on their relationship with you, EssayEdge offers a vital perspective in providing objective criticism and expertise specific to the admissions essay.

The following is an evaluative questionnaire for you to give your readers along with the essay:

1. Did my opening paragraph capture your attention?
2. Did you find the statement as a whole to be interesting?
3. Did you find it to be well written?
4. Did it seem positive, upbeat?
5. Did it sound like me?
6. Do you regard it as an honest and forthright presentation of who I am?
7. Did it seem to answer the question(s)?
8. Can you think of anything relevant that I might have inadvertently omitted?
9. Is there material within the statement that seems inappropriate?
10. Did you gain any insight about me from reading this?
11. Did you notice any typos or other errors?
12. Do you think the statement has in any way distinguished me from other applicants?

Editing Checklist

The following checklist is divided into the basic categories that we used to organize this course: content, structure, and style.

CONTENT

Are you answering the actual question given in the prompt?

Have you been sincere and personal?

Is your essay within the word limit?

Will your reader find the essay interesting?

Are you showing rather than telling?

Does your introduction grab the reader's attention?

Do you explore your experiences in sufficient depth?

Does your essay contain a high level of detail and concrete evidence?

Have you avoided unsubstantiated claims?

Do you offer specific, personal insights rather than trite generalizations and clichés?

Does your essay reveal anything meaningful about your character?

Do you avoid summarizing information that can be found elsewhere on your application?

Will your essay make you stand out?

Does your conclusion leave a lasting impression?

STRUCTURE

Can you identify an overarching theme? Have you articulated that theme in the essay?

Does your theme have multiple layers and genuine depth?

Do you have a reason for placing every paragraph where it is?

Do your paragraphs flow smoothly? Are there any gaps or jumps?

Does each point build upon previous points, or does your essay sound like a list?

Have you written insightful transitions and resolutions that highlight your key themes?

Are your stories well integrated into your essay?

Is the essay clear and coherent? Have you strengthened its impact by using the optimal structure?

STYLE

Have you achieved a simple, straightforward style?

Have you varied your sentence constructions?

Have you avoided unnecessarily fancy vocabulary?

Have you avoided passive voice?

Have you achieved active writing through the use of strong verbs?

Have you avoided overusing adjectives and adverbs?

Is your tone conversational, rather than too casual or too formal?

Have you conveyed confidence, enthusiasm, and passion?



Final Steps

Read Your Essay Out Loud: To help you polish the essay even further, read it out loud. You will be amazed at the faulty grammar and awkward language that your ears can detect. This will also give you a good sense of the flow of the piece and will alert you to anything that sounds too abrupt or out of place. Good writing, like good music, has a certain rhythm. How does your essay sound? Is it interesting and varied or drawn out and monotonous?

Have Your Essay Professionally Edited: Named "the world's premier application essay editing service" by The New York Times, EssayEdge has helped more applicants write successful application essays than any other company in the world. Please [click here](#) to have your essay professionally edited.

Congratulations!

You have completed the course.

We wish you the best of luck throughout the application process.