# EDITING & PROOFREADING CHECKLIST

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*For specific examples on how to implement any of the revisions listed in this checklist, please read the related blog post here: [www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_edit_and_proofread_your_writing](http://www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_edit_and_proofread_your_writing).
1. **ENSURE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION.**

- Ensure that conventional organization and structure are followed for the type of document.
- Make sections and headings consistent with the specified style guide.
- Check that paragraphs are structured correctly.
- Organize list items effectively, observing grammar rules.
2. CHECK THE FLOW AND TONE.

☐ Improve awkward sentence constructions.
☐ Suggest smooth transitions between ideas.
☐ Ensure appropriate tone and word choice for the context and audience.
☐ Point out or remove obviously biased information.
☐ Implement sentence variety or remove short sentences as appropriate to the document type.
3. CHECK FOR CORRECT MECHANICS.

- Run a spell check to correct typographical errors.
- Maintain consistent tense and voice throughout.
- Use appropriate vocabulary for the type of writing and audience.
- Remove unnecessary jargon and clarify word choice.
- Ensure subject–verb agreement throughout.
- Check that complete sentences are used throughout.
- Ensure that all acronyms are defined on their first use and then used consistently throughout the document.
- Remove acronyms if they are not used more than once; use the full terms instead.
4. ENSURE CLARITY AND CONCISENESS.

☐ Remove redundant content or repetitive wording.
☐ Rearrange content for logical flow.
☐ Improve the clarity of arguments or statements.
☐ Remove wordiness and make the writing concise and clear.
5. MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS PUNCTUATED CORRECTLY.

- Remove punctuation that is contextually inappropriate, such as exclamation marks or ellipses.
- Apply parenthetical commas where appropriate to improve readability.
- Use colons as appropriate to introduce lists, but never after "include" or verbs of being.
- Apply semicolons properly between independent clauses or lists with long phrases.
- Use em dashes for parenthetical information and en dashes for ranges (e.g., dates, numbers, or measurements) and relationships (e.g., win–win).
- Use italics for emphasis rather than quotation marks.
- Ensure the consistent use of straight or curly quotation marks throughout.
- Check for the consistent placement of punctuation inside or outside quotation marks.
- Ensure that single or double quotation marks are used first.
- Ensure that all hyphenated terms are hyphenated consistently.
6. **FOLLOW THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TYPE OF ENGLISH.**

- Ensure that the conventions of Oxford comma use are followed based on the type of English.
- Check that all spelling conforms to the conventions of the type of English.
- Ensure that the conventions for the use of single or double quotation marks are followed based on the type of English.
- Place punctuation inside or outside quotation marks based on the conventions of the type of English.
- Check that abbreviation conventions are followed based on the type of English.
- Check that number and date presentation conventions are followed based on the type of English.
7. REVIEW THE CITATIONS AND REFERENCES.

☐ Check the in-text citations for conformance with the target style guide.
☐ Ensure the consistent placement of punctuation around in-text citations.
☐ Format the reference list, including the heading, justification, line spacing, and indentation, according to the target style guide.
☐ Consecutively number or correctly alphabetize references.
☐ Revise each reference according to the target style guide.
☐ Cross-check the in-text citations against the reference list.
☐ Point out information that is not cited but should be.
Review line justification and spacing for consistency.

Check that the page margins are appropriate.

Apply a consistent font type, size, and color throughout.

Ensure appropriate and consistent heading and subheading capitalization, numbering, and formatting in terms of font type, size, and color throughout.

Check that spacing is consistent between sections, chapters, paragraphs, and sentences.
☐ Check that tables are formatted consistently in terms of font type, size, and color and in the use of capitalization and justification.

☐ Format table and figure referrals consistently.

☐ Number all table titles consecutively and format them consistently in terms of font type, size, and color and in the use of capitalization, numbering, and punctuation.

☐ Consistently place table titles and figure captions before or after tables and figures (usually before and after, respectively).

☐ Ensure appropriate and consistent figure formatting and justification.

☐ Format figure captions consistently in terms of font type, size, and color and in the use of capitalization, numbering, and punctuation.
10. CHECK THE LISTS AND EQUATIONS.

☐ Ensure that lists are formatted consistently throughout.

☐ Appropriately and consistently format equations and their numbering and referrals throughout.
11. REFER TO ANY SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.

☐ Follow any specific instructions from the client.
☐ Use the appropriate journal guidelines or assignment details when requested.
☐ Identify and comment on any legal or social concerns.
☐ Check that the target word count has been met.
12. PROVIDE YOURSELF WITH SUBSTANTIVE FEEDBACK.

☐ Provide suggestions or word choices to strengthen arguments, research questions, and thesis statements.
☐ Identify statements or arguments that require further evidence.
☐ Point out when an author is telling, rather than showing, in their fiction.
☐ Suggest a logical flow of ideas, plot, or character development.
☐ Identify areas that require more detail or explanation for clarity or to strengthen the writing.
☐ Show where word choice, clarity, and concision can improve the strength of ideas.
☐ Point out where the client might move, remove, or add content to improve pace or tension.
☐ Identify logical fallacies and suggest improvements.
☐ Suggest ways to strengthen underdeveloped writing in fiction, academic writing, and resumes.
☐ Point out inconsistencies in character names, evidence, and plotlines.
☐ Make suggestions to improve both introductions and conclusions to strengthen academic writing.
☐ Suggest the removal of new information that is introduced in conclusions.
COFFEE BREAK

CONDUCT A SECOND PASS

☐ Review the whole document again, checking for missed and introduced errors.
☐ Pay particular attention to clarity and flow, making comments where necessary to query the author.

CONDUCT A FINAL PROOFREAD

☐ Review the whole document for the final time, checking for missed and introduced errors.
COMPLETE