

Top Tips to Effective Editing

1. Remove basic words. Highlight primary school words like 'good', 'bad', 'things' and 'sad', and replace them with more specific words.
2. Use synonyms. Highlight any words that have been repeated several times and replace them with synonyms from a hard copy thesaurus.
3. Check homonyms. Ensure you have used the correct homonym as spell check will not pick up these words. For example – there / they're / their, too / two / to, principal / principle, role / roll, wear / where / we're.
4. Check for easily confused words. These could include where / were / we're, definitely / defiantly.
5. Look for where you can showcase sentence skills using complex sentences with embedded clauses, semi colons or colons.
6. Check your sentences do not start with relative pronouns including 'that', 'which' and 'who' (unless you are writing a question).
7. Check for subject-verb agreements (is / are, singular words/ plural words).
8. Check for correct use of apostrophes and contractions. Remember, the apostrophe is never used to form plurals. Also look at your 'its' / it's, 'your' / you're'. Formal writing should not have contractions.
9. Check for incorrect words. 'Should of' = 'should have', 'could of' = 'could have'.
10. Check punctuation. Look at commas, full stops and capital letters.
11. Check for any incorrect capitals.
12. Check for any incorrect interchanging small words 'of' / 'off', 'and' / 'an' or 'a'.
13. Read it out aloud. This is important. We never find errors reading it in our own head. We need to hear the errors or missing words.
14. Ask someone else to read it out aloud to you.