



IIT Madras

BSc Degree

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Professional Writing

- i) Editing:
- ii) What is proofreading?

Editing and proofreading

- Editing and proofreading constitute the next significant steps after the first draft of a piece of writing.
- Both include steps towards the revision of the written work for its content, style, language, and format.
- Editing involves revision of logistic errors in writing.
- Proofreading rectifies the grammar and surface-level errors in writing.

Editing : What is it about?

- Content
- Overall structure
- Clarity
- Style



Editing: CONTENT

- Is the major question answered?
OR
- Is the purpose stated clearly?
- Does the supporting statements engage the purpose statement / topic sentence?

Editing: OVERALL STRUCTURE

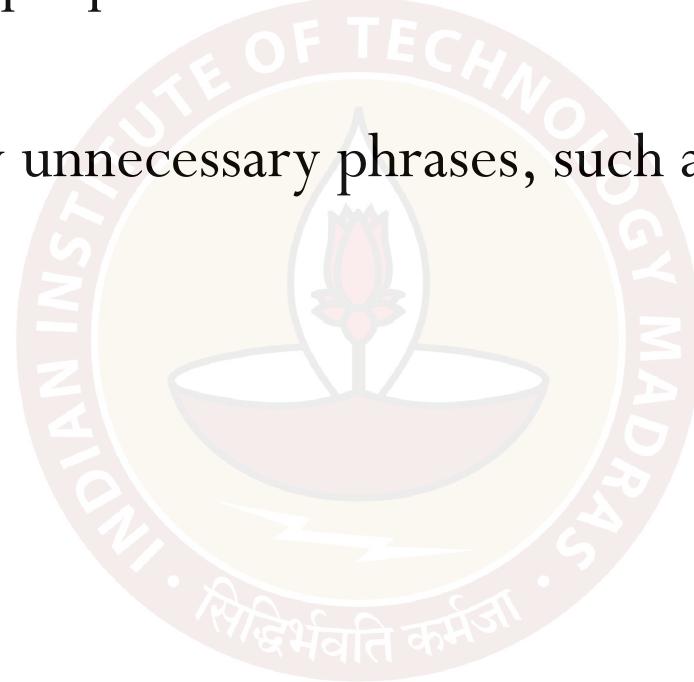
- Is there a clear introduction and conclusion? (topic sentence, concluding remarks)
- Is the order of the sentences logical?
- Are transitions between sentences and paragraphs clearly visible?

Editing: CLARITY

- Are all the terms clearly defined ?
- Are the meaning of the sentences as intended by the author?
- Does the choice of the words effectively express the ideas?
(free from vagueness, non-wordy, non-cliced, non-ornate etc.)

Editing: STYLE

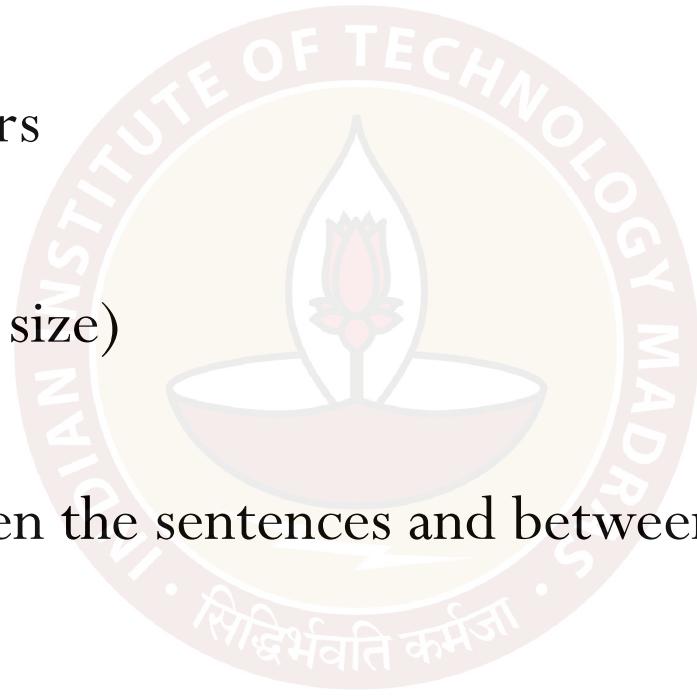
- Is the tone appropriate for the audience? (objective and impersonal)
- Are there any unnecessary phrases, such as ‘due to the fact that....’?



Proofreading techniques

- Read your work aloud.
- Make a list of errors that you commonly commit and look for them as a first step.
- Proofread for only one error at a time.
- Proofreading also checks for the format of the writing.

- It rectifies the errors in -
 - Punctuation
 - Citations
 - Page numbers
 - Headers/ footers
 - Proper names
 - Fonts (type and size)
 - Indentation
 - Spacing (between the sentences and between sections)
 - Alignment
 - Spelling
 - Grammar



Most common surface errors

1. Missing comma after introductory phrases

Eg. According to the secretary, the files should be submitted in a sealed envelope.

2. Vague pronoun references

Eg. She gets a bus first and then the bike to go to her school. It is blue in colour.

*She gets a bus first and then the bike to go to her school. **The bus** is blue in colour.*

3. Missing comma in a compound sentence

Eg. I will write the email, and I will send the report to the manager.

4. Wrong words

Eg. You should all take the advise seriously.

*You should all take the **advice** seriously.*

5. wrong or missing verb endings

*Eg. The new staff member always leaves **s** her desk unattended.*

*The new staff member decided**ed** to work promptly on the files.*

6. Comma splices or fused sentences

Eg. I am skilled at typing, I can type at a high speed.

I am skilled at typing; I can type at a high speed.

I am skilled at typing, **and** I can type at a high speed.

I am skilled at typing. I can type at a high speed.

7. missing or misplaced possessive apostrophes

Eg. Ashas office desk looks really neat. (missing apostrophe)

Asha's office desk looks really neat.

Officer's should report to the centre on time. (misplaced apostrophe)

Officers should report to the centre on time.

8. unnecessary shifts in tense

Eg. The reports are presented to the clients, they have been verified.

The reports **are** presented to the clients; they **are** verified.

9. wrong shifts in pronouns

Eg. *He was on their way back from work.*

*He was on **his** way back from work.*

10. sentence fragments

Eg. *Want to attend the meeting.*

I want to attend the meeting.

Since yesterday, the work has been postponed, waiting for it to resume.

The work has been postponed since yesterday. I am waiting for it to resume.

11. lack of agreement between subject and verb

Eg. *I likes the ambience of my office.*

*I like (**Φ**) the ambience of my office.*

12. missing commas in a series

Eg. *The reports of the previous meeting, files and writing pads must be laid on the table before the members of the board arrive here.*

The reports of the previous meeting, files, and writing pads must be laid on the table before the members of the board arrive here.

13. lack of agreement between pronouns and antecedents

Eg. *Each of the emails have been sent to their recipients.*

Each of the emails have been sent to its recipients.

14. dangling or misplaced modifiers

Eg. *I have submitted the paper clips to the department that were left over.*

*I have submitted the paper clips **that were left over** to the department.*