



# Editing and Proofreading

Study Development Worksheet

## Top Tips for Proofreading

- 1) Develop a personal proofreading checklist.
- 2) Check your document once for each item on the list using 'ctrl'+F and entering words or phrases you know you want to check.

## Consistency and common errors

References: Are they consistent, and in line with your department's required format?

Proper nouns: Are they all capitalised?

Key terms: Are they introduced appropriately the first time they appear?

Contractions: Don't Do not use them!

## Precision

### Replace phrasal verbs with more precise terms to improve precision and clarity:

Phrasal verbs such as 'made up' are vague and can mean a number of different things. Use a more precise verb such as 'invented', 'designed', or 'comprised' to more clearly convey your point.

Phrasal verbs contain two words:

- A basic verb (make, do, get, go, take, think, come)
- A preposition (in, on, up, down, under, over, away, about)

You can use 'ctrl' + F to locate common phrasal verbs. Then, ~~think about~~ consider using a thesaurus to replace them with a more precise verb.

Practice: [Kahoot quiz on replacing phrasal verbs with more precise alternatives.](#)

### Replace general link words with a word conveying the exact nature of the link:

See overleaf for some common examples, and this webpage for an idea of how to improve link words, otherwise known as 'signals'. [Guidance on choosing and using signal words from uefap.net.](#)



## Clarity

### Identify unclear writing:

- 1) We tend to read what we think we have written, so listening can be often more effective.  
Use the 'Read Aloud' option in Word to have your work read out to you.
- 2) If you know you tend to write long sentences, why not try highlighting every full stop on a page? This way you can easily see where a sentence is obviously longer than your average sentence length (1-2.5 lines).

### Diagnose and Resolve unclear writing:

- More than one idea? Split into two sentences.
- Lots of commas? Check if you need them, using a guide [like this one](#).
- Lots of pronouns (she, he, it, they...)? Check it is clear who is doing what to (or in relation to) whom.
- Lots of function words (the, when, who, why, what...)? Rephrase that section.

## Being precise

**Tip 1: Think about the nature of the link** between information and choose an appropriate alternative phrase.

### Commonly used phrases to link information:

#### Cause and effect

- 'Because of X ...'
- 'As a consequence of X, ...'
- 'The result of X is that ...'

#### Chronological

- 'Preceding X, ...'
- 'Subsequently, ...'
- 'Simultaneously, ...'

#### Problem and solution

- 'One solution could be that...'



**Tip 2: Be cautious** in expressing opinion or drawing conclusions. Try not to make general statements or claims without evidence.

**Commonly used phrases to express opinion:**

- 'In my opinion, ...'
- 'It could be said that ...'
- 'This appears to suggest that ...'
- 'One possible explanation is that ...'

**Tip 3: Be specific** about how the argument is developing. Are you adding further evidence? Are you presenting a different side of the argument?

**Commonly used phrases to develop an argument:**

- 'Therefore, ...'
- 'However, ...'
- 'Alternatively, ...'
- 'Unlike X, Y ...'
- 'Whereas X suggests 1, Y suggests 2 because...'

**Manchester phrasebank** can be helpful for improving phrasing. Identify the purpose of your sentence, and then choose the appropriate subsection of the website for some suggestions on phrasing.

**The Online Writing Lab** offers lots of useful help pages on academic style, including this [Transition Words Checklist](#).

Lastly... Remember to re-read (or listen to) the full paragraph after making any changes within it!



**Your turn! In the examples below, do the following:**

- Identify and correct any mistakes
  - Rephrase so as to improve clarity and reduce word count
1. This organisation primarily has members who are older in age, but has an open door policy to those who may have mental health issues, and want to join.

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2. The passion of the volunteers that run the organisation, keeps it a place of peacefulness and support for the members.

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3. They believe in equality and are an association that members can be assured their views and wishes will be listened to and where practicable, acted upon.

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4. The opportunity to just talk to the volunteers and peers, develops there social skills and personal growth.

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5. I can particularly see this when I volunteered on games day. Where they all participate and help each other out to get the final outcome which is the prizes.

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6. Case studies give the views and opinions of members and there positive experiences they have had.

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On the next page, you can read through two extracts that have been edited to reduce wordy and repetitive sentences.



Extract 1 – suggested cuts

The Sex Pistols were one of the most iconic, ~~important,~~ significant, ~~prominent,~~ influential British Punk bands, originating in ~~Britain,~~ in London in 1975. As Matthew Worley puts it, ~~eloquently,~~ in his book *No Future: Punk, Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976-1984*: ‘British Punk is synonymous with the Sex Pistols.’ (Worley, 2017, p.3) In this essay I will use the Sex Pistols as a case study, exploring the links between their music and the politics of 1970s Britain. ~~This will demonstrate and show how the Sex Pistols and their music were relevant to in politics in 1970s Britain.~~

**Wordy**

**Wordy/Mishandled quotation**

**Repetitive**

Extract 2 - suggested cuts:

Academic studies on the Punk movement and its cultural significance are becoming more prevalent. ~~As Matthew Worley explains in his 2017 book No Future: Punk, Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976-1984: ‘Academic work on punk and punk-related cultures appears to be broadening in scope.’~~ (Worley, 2017, p.22) To understand the significance and relevance of punk it is necessary to look at it in its social, cultural and political contexts. ~~This will help us understand its social, cultural and political relevance.~~

**Mishandled Quotation**

**Repetitive**



### Extract 1 – edited version

The Sex Pistols were one of the most iconic British Punk bands, originating in London in 1975. As Worley puts it, ‘British Punk is synonymous with the Sex Pistols’ (Worley, 2017, p.3). In this essay I will use the Sex Pistols as a case study, exploring the links between their music and the politics of 1970s Britain.

### Extract 2 – edited version

Academic studies on the Punk movement and its cultural significance are becoming more prevalent (Worley, 2017, p.22). To understand the significance of punk it is necessary to look at it in its social, cultural and political contexts.

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