W. L. Adams Center for Writing

**Editing Tips**

When you have completed your essay, read through it one more time and check for:

* **Spelling:** Remember that even the latest computer software cannot tell the difference between homophones such as *they’re*, *there*, and *their*. Only you can proofread for spelling that is correct within the context of your paper.

* **Conciseness:**

**Avoid empty phrases,** such as *there is*, *there are; it is*.

Empty phrasing: *There are many factors that influence the economy.* Concise phrasing: *Many factors influence the economy.*

**Avoid unneeded repetition or redundancy:**

Repetitive sentences*: For the meeting, citizens gathered in the town hall. The town hall is on Fourth Street.*

Concise sentence: *Citizens met in the town hall on Fourth Street.*

**Combine short, choppy sentences**:

Wordy and choppy:*The French and British collaborated on building the Channel Tunnel. The tunnel links France and Britain. The French drilled from Sangatte. The British drilled from Dover.*

Concise:*The French and British collaborated on building the Channel Tunnel between their countries, the French drilling from Sangatte and the British from Dover*.

* **Subordination:** Use subordination to indicate that some elements are less important than others for your meaning. Usually, the main idea appears in the main clause, and supporting information appears in subordinate structures. Subordination can transform a monotonous string of main clauses into a more emphatic and interesting passage.

**Excessive coordination:** *In recent years, computer prices have dropped, and production costs have dropped more slowly, and computer manufacturers have had to struggle, for their profits have been shrinking.*

**Instead, use subordination:** *Because production costs have dropped more slowly than computer prices in recent years, computer manufacturers have had to struggle with shrinking profits.*

* **Variety and Details:**

If most of your sentences contain thirty-five words or more, you probably need to break some up into shorter, simpler sentences. If most of your sentences contain fewer than ten or fifteen words, add details to them, using subordination and coordination.

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