

Editing guidelines

Points to consider:

1. Do your paragraphs have good topic sentences?
2. Do the points they make tell a clear story?
3. Does each paragraph back a claim with evidence or illustration?
4. Are there any logical gaps in the argument (missing evidence, lack of explanation, etc.)?
5. Is any material off topic or unnecessary?
6. Are the sentences efficient?

Most likely your draft will need work in all these areas

Good topic sentences?

Points to consider:

1. Do the topic sentence makes the correct claims?
2. Are they precise enough?
3. What would a critic say?
4. Do they assume any specialist knowledge?

Is the story clear?

Points to consider:

1. Do the topic sentences tell a story?
2. Can it be followed if you block out the supporting material?
3. Is there any sense of drama/surprise?
4. Do readers understand why they should care?

Does each paragraph back a claim with evidence?

Points to consider:

1. Is the evidence fully convincing? Do you need more examples?
2. Would a critic object to anything as being incorrect or misleading?
3. Do any of the paragraphs give too much/redundant evidence?

Are there logical gaps in the argument?

Points to consider:

1. Is there any missing background?
2. Do readers need specialist knowledge to follow the argument?
If so, can you fill that in with a sentence or two?
3. Does the argument acknowledge weak points or caveats?

Is any material off topic or unnecessary?

Points to consider:

1. Are you emotionally connected to some text which might not be so useful? Don't fall in love with your paragraphs!!!
2. Do any elements lead away from the main argument?

Are the sentences efficient?

Points to consider:

1. Do you have any passive sentences? Can you make them active?
2. Do you have any sentences which are too long? Can you simplify them?
3. Do you use any jargon or overly technical words?

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