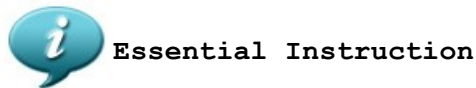Lesson Name : 14

Lesson Title : Editing a Paper

Course Name : English 2 Part 2 [Honors]

Task Id : 53174566

Course Id : 15020

 Essential Instruction

The final step in the writing process is editing the paper.

Once you have finished the final draft of your paper, you are ready to begin **editing. Editing** involves checking for errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling as well as making sure the formatting is appropriate and consistent. Editing is not the same process as **revising**. Editing is different from **revising**. Revising means making large changes to the structure or ideas of the paper. Revising happens earlier in the writing process. It is what happens after you complete a first draft. Editing, on the other hand, is the last thing you should complete before you submit your final draft for a grade.

When you begin editing your paper, you want to look for errors that contradict the **conventions of standard written English.** The conventions are rules and guidelines for formal writing. Some of these are established formally by teachers, professors, and writers. They are often listed in writing manuals such as *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr and E.B. White, *Garner's Modern American Usage* by Bryan Garner, and *On Writing Well* by William Zinnser. Other conventions are established by tradition and popular usage. A few of the most common are listed below.

Contractions

In formal writing, all words should be spelled out. This means you should use *do not* instead of *don't* and *will not* instead of *won't*. This is true for other ways we shorten words and phrases. For example, organizations, groups, and countries that are usually known by **acronyms**, that is, a word formed from the initials or other parts of several words, should be spelled out the first time you reference it in your paper and the acronym should be in parentheses after it. From then on, you can just use the acronym.

Spelling

You should always use the spell-check feature of the word processing program you use. After that, you should print out your paper and go over it with a pen in your hand. This is because spell-check programs often miss commonly confused words like *loose* (not firmly attached or fixed in place) and *lose* (to misplace or have something taken away).

Comma Splice

Another problem a lot of students have is a **comma splice**. A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined with just a comma. Two independent clauses must be joined by a **coordinating conjunction** or a semicolon. Remember the coordinating conjunctions are *and, but, or, yet, for, nor,* and *so.*

Pronoun-antecedent agreement

Another common mistake is not checking **pronoun-antecedent agreement**. This means when using a pronoun (a word used to stand for a noun such as *he, she, it, we, they, us,* and so on), check to make sure that it agrees with the **antecedent** (the word for which the pronoun stands) in both gender and number.

Run-on sentences

You also want to look for **run-on sentences**. Run-on sentences are sentences that are overly long. They usually are missing punctuation or a conjunction, or both. Sometimes, run-on sentences need to broken up into two sentences.

Sentence Fragments

The opposite problem is also common. These are **sentence fragments.** Make sure all sentences have a subject and a verb and that none of them are **dependent clauses**. Dependent clauses are clauses that depend on another part of the sentence to make sense.

Formatting

The last part of the editing process is **formatting**. This is an important part of your paper – it concerns how the paper looks in terms of things like font type and size, margin size, headings, as well as how to cite secondary sources properly. Most often, the instructor will assign a specific type of formatting. The main formatting styles are published by the Modern Language Association (MLA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the Chicago Manual of Style. Each of these styles varies. For example, MLA style requires a heading on the first page that includes the student's name, the instructor's name, the name of the class, and the date whereas APA style requires a title page instead of a heading. They also vary in terms of how to cite a secondary source both within the text of the paper when quoting or paraphrasing as well as at the end of the paper on a works cited or bibliography page. The important thing to remember when formatting a paper is to follow the method assigned and to remain consistent.

Practice A

Read the following sentences and correct any mistakes.

1. A person should see their doctor at least once a year.

_____

2. After you complete your paper, you should run spell-check print out your paper and check it by hand.

_____

3. James is afraid the airline will loose his luggage.

_____

4. The jury members put its votes on slips of paper.

_____

5. After school, Julian finished his homework. With the exception of his science project.

_____

6. School uniforms didn't become popular with school districts until the 1970s.

_____

7. The graph below shows the affects of playing music to help plant growth.

_____

8. Samara wants to go to the movies, she also wants to go to a restaurant.

_____

9. Tony finished making bracelets for his sisters cleaned his room and went to the store.

_____

10. It is important to revise your paper, you should also leave time for editing.

_____

Click **here** to see the answers.