

HOW TO EDIT YOUR OWN ESSAY

1. Ask yourself, “What mistakes do I make most often?” If you are not sure, start to keep an error log.
2. List at the top of your paper the three most frequent errors that you make.
3. Read through your paper looking ONLY for the first, most common error. Circle all of the suspected errors of that type.
4. Next, read your paper looking only for your second most common error. Then repeat step #3. (Hint: using a different color ink for each type of error will help you keep an ongoing analysis of your error patterns.)
5. Repeat the process for your third most common error.
6. If you have not already looked for verb problems, highlight or underline all the verbs in your paper.
7. Check the verbs for:
 - a) subject-verb agreement: Is the subject singular or plural? Does the verb form agree?
 - b) modals (can, should, would, must, may, etc.): Did you use the base form of the main verb after the modal?
 - c) “be” verbs: Check the tense. Have you changed tense? Why? Is the tense appropriate for the meaning? Is the verb in passive voice? If yes, should it be?
8. Check your paper one more time with a ruler or piece of paper covering everything but one line at a time.
9. Have a knowledgeable friend read over your paper to look for your problem areas.