

Editing your work

- 1** In your project plan, allow plenty of time for editing – perhaps more than for writing your first draft.
- 2** Allow time to lapse between (a) finishing writing your draft and (b) beginning to edit.
- 3** Before beginning to edit, change the format of the text. For example, change the typeface, font size, line spacing, or margin dimensions before printing. Trick your brain into seeing the writing afresh.
- 4** Edit your work developmentally. For example, what passages can you remove or reposition? Where would additional figures help? Where do you need to provide more context?
- 5** Next, check your facts. Are they (a) accurate and (b) sufficiently precise?
- 6** Then edit the text line by line. Check that each sentence is (a) clear, (b) logical, (c) sufficiently concise, and, ideally, (d) rhythmical.
- 7** Check your citations. Are they accurate? Do they conform to the citation style you've selected?
- 8** Finally, proofread the text for any remaining typographic errors – or, better, get somebody else to do this.
- 9** Consider hiring a professional copy-editor or proofreader.

This resource is published as the seventh in the Writing Protocols series.

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Resources

Jo Billingham, *Editing and revising text* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Claire Kehrwald Cook, *Line by line: how to edit your own writing* (MLA, 1985)

Scott Norton, *Developmental editing* (University of Chicago Press, 2009)

The FAQ section on The Society for Editors and Proofreaders website (www.sfep.org.uk) provides valuable guidance on how to hire and brief copy-editors and proofreaders.

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