

TRANSPARENCY MASTER 3.4

TRANSPARENCY MASTER 3.5

3d Editing the revised draft

Editing for style, clarity, and correctness may come second to more fundamental revision, but it is still very important. A carefully developed essay will fall flat with readers if you overlook awkwardness and errors.

1 Discovering what needs editing

Try these approaches to spot possible flaws in your work:

Ways to find what needs editing

- **Take a break**, even fifteen or twenty minutes, to clear your head.
- **Read the draft *slowly*, and read what you *actually see*.** Otherwise, you're likely to read what you intended to write but didn't.
- **Read as if you are encountering the draft for the first time.** Put yourself in the reader's place.
- **Have a classmate, friend, or relative read your work.** Make sure you understand and consider the reader's suggestions, even if eventually you decide not to take them.
- **Read the draft aloud or, even better, record it.** Listen for awkward rhythms, repetitive sentence patterns, and missing or clumsy transitions.
- **Learn from your own experience.** Keep a record of the problems that others have pointed out in your writing. (See p. 69 for a suggested format.) When editing, check your work against this record.

In your editing, work first for clarity and a smooth movement among sentences and then for correctness. Use the questions in the following checklist to guide your editing, referring to the page numbers in parentheses as needed.

Checklist for editing**Clarity**

How well do words and sentences convey their intended meanings? Which words and sentences are confusing? Check especially for these:

- Exact language (pp. 518–28)
- Parallelism (pp. 405–11)
- Clear modifiers (pp. 364–72)
- Clear reference of pronouns (pp. 350–56)
- Complete sentences (pp. 334–40)
- Sentences separated correctly (pp. 342–48)

Effectiveness

How well do words and sentences engage and focus readers? Where does the writing seem wordy, choppy, or dull? Check especially for these:

- Emphasis of main ideas (pp. 384–93)
- Smooth and informative transitions (pp. 85–88, 108)
- Variety in sentence length and structure (pp. 412–19)
- Appropriate language (pp. 510–17)
- Concise sentences (pp. 529–35)

Correctness

How little or how much do surface errors interfere with clarity and effectiveness? Check especially for these:

- Spelling (pp. 542–54)
- Pronoun forms, especially subjective (*he, she, they, who*) vs. objective (*him, her, them, whom*) (pp. 267–74)
- Verb forms, especially *-s* and *-ed* endings, correct forms of irregular verbs, and appropriate helping verbs (pp. 275–92)
- Verb tenses, especially consistency (pp. 292–98, 359–60)
- Agreement between subjects and verbs, especially when words come between them or the subject is *each, everyone*, or a similar word (pp. 305–12)
- Agreement between pronouns and antecedents, especially when the antecedent contains *or* or the antecedent is *each, everyone, person*, or a similar word (pp. 131–17)
- Sentence fragments (pp. 334–40)
- Commas, especially with comma splices (pp. 342–47), with *and* or *but* (432), with introductory elements (433–34), with nonessential elements (435–38), and with series (441–42)
- Apostrophes in possessives but not plural nouns (*Dave's/witches*) and in contractions but not possessive personal pronouns (*it's/its*) (pp. 461–66)

You can download this checklist from ablongman.com/littlebrown. Save the list in a file of its own, duplicate the file for each writing project, and insert appropriate answers between the questions along with notes on specific changes to make.

The second paragraph of Sara Ling's edited draft appears below. One change Ling made throughout the essay shows up here: she resolved an inconsistency in references to *you, people*, and *we*, settling on a consistent *we*. In addition, Ling corrected several sentence fragments in the middle of the paragraph.

Internet communication can be anonymous on at least two levels. The people ~~we~~you communicate with do not know ~~our~~your age., ~~W~~whether ~~we're~~you're fat or thin or neat or sloppy., ~~W~~what kind of clothes ~~we~~you wear. (Maybe you're not if

INDIVIDUALIZED CHECKLISTS

Since most students' work demonstrates patterns of repeated error, have them keep ongoing lists of their recurring editing errors and stylistic problems. Ask them to bring their lists to class for in-class revision and editing sessions and to have their revision group help them look particularly for those errors.

into the rhythm and the content of your prose. The box below gives a few tricks, including some used by professional proofreaders.

Techniques for proofreading

- **Read printed copy**, even if you will eventually submit the paper electronically. Most people proofread more accurately when reading type on paper than when reading it on a computer screen. (At the same time, don't view the printed copy as necessarily error-free just because it's clean. Clean-looking copy may still harbor errors.)
- **Read the paper aloud**. Slowly and distinctly pronounce exactly what you see.
- **Place a ruler under each line as you read it**.
- **Read "against copy."** Compare your final draft one sentence at a time against the edited draft you copied it from.
- **Ignore content**. To keep the content of your writing from distracting you while you proofread, read the essay backward, end to beginning, examining each sentence as a separate unit. Or, taking advantage of a computer, isolate each paragraph from its context by printing it on a separate page. (Of course, reassemble the paragraphs before submitting the paper.)

3f Examining a final draft

Sara Ling's final essay begins below, typed in MLA format except for page breaks. Comments in the margins point out key features of the essay's content.

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Professor Nelson
English 120A
4 November 2005

The Internet:

Fragmentation or Community?

We hear all sorts of predictions about how the Internet will enrich our individual lives and promote communication, tolerance, and thus community in our society. But are these promises realistic? In her 1995 essay "Welcome to Cyberbia," M. Kadi argues that they are not. Instead, she predicts that the Internet will lead to more fragmentation, not community, because users merely seek out others with the same biases, concerns, and needs as their own. The point is an interesting one, but Kadi fails to foresee that the unique anonymity of Internet communication could actually build diversity into community by lowering the barriers of physical appearance.

TRANSPARENCY MASTER 3.6

INDIVIDUALIZED PROOFREADING LISTS

Students often struggle to recognize common proofreading errors in their own work. Ask students to keep an ongoing list of the misspellings, typos, and minor grammatical errors that occur frequently in their own work and use that list for proofreading.

Descriptive title

Introduction

Question to be addressed

Summary of Kadi's essay

Thesis statement

Explanation of Internet's anonymity

Internet communication can be anonymous on at least two levels. The people we communicate with do not know our age, whether we're fat or thin or neat or sloppy, what kind of clothes we wear (if we're wearing clothes at all), or anything else about physical appearance. If we use invented screen names instead of our real names, readers don't even know whatever our names may reveal or suggest about us, such as gender or ethnic background.

Presentation of survey conducted to gauge use of invented screen names

Internet anonymity seems a popular option, judging by the numbers of invented user names seen in online forums. To determine the extent of invented user names as well as the reasons for them, I surveyed seventy-eight students. I asked two questions: (1) Do you ever write with an invented user name when contributing to chat rooms, newsgroups, Web logs, and so on? (2) If yes, why do you use an invented name: to protect your privacy, to avoid revealing personal information, or for some other reason? The results are shown in fig. 1. A large majority of the students (seventy-eight percent) do use invented names online. And most of them do so to protect their privacy (thirty-seven percent) or to avoid revealing personal details (thirty percent).

Explanation of survey method

Summary of survey results

Graph displaying survey results, with self-explanatory labels and caption

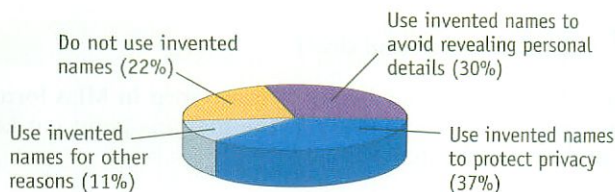


Fig. 1. Use of invented screen names among seventy-eight Internet users.

First main point: We are not prejudged by others.

Users of the Internet clearly value the anonymity it can give them. This anonymity allows users to communicate freely without being prejudged because of physical attributes. In follow-up interviews, twenty students said that they use invented names to mask personal details because they think the details might work against them in online communication. One said she is able to participate in a physics discussion list without fear of being ignored by the group's professional physicists. Another said he thinks he can contribute more freely to a political forum because no one knows he's African American. I learned the benefits of anonymity myself when I joined a snowboarding forum using my full name and received hostile responses such as "What does a girl know?" and "Why don't you go back to

Examples of first point

knitting?" I assumed I had run into a male prejudice against female snowboarders. However, another woman on the forum had no such problems when she contributed for a while before revealing her gender.

Granted, concealing or altering identities on the Internet can be a problem, as when adults pose as children to seduce or harm them. These well-publicized occurrences say much about the need to monitor children's use of the Internet and to be cautious about meeting Internet correspondents. However, they do not undermine the value of being able to make ourselves heard in situations where normally (in the real world) we would be shut out.

The Internet's anonymity has a flip side, too: just as we cannot be prejudged, so we cannot prejudice others because of their appearance. Often in face-to-face interaction, we assume we know things about people just because of the way they look. Someone with an athletic build must be unintelligent. Someone who is heavy must be uninteresting. Perhaps most significant, someone of another race must have fixed and contrary views about all kinds of issues, from family values to crime to affirmative action. Assumptions like these prevent us from discovering the interests and concerns we share with people who merely look different. But with the anonymity of the Internet, such physical barriers to understanding are irrelevant.

A world without physical bias may be an unreachable ideal. However, the more we communicate with just our minds, the more likely it is that our minds will find common ground and put less emphasis on physical characteristics. Logged on, we can begin to become more accepted and more accepting, more tolerated and more tolerant. We can begin to become a community.

Work Cited

Kadi, M. "Welcome to Cyberbia." *Utne Reader* Mar.-Apr. 1995: 57-59.

Qualification of first point

Conclusion of first point

Second main point: We cannot prejudice others.

Clarification of second point

Examples of second point

Effects of assumptions

Conclusion of second point

Conclusion, summarizing essay

Work cited in MLA style (see p. 656)

EXERCISE 3.9 Proofreading

Proofread the following passage, using any of the techniques listed on page 63 to bring errors into the foreground. There are thirteen errors in the passage: missing and misspelled words, typographical errors, and the like. If you are in doubt about any spellings, consult a dictionary. (You can do this exercise online at ablongman.com/littlebrown.)

An envirnmental group, Natural Resources Defense Council, has estimated that 5500 to 6200 children who are preschool today may contract cancer durng there lives becuase of the pesticides they

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Exercises 3.9 and 3.10 make for productive collaborative projects. Ask students to revise the sample paragraph together and then to proofread each other's work.

ANSWER: EXERCISE 3.9

An environmental group, Natural Resources Defense Council, has estimated that 5,500 to 6,200 children who are in preschool today may contract cancer during their lives because of the pesticides they consume in their food. In addition, these children will be at greater risk for kidney damage, problems with immunity, and other serious impairments. The government bases its pesticide-safety standards on adults, but children consume many more of the fruits and fruit products likely to contain pesticides.