Editing and Proofreading

- **Editing** = revising your work with a view to improving the content (such as ideas and argumentation strategies), the structure, the writing style, and the overall presentation.
- **Proofreading** = revising your work with a view to fixing minor errors, typos, and problems with punctuation, grammar, or syntax.
- As scholars, we often edit and proofread simultaneously, but it is important to know the difference between the two. It can also be useful to separate these tasks, so that you can be more effective when you revise your work.

Tips for Editing and Proofreading

1. **Distance yourself from the text.** It can be difficult to edit or proofread a paper that you have just finished writing. This is because it is still too familiar, and you may tend to skip over some errors. Put the paper aside for a few hours, days, or weeks, if you have time. Try engaging in a completely different activity in order to clear your head of what you have written. This will allow you to take a fresh look at the paper and see what is really on the page when you return.

2. **Select a medium/ appearance that allows you to edit/ proofread carefully.** Some people like to work on a computer, on a laptop, or on a tablet. Others like to use a printed copy that they can annotate as they read. Make an informed decision about what suits your work style best and use different approaches if you find that it allows you to see things from a different perspective. Altering the size, the spacing, the colour, or the font/style of the text may trick your brain into thinking that it is seeing an unfamiliar document. This can help you to get a different perspective on what you have written.

3. **Find a quiet place to work.** It is important to work in a space that is quiet and free from distractions. This allows you to concentrate better. This also means temporarily limiting your use of your mobile phone, social media, etc.

4. **Do your editing and proofreading in several stages/ blocks.** Your concentration may start to wane if you try to proofread the entire text at one time. Remember, you can read different sections at different work intervals. You can also set smaller editing/ proofreading tasks and work accordingly to those tasks only; this means prioritising carefully, and also re-reading your work multiple times (as you will be reading for one error at a time).

5. **Read your work out loud.** Certain phrases or ideas may sound very differently to how it reads as text on a page. It is important to hear how your own work sounds. Alternatively, you can ask somebody to read your work to you and listen to how it sounds.

UCD Writing Centre
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Editing and Proofreading Checklist

Content	Writing Style and Register	Grammar, Punctuation, and Syntax	Layout and Presentation
✓ Am I responding effectively to what I have been asked to do? ✓ Do I have a clear and convincing thesis statement, and/or clear and logical key findings? (If required). ✓ Are the claims/ arguments I make in the body paragraphs relevant to my central thesis/ findings? (If required). ✓ Am I explaining my points fully? ✓ Are my points supported with reference to scholarly works? (If required). ✓ Have I cited everything correctly according to my School's citation style?	✓ Am I using an appropriate register? I.e. Is my tone professional throughout the assignment, or am I sometimes using informal phrasing? ✓ Am I saying everything as clearly as I could be? E.g. Are any of my sentences unnecessarily long? Am I using complicated phrasing instead of straightforward language? ✓ Am I using an active voice (rather than a passive voice) when it is appropriate to do so? ✓ Am I rambling at any stage, or drifting from the point at hand?	✓ Have I demonstrated a clear understanding of syntax and the rules of sentence construction? ✓ Have I demonstrated that I know how to use the following correctly: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.? ✓ Have I demonstrated that I know how to use the following correctly: commas, quotation marks, hyphens, dashes, colons, semicolons, etc.? ✓ Have I identified any and all typos/ errors in the text?	✓ Am I using an appropriate structure for each section of this assignment, and for the overall work? ✓ Am I deploying effective transitions from one paragraph to the next? ✓ Is there a logical development/ progression of my points and ideas? ✓ Am I using an appropriate font, line spacing, text size, margins, and visual layout? Am I adhering to the assignment rubric in this regard?

UCD Writing Centre resources
provide general writing advice
only and students should
always follow the specific
rubric required by their School.

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Test Your Editing Abilities!

Read the body paragraph below and highlight what you think are the major problems in the text, or, list the issues in the empty box at the bottom of the page. When you are finished, turn to page 4 of this document, where the major problems are revealed. Compare the items on that list with what you highlighted.
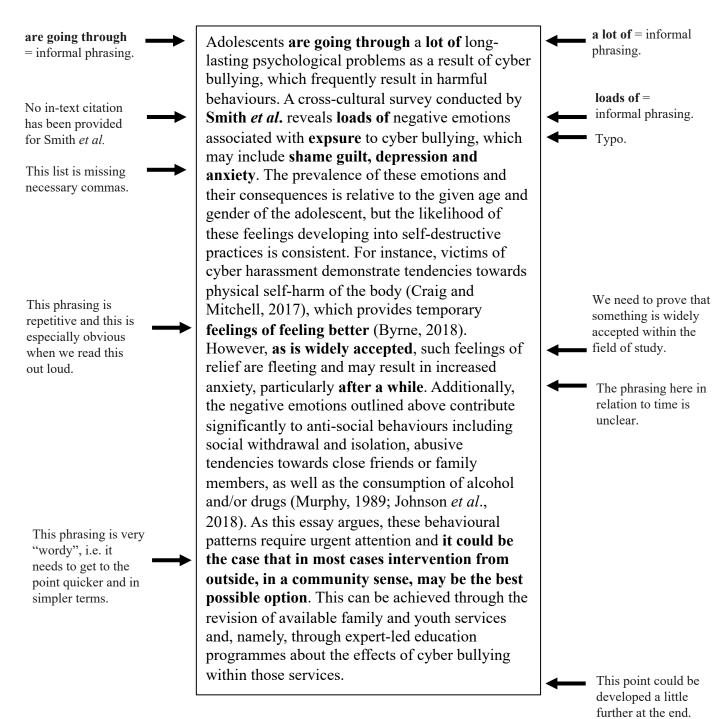
Adolescents are going through a lot of long-lasting psychological problems as a result of cyber bullying, which frequently result in harmful behaviours. A cross-cultural survey conducted by Smith *et al*. reveals loads of negative emotions associated with expsure to cyber bullying, which may include shame guilt, depression and anxiety. The prevalence of these emotions and their consequences is relative to the given age and gender of the adolescent, but the likelihood of these feelings developing into self-destructive practices is consistent. For instance, victims of cyber harassment demonstrate tendencies towards physical self-harm of the body (Craig and Mitchell, 2017), which provides temporary feelings of feeling better (Byrne, 2018). However, as is widely accepted, such feelings of relief are fleeting and may result in increased anxiety, particularly after a while. Additionally, the negative emotions outlined above contribute significantly to anti-social behaviours including social withdrawal and isolation, abusive tendencies towards close friends or family members, as well as the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs (Murphy, 1989; Johnson *et al*., 2018). As this essay argues, these behavioural patterns require urgent attention and it could be the case that in most cases intervention from outside, in a community sense, may be the best possible option. This can be achieved through the revision of available family and youth services and, namely, through expert-led education programmes about the effects of cyber bullying within those services.

Can you list the major problems in the text above?

Test Your Editing Abilities!

See the emboldened text below for errors and mistakes in the original text. You will also see a revised version of the text on page 5 of this document. Compare the text below with the revised version on the next page.

are going through = informal phrasing.

No in-text citation has been provided for Smith *et al.*

This list is missing necessary commas.

This phrasing is repetitive and this is especially obvious when we read this out loud.

This phrasing is very "wordy", i.e. it needs to get to the point quicker and in simpler terms.

a lot of = informal phrasing.

loads of = informal phrasing.

Typo.

We need to prove that something is widely accepted within the field of study.

The phrasing here in relation to time is unclear.

This point could be developed a little further at the end.

Adolescents **are going through** a **lot of** long-lasting psychological problems as a result of cyber bullying, which frequently result in harmful behaviours. A cross-cultural survey conducted by **Smith *et al.*** reveals **loads of** negative emotions associated with **expsure** to cyber bullying, which may include **shame guilt, depression and anxiety**. The prevalence of these emotions and their consequences is relative to the given age and gender of the adolescent, but the likelihood of these feelings developing into self-destructive practices is consistent. For instance, victims of cyber harassment demonstrate tendencies towards physical self-harm of the body (Craig and Mitchell, 2017), which provides temporary **feelings of feeling better** (Byrne, 2018). However, **as is widely accepted**, such feelings of relief are fleeting and may result in increased anxiety, particularly **after a while**. Additionally, the negative emotions outlined above contribute significantly to anti-social behaviours including social withdrawal and isolation, abusive tendencies towards close friends or family members, as well as the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs (Murphy, 1989; Johnson *et al.*, 2018). As this essay argues, these behavioural patterns require urgent attention and **it could be the case that in most cases intervention from outside, in a community sense, may be the best possible option**. This can be achieved through the revision of available family and youth services and, namely, through expert-led education programmes about the effects of cyber bullying within those services.

Test Your Editing Abilities!

See the emboldened text below for corrections to the original text. Compare this text with the unrevised version of the previous page (page 4) of this document.

Adolescents **experience a high number of** long-lasting psychological problems as a result of cyber bullying, which frequently result in harmful behaviours. A cross-cultural survey conducted by **Smith *et al*. (2009)** reveals **several** negative emotions associated with **exposure** to cyber bullying, which may include **shame, guilt, depression, and anxiety**. The prevalence of these emotions and their consequences is relative to the given age and gender of the adolescent, but the likelihood of these feelings developing into self-destructive practices is consistent. For instance, victims of cyber harassment demonstrate tendencies towards physical self-harm of the body (Craig and Mitchell, 2017), which provides temporary **feelings of relief** (Byrne, 2018). However, **as is widely accepted (Robinson, 1990; Hamilton, 2001; Williams, 2020)**, such feelings of relief are fleeting and may result in increased anxiety, particularly **over a sustained period of time**. Additionally, the negative emotions outlined above contribute significantly to anti-social behaviours including social withdrawal and isolation, abusive tendencies towards close friends or family members, as well as the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs (Murphy, 1989; Johnson *et al*., 2018). As this essay argues, these behavioural patterns require urgent attention **in terms of communal intervention**. This can be achieved through the revision of available family and youth services and, namely, through expert-led education programmes about the effects of cyber bullying within those services. **Such a revision would facilitate a network of support for adolescents experiencing cyber bullying, as well as institute an informed culture of prevention, guided by expert professionals, research, and practice-based strategies.**