**Writing Resource Series: EDIT**

**Keeping an Editing Log**

An editing log offers an easy way to keep track of potential errors or stylistic habits; it can also be a useful self-teaching tool. This editing checklist template is a bit more involved: it asks you not only to keep track of the issues that readers and professors are pointing out to you but also to provide yourself with resources that will help you to identify this kind of issue in the future…and to revise.

In this editing checklist, you answer five questions:

1. What is the issue?
2. What does a sentence or paragraph with this issue look like before you intervene?
3. What does your revised sentence or paragraph look like?
4. What is the rule or guideline that you rely on to make this change?
5. What is a resource you can consult next time?

The sample below offers examples of a grammatical issue and a citation issue; the following page includes a blank template you can use to create your own editing checklist.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Example of Original** | **Example of Revision** | **Guideline** | **Resource** |
| I keep forgetting to use introductory commas. | “Despite this argument for change Jorgen was unable to convince stakeholders.” | “Despite this argument for change, Jorgen (1989) was unable to convince stakeholders.” | If the sentence begins with an introductory phrase of more than three words, I need a comma before the subject. | Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/3/5/53> |
| I am not formatting my in-text citations correctly. | Jensen argues for the “need for coffee cake” (32). | Jensen (2000) argues for the “need for coffee cake” (p. 32).  Or  He argues for the “need for coffee cake” (Jensen, 2000, p. 32). | In APA, author’s last name is generally followed immediately by the date. This is true if the author’s name appears in the sentence or if it appears in the citation. | APA handbook, p. 67. |

On the next page, you’ll find a blank template you can copy to start your own editing log. Copy it into a new file and start logging!

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Example of Original** | **Example of Revision** | **Rule** | **Resource** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

If you find this five-question editing template is too involved, consider keeping a basic editing log instead.

Note issues in your writing—perhaps things that professors have pointed out to you or that you forget to think about when you’re writing.

The simplest form of this is a basic table or list that you keep in a document on your computer or tablet (or in a notebook).

When you receive a paper back with comments, look through those comments and decide which ones are likely to recur. Jot down a note in your editing log to remind you that next time, before you turn the paper in, you’ll consult your log.

The sample below offers examples of a grammatical issue and a citation issue:

|  |
| --- |
| **Issue** |
| Prof keeps circling commas in my sentences. Go through them to be sure I’m not overusing. |
| All citations need a hanging indent. Go through remove tabs and spaces at the beginning of each citation, and apply hanging indent from Format / Paragraph menu. |