DOUGLASCOLLEGE

Learning Centre

EDITING FOR LANGUAGE ERRORS

At first, you will find the self-editing process quite time-consuming, but with practice you'll be able to do it more quickly. Not only will you be able to find the errors more quickly, but also you'll make fewer errors due to the practice this strategy provides.

1. Ask yourself, "What mistakes do I make most often?" If you are not sure, take a look at papers your teachers have marked or consult your Learning Centre learning plan, your tutor or your teacher. A more systematic approach is to create an error log. Your tutor can show you how to create an error log.

2. At the top of your paper, list your 3 most common types of errors.

3. Read through your paper, looking only for the first, most common error.

   a) Circle suspected errors of that type.

   b) Consider each suspected error using rules and proofreading strategies you know.

   c) For help with decision-making steps to correct specific types of grammar errors, consult your tutor, Learning Centre handouts, a dictionary or a grammar book. Some books in the Learning Centre that suggest good steps for finding specific types of errors are Books G2.17 to G2.20.

   d) Highlight suspected errors that you remain unsure about to discuss with your tutor later.

4. Next, repeat Step 3 looking for the second type of error.

5. Repeat Step 3 again, looking for the third type of error.

6. If you have not already looked for verb problems, underline all the verbs in your paper.

7. Check your verbs for: subject-verb agreement; verb tense; passive or active; modals; use of gerunds and infinitives. Highlight any you are unsure about.

8. AFTER you have followed these steps, you may ask your tutor about the problems you have highlighted. Your tutor can also look over your paper to find problems you missed.