

How good are you at the moment?

Are you confident that you can write a piece of written work that will not have many mistakes in it?

Yes: You are confident that you can write coherently without making too many errors in your grammar or spelling, too many typing errors and without omitting important words.

No: You are not sure that you can write at length clearly and coherently, presenting an argument in a way that helps your reader to understand what you mean, and without spelling, grammar or typing errors that detract from the clarity of your work.

Do you produce structured work that answers the assessment question effectively?

Yes: You can write in a structured way that requires no checking and answers the assessment question fully without omitting vital information.

No: You are not sure that you can write in a structured way. You sometimes give too much space in your work to less important information. Sometimes, you drift from point to point without explaining clearly to your reader how those points are connected. Tutors say that you do not always answer every part of the question. You are not sure how to check the structure or content of your work.

Do you think that you have the ability to edit a piece of written work to meet a strict word limit and still answer the question?

Yes: You are fairly comfortable with your editing skills and can identify the most crucial information in your coursework and cut or rewrite the less important sections to meet a strict word limit.

No: You find it hard to identify the most important information and worry that you need a lot of words to explain your ideas and develop your argument. You envisage having problems with editing long pieces of written work to bring them down to the word count expected.



How to check your work

Student Academic Support

The main points

It is important to check your work before handing it in. Things to check for include:

- Have you missed out anything your tutor required?
- Is there any repetition?
- Have you expressed your ideas clearly?
- Are all your references in the correct format?
- Are there any spelling or grammar errors?

It is good practice to leave a bit of time between writing your work and checking it, so that you are looking at your work with a fresh eye.

Often when you write a piece of work you write from your own perspective, what may perfect sense to you may be unclear to the marker. Always check your work with this in mind.

Focusing on what you have written is sometimes difficult, things that may help include: reading your work aloud, taking a word at a time and using a sheet of paper to read one line at a time.

Student Academic Support

Find us on level 2 of the library.

Appointments available or drop by for quick questions

Mondays to Fridays, 10am to 4pm.

Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Blackboard.

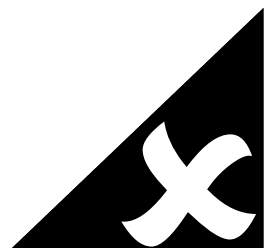
<http://www.abertay.ac.uk/studying/support/academic>

How did you do?



If you have answered mainly **yes** then you will probably find writing, editing and proof-reading your work straight forward and not an aspect of written assessment. However you should still check your work and this guide may give you some ideas on how to do this efficiently.

If your answers were all or mostly **no** then this guide will be very useful for developing good checking and proofreading skills.



Want more?

Other guides available on Blackboard from Student Academic Support that you might find useful:

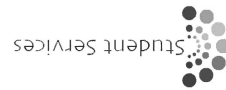
- Getting started with coursework.
- Writing essays
- Writing reports.

Online:

- **LearnHigher** is a great starting point, full of excellent resources to develop all aspects of your approach to learning - including printable timetables, coursework planners, and more.
<http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/students.htm>
- **Virginia Tech:** good tips on proofreading and reasons why we make mistakes.
<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/proofing.html>
- **Uefap.com:** a guide with exercises for students in higher education
<http://www.uefap.com/accuracy/acctram.htm>

At Abertay:

- Visit Student Services on level 2 of the library, including:
English as a foreign language:
Amanda Shaw - a.shaw@abertay.ac.uk.
- **Advice for disabled students:**
Claire Allan - c.allan@abertay.ac.uk.



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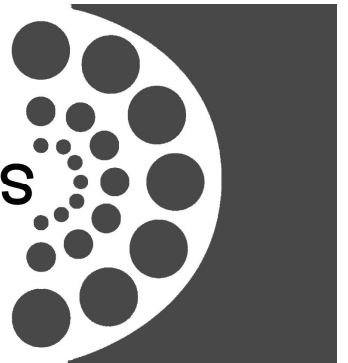
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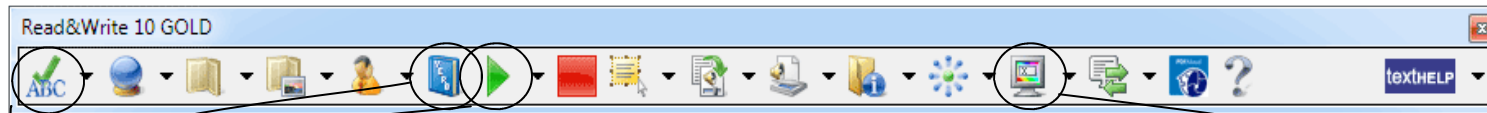


Tools to help you check your work.

Texthelp Read & Write v10

Texthelp is available on all networked university PCs and works with all the main applications, including Word, Adobe Acrobat and web browsers.

The Texthelp toolbar includes a range of functions that can help you to check your written work.



- Use this to turn your text into speech so you can hear what you have written being read back to you.
- Use this to shade everything apart from the particular section you are working on to help you to concentrate.
- Use this to check whether you are using the right form of the verb in each sentence.
- This is an enhanced spell checker that can offer a better range of suggestions. Also try to use the picture dictionary to help you visualise the correct word.

Microsoft Word

The spelling and grammar checkers in Word are not the most helpful, but can be good to help you find possible errors or poorly written sentences in your work, especially if you are in a hurry. Do not trust the computer completely - it is not perfect. If you do not trust its suggestion, do not use it. Check a dictionary or ask a friend's advice instead.

Different ways to check different features of your work.

Read word-by-word to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot spelling and grammar errors.
Read sentence-by-sentence to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about whether you are writing clearly, using the first line of each paragraph to introduce the key point that is then developed through the rest of the paragraph. • Find any repetition.
Read paragraph-by-paragraph to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about whether you have structured your work effectively, leading your reader from point to point in a helpful order. • Think about whether you have used your introduction. • Check that you have included references every time you have mentioned or made use of someone else's work and that all your references are in the correct format.
Read your entire assignment to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your work against the tutor's original instructions to be sure that you have done everything you were asked to do, not missed anything out and not included anything not strictly relevant or required. • Check that your reference list at the end includes every source you have used in the text and you have used the correct format.

How to practise.

Take a note of your most common mistakes:

This will make you more aware of them in subsequent pages and work. However it is natural for many people to have problems spotting their own mistakes, it is easier for others to spot these.

Think about the content and structure:

Sometimes it is difficult to focus on just one of these without addressing the other. Use the following questions to help as you check through your entire piece of work, paragraph by paragraph. You may need to check your work a few times, addressing different items each time.

What is the main point you make in your coursework? Note it here.	
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Do each of your paragraphs make a single clear point? Try to summarise these in 1 or 2 words here. Are these relevant to your overall main point? (Tick each of them if yes)	1.	7.
	2.	8.
	3.	9.
	4.	10.
	5.	11.
	6.	12.

Is all the information in each paragraph related, or is there extra information that should either be cut or moved to another paragraph?	Related?	Cut / Move?

Are the major points made in each paragraph related?	YES	NO
If so, do you have appropriate transitions between them?		
Are the paragraphs in a logical sequence?		
Do you need to rearrange any of them?		
Have you included enough evidence to back up each point made?		
Have you referenced your work appropriately?		
Have you summarised all your points in the conclusion without adding any more new material?		

Have you answered the question?	YES	NO
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