

How to Grade Your Own Writing

If you do not understand something in this section, ask your teacher to explain it or send us your question at [Ask the Editor](#).

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5 Things My Story Should NOT Have

Words to Define: orange words in the list

- a plot line that is the same as or very similar to the plot of a story that is not your own (**plagiarism**)
- real names of people (in fiction)
- personal information, such as telephone numbers and addresses
- **gratuitous** violence or gore
- words that might offend people

Your first draft is finished. Now what? It's time for a break. Sometimes staring at your writing for too long causes you to overlook errors. So, put your writing away for a day or two. Come back to it after the break for a fresh look.

Use Second Pair of Eyes

Have you ever gotten a paper back that had big red circles around obvious mistakes--mistakes you can't believe you didn't find yourself? When you are proofreading your work, your eyes can "auto-correct" some of your writing mistakes as you read, causing you to miss errors. After all, your mind knows what you **meant** to write. To avoid missing those mistakes, have someone else read over your work. A second pair of eyes always comes in handy when you're proofreading your draft copy.

Read Out Loud

Have a hard time catching errors in your writing? Try reading your work out loud. You might **hear** some of your mistakes. Also, ask yourself if your writing makes sense.

Quick Checklist

Ask these questions about your writing:

Does my piece have a main idea?

Is that main idea on topic for my assignment?

Do I have an audience?

Is the format appropriate for that audience?

Is there a clear structure (beginning, supporting details or specific examples)?

Do I stay on topic throughout the whole piece?

Are my ideas original?

Are my transitions logical (transitional words, phrases, sentences)?

Do I use paragraphs?

Do I use correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation?

Do I avoid slang?

Are the verb tense and point of view consistent?

Do I use complete sentences (no fragments or run-ons)?

Do I use interesting vocabulary?