

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](#).

How to grade your own writing

5 Things My Story Should NOT Have

- a stolen plot line (plagiarism)
- real names of people (in fiction)
- personal information, such as telephone numbers and addresses
- gratuitous violence or gore
- insensitive words that might offend people

Give Me a Break!

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?
- Is my purpose clear?
- Is the form (i.e., narrative) I chose appropriate for my purpose and audience?
- Does my entire piece stay on topic?
- Are my ideas original?
- Is there a logical or sequential development (entire piece and paragraphs)?
- Are the relationships between paragraphs clear?
- Are my transitions appropriate and smooth?
- Is my structure clear and strong (introduction, body, and conclusion)?
- Is my voice consistent? Tense? Person?
- Do I use varied sentence structure?
- Do I avoid slang or clichés?
- Is my language concise?
- Is my vocabulary precise?
- Do I use varied vocabulary?
- Do I use active voice?
- Do I use correct punctuation, spelling, and capitalization?
- Can superfluous details be cut?