

## Proofreading the final draft

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## Editing tips

### Tip # 1 Take a break.

Give yourself some time between writing the final draft and editing. That way you can give it a fresh look.

### Tip # 2 Look at your paper on the computer.

Your word processing software is sure to have spell check. This can be very helpful for finding misspelled words. If the word is misspelled in Microsoft Word, it will be underlined in red.

Caution: Not all underlined words are misspelled. It could be specialized vocabulary that Word does not recognize, or it could be a proper noun (person's name). Also, not all misspelled words will be caught by Microsoft Word. Maybe you typed *you* instead of *your*. Both of them are spelled correctly, so spell check doesn't identify a problem.

Caution: Avoid using grammar check. When Microsoft Word doesn't recognize or approve of grammar, it will be underlined in green. However, this can create confusion because Word will underline anything in the passive voice. This is a stylistic choice as opposed to being incorrect grammar. It is generally recommended that non-native speakers of English avoid using grammar check because it is more confusing than helpful.

### Tip # 3 Print your paper for editing.

Put your paper in front of you and cover everything but the sentence you are looking at with a cover sheet. This forces you to focus only on that particular area of the paper. Read from the beginning to the end. Then, after a break, read from the end to the beginning.

**Tip # 4 Read your paper aloud.**

By reading aloud, you will hear mistakes that you might otherwise miss by sight only. We tend to process what we expect to read, so many errors are overlooked. If you read out loud, word by word, you are more likely to catch the problem.

**Tip # 5 Check each subject and each verb for agreement.**

By now you are very well aware of 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular tense. However, this is the most common subject verb agreement error made by non-native speakers of English. It's an unconscious mistake, so you need to make an extra effort to focus on it. Look at each subject and each verb and ask yourself if they agree.

Evaluating subject-verb agreement:

Directions: Read the following sentences and look for subject-verb agreement errors. Read aloud. Stop to focus on each subject and each verb.

1. In the movie, John Nash is in his early thirties when he begin to have delusions. He hear voices and imagine characters interacting with him in a life-like way.
2. Not only is the age of the onset of disease portrayed incorrectly, but also the recovery rate of the disease are shown inaccurately.
3. Unfortunately, the movie *A Beautiful Mind* while showing John Nash's life correctly, teach the public about schizophrenia incorrectly.
4. A movie like *A Beautiful Mind*, starring Russell Crow, which portray the true-life story of John Nash should be a welcome view into the lives of these people who may be our relatives, neighbors, or friends.

**Tip # 6 Check each noun for agreement.**

A common mistake of non-native English speakers is to use a singular noun when a plural one is needed. In these cases, the student usually knows the correct way to use the noun, but uses the incorrect form inadvertently. This is an easy mistake to check for and can make a big difference in the flow of your paper.

Evaluating plural and singular noun errors:

Directions: Find the nouns that should be plural instead of singular.

1. In fact, Robert Walters, head of the Schizophrenic Research Unit at Nebraska Wesleyan University says, "From Nash's case the public can

learn that even schizophrenics have the ability to make contribution to society” (Hollings, 2002, p. 3).

2. The first myth presented in this film is that schizophrenics begin to experience symptom around age 30.
3. This could lead to parent of teenager ignoring the sign of the disease and passing irrational behavior and unexplained anger off as typical of rebellious teenager.
4. Lastly, and also related to recovery, is the myth that schizophrenic can lead successful life unaided by medical professional or the welfare system.

**Tip # 7 Check each source citation.**

Re-check each citation made in your paper. If it’s a quotation, did you use quotation marks correctly? Did you provide the source following APA style in parentheses? You may want to re-read **Using Sources** to be sure. Check each comma, period, and space. For your reference list, check each comma, period, and space. You might want to check back with **Finalizing Your Reference List** to be sure that you followed APA style exactly. Don’t forget that every citation needs to have full source information on your reference list. In addition, your reference list should not include any source that is not directly cited in the text of your research paper

Evaluating in text citations (each one has 2 mistakes):

1. In fact, Robert Walters, head of the Schizophrenic Research Unit at Nebraska Wesleyan University says "from Nash’s case the public can learn that even schizophrenics have the ability to make contributions to society” (Hollings, 2002, p. 3).
2. Walters states in *the Wesleyan News* that the movie had, “...a beautiful ending, but not a common ending (Hollings 2002, p. 4).

**Evaluating sources on a reference list (Each one has 2 errors.):**

Hollings, Sarah (2002, January 23) Nash’s story not true to life. *The Wesleyan News*, 3-5.

Patton, L. P. (2001). Schizophrenia: Onset and Development. *American Psychological Association Monitor* 27, 32-45

**Tip # 8 Compare your final paper with rough draft corrections.**

During the paper writing process, your instructor will have given you feedback on your rough drafts. It is important that you pay attention to that feedback. You must address any of the instructor's concerns and follow any suggestions. Your instructor might also provide corrections in mechanics. Those corrections can be compared with your final paper. Use all instructor feedback to help with the final editing of your research paper.

**Tip # 9 Vary your vocabulary**

When you edit your paper, you might start to notice that you use a vocabulary word again and again. Circle every instance of use. Use a thesaurus or go on-line to <http://www.m-w.com/> and use Webster's thesaurus to find synonyms of your words. A high-level academic research paper should not repeat the same words over and over.

*Evaluating vocabulary:*

Schizophrenia is a terrible disease. People who suffer from this disease often experience symptoms, such as delusions, unexplained anger, or social anxiety. These are typical symptoms of the disease.

Which words should be replaced with synonyms?

What are some possible alternatives?

## KEY

### *Evaluating subject-verb agreement errors*

1. In the movie, John Nash is in his early thirties when he begin(**s**) to have delusions. He hear(**s**) voices and imagine(**s**) characters interacting with him in a life-like way.
2. Not only is the age of the onset of disease portrayed incorrectly, but also the recovery rate of the disease (**is**) shown inaccurately.
3. Unfortunately, the movie *A Beautiful Mind* while showing John Nash's life correctly, teach(**es**) the public about schizophrenia incorrectly.
4. A movie like *A Beautiful Mind*, starring Russell Crow, which portray(**s**) the true-life story of John Nash should be a welcome view into the lives of these people who may be our relatives, neighbors, or friends.

### *Evaluating plural and singular noun errors:*

1. In fact, Robert Walters, head of the Schizophrenic Research Unit at Nebraska Wesleyan University says, "From Nash's case the public can learn that even schizophrenics have the ability to make contribution(**s**) to society" (Hollings, 2002, p. 3).
2. The first myth presented in this film is that schizophrenics begin to experience symptom(**s**) around age 30.
3. This could lead to parent(**s**) of teenager(**s**) ignoring the sign(**s**) of the disease and passing irrational behavior and unexplained anger off as typical of rebellious teenager(**s**).
4. Lastly, and also related to recovery, is the myth that schizophrenic(**s**) can lead successful li(**ves**) unaided by medical professional(**s**) or the welfare system.

### **Evaluating in text citations (each one has 2 mistakes):**

1. In fact, Robert Walters, head of the Schizophrenic Research Unit at Nebraska Wesleyan University says, "From Nash's case the public can learn that even schizophrenics have the ability to make contributions to society" (Hollings, 2002, p. 3).

It was missing a comma after *says*, and it needed a capital *F*.

2. Walters states in *the Wesleyan News* that the movie had, "...a beautiful ending, but not a common ending" (Hollings, 2002, p. 4).

It was missing the second quotation marks and the comma after *Hollings*.

**Evaluating sources on a reference list (Each one has 2 errors.):**

Hollings, **S.** (2002, January 23). Nash's story not true to life. *The Wesleyan News*, 3-5.

The first name of the author should be an initial, and the date needed a period and a space after it.

Patton, L. P. (2001). Schizophrenia: **o**nset and **d**evelopment.

*American Psychological Association Monitor* 27, 32-45.

Only the first word of the article title should be capitalized. The others should be lowercase letters. The final period was missing.

*Evaluating vocabulary:*

Schizophrenia is a terrible disease. People who suffer from this disease often experience symptoms, such as delusions, unexplained anger, or social anxiety. These are typical symptoms of the disease.

Which words should be replaced with synonyms?

**disease and symptoms**

What are some possible alternatives?

disease: illness, sickness, affection, ailment, complaint, condition, disorder, infirmity, malady, syndrome

symptoms: evidence, index, indicia, mark, sign