

Basic Self-Editing Checklist

Steps	Questions to Ask Yourself
1. Is my message de-centered and audience-focused?	<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear why my audience should care about this topic? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I included only what the audience needs to know?
2. Do I have a concrete purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/> What specific recommendation or proposal do I want to make? <input type="checkbox"/> Is exactly what I want the reader to think or to do stated clearly in the conclusion?
3. Is my message structured logically so that it is easy to understand and process?	<input type="checkbox"/> INTRO: Is the purpose stated concisely? <input type="checkbox"/> INTRO: Do I have a roadmap sentence in the introductory paragraph? <input type="checkbox"/> INTRO: Is the audience's WIIFM clear? <input type="checkbox"/> BODY: Does each paragraph have one controlling idea, which is identified in the 1 st sentence of the paragraph? <input type="checkbox"/> BODY: Does the evidence in the body of my communication track to my roadmap sentence? <input type="checkbox"/> BODY: Have I signposted this evidence with headers? If not, should I consider adding them? <input type="checkbox"/> CONCLUSION: Does my conclusion restate the overarching purpose and key points as well as the call to action?
4. Have I appealed to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos?	<input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS: Have I established trust with this audience, either through my credentials or shared goals? <input type="checkbox"/> LOGOS: Do I have enough supporting facts (evidence) for each main argument? <input type="checkbox"/> LOGOS: Have I used a variety of sources to support my message? <input type="checkbox"/> PATHOS: Have I appealed to my audience's emotions professionally? <input type="checkbox"/> PATHOS: Have I incorporated a variety of pathos elements so I connect with different people in my audience?
5. Have I addressed counter-arguments and resistance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Is my recommendation or solution open to practical, moral, financial, or logistical challenges? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there prevailing sentiments that might present a challenge to my communication? <input type="checkbox"/> Where in the communication will I address these counter-arguments?

6. Is my message concise?

- Have I eliminated extraneous information that might distract the audience from my key message?
- Are there three or more commas in a sentence and it's not even a list of items separated by commas?
- Do I have any sentences that take up more than two full lines of text? If so, would it make more sense to break them up into crisper, shorter sentences?
- Where can I cut unnecessary words (adverbs, jargon, redundancies, etc.), even if I love the content so much it hurts to part with it?

7. Are my word choices deliberate, clear, and persuasive?

- Have I used language that my audience will understand?
- Do I avoid jargon in the communication?
- Have I created the tone I intend?
- Are my word choices and examples inclusive?
- Are there any vague words I can swap out for more specific ones?
- Are there any terms that need to be defined or given more context?
- Have I helped the reader visualize my ideas with illustrative, vivid, and figurative language?

WRITING SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

1. Have I made any of the following syntax and grammar mistakes that are most urgent to correct in a business context?
 - Are my sentences active, placing the actor and action first?
 - Am I using past, present, and future tense consistently? If my tenses change, do they align with my narrative of past, present, and future?
 - Do I have sentence fragments or incomplete sentences? (Usually these are dependent clauses that are disconnected from a subject – e.g. the clause in red is a fragment: “Jane likes ice cream. **Such as chocolate.**”)
 - Have I included serial commas (the final comma before “and” in a list of three or more terms)?
 - Do I have transition words that connect ideas across sentences and paragraphs (e.g. firstly, secondly..., however, etc.)?
 - Do I revert to pronouns too much too late in a paragraph so that the reader will forget the noun to which they refer?

2. Have I proofread the document?

- Correct spelling (including names and organizations)
- No missing words
- Sentences make grammatical sense
- Appropriate formatting
- Word count was observed

SPEAKING SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

1. Timing
 - Can I deliver my presentation in the time allotted without sounding rushed?
 - Have I allowed time for Q&A, if appropriate?

2. When presenting with slides, do they enhance or distract from my spoken message?

- One main message per slide
- Titles focus the audience on the main message
- The slides contain few complete sentences
- Graphics add meaning rather than just act as an illustration
- Fonts and color schemes are consistent throughout
- Correct spelling (including names and organizations)