



## ‘Bare bones’ editing checklist

Problem	Check	Aim	Solution
<b>Overall structure illogical</b>	Look at table of contents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are chapters or sections of similar length and structure?</li> <li>Do divisions of content (into parts, chapters, etc) make sense?</li> </ul>	Logical structure, easy to follow	Restructure as necessary to provide logical flow
<b>Headings overused, underused or not appropriate</b>	Check headings; look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>too many levels (maximum of 5)</li> <li>too few headings (ie slabs of text &gt;250 words with no subheadings)</li> <li>nonparallel structure</li> <li>headings that do not reflect the content</li> </ul>	Headings used in way that helps reader to follow document	Revise headings as appropriate (eg if there are 6 or 7 heading levels, fix by restructuring the text)
<b>Too many tables or figures</b>	Scan document. Are there large numbers of tables or figures breaking up the text?	Text flowing, easy to follow	Move tables or figures to appendix, as appropriate
<b>Lack of linking text</b>	Does each chapter or section have introductory text? Is there text to link different sections, put subsections into context, etc?	Document easy to follow, with parts clearly linked	Add linking text, where appropriate
<b>Overlong sentences</b>	Highlight a series of sentences and use the ‘word count’ feature to check length	Average length of 14–18 words	Find long sentences that can be broken up (eg a semicolon becomes a full stop)
<b>Over-capitalisation</b>	Scan a couple of pages. Are there many capitals within sentences? Are they used consistently?	Consistency and minimal capitalisation	Identify words that are incorrectly capitalised; fix using ‘Find and replace’
<b>Bullet lists not making sense, overlong or not parallel</b>	Find bullet points; look at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead-in sentence (makes sense?)</li> <li>number of points (not too many?)</li> <li>first word of each point (parallel?)</li> </ul>	Each point following from lead-in sentence, 3–6 points, parallel structure	Change either lead-in sentence or bullets to make sense; break up if too many points; make parallel
<b>Overuse of passive voice</b>	Use the Word proofing setting for checking passive sentences (In Word 2010: File > Options > Proofing > Settings, Passive sentences)	Maximum of 40% passive (as in normal speech)	Activate sentences where possible
<b>Other grammatical problems</b>	Check appropriate items in Word > Proofing (as for passive voice) and look for green underlining	Fluent text that is easy to read and understand	Reword sentences as appropriate, following prompts from Word
<b>Technical inconsistency</b>	Scan a few pages with technical terms, units, chemical names, etc; are there inconsistencies?	Accuracy and consistency	Edit technical terms, units, chemical names, etc to be consistent

