Keys to Effective Editing

Checklist—Editing (Overview)

Type of edit / Task	Description
Substantive Edit	
Content	
Complete	The document says everything it needs to say.
Concise	Nothing in the document is superfluous or irrelevant.
Tone	The document speaks to its intended readers in a way that is both personable and professional.
Organization	The document clearly states a position and is arranged logically to support the position.
Copyedit	
Paragraphs	
Unified	Concentrates on the one idea that was introduced in the topic sentence.
Developed	Provides sufficient evidence and analysis for the audience and purpose.
Coherent	Presents information in a logical order that is clear to the reader.
Relevant	Information is obviously necessary to the document's thesis.
Flow	Paragraph builds on previous paragraphs and sets the stage for future ones.
Sentences	
Subjects	…within a paragraph or section are consistent.

	Nominalizations	…are avoided (nouns are turned into verbs where possible).
	Transitions	…are used frequently and are punctuated correctly.
	Word Choice	
	Pronoun	Problems have been resolved: it, there, this, that, etc.
	Jargon	Has been replaced with clear language.
	Proofread	
	Mechanics	Correct a document for errors including misspellings, typos, and errors in punctuation, including but not limited to commas, dashes, semicolons, and quotation marks. Verify abbreviations. Check for proper capitalization. Determine the presentation of numbers and other symbols.
	Fact check	Includes quotes and their sources as well as mathematical calculations.
	Cross references	Cross reference tables of contents, indices, appendices, figures, tables, charts, footnotes, endnotes, and literature cited.
	Typography	Page margins; headers and footers; subject headings and subheadings; protection against widows and orphans; charts, tables, and figures and their captions; tables of contents; indices; and appendices.