



## PROOFREADING

Producing a paper involves two major processes: **writing and editing**. During the **writing** process, you concentrate on your ideas and the organization, presentation, and development of those ideas. When you write, you pay attention to what you are saying, not so much to how you are saying it. You save the fine-tuning of your paper for the **editing** process: when you edit, you focus on grammar and mechanics, on choosing one word over another to say precisely what you want to say, on expressing an idea in one longer sentence rather than two shorter ones. Both writing and editing are important parts of the writing process, and it would not be wise to ignore one for the sake of the other. However, few experienced writers pay attention to both **at the same time**. They write first—and then they edit.

Here's a tip on how to catch pesky errors when you edit: Instead of proofreading your paper from beginning to end, start with your last sentence and work your way backwards through the paper. The advantage of this method is that your paper will not make any sense read backwards; you will not get caught up in the flow of your ideas, which makes you look at each sentence individually. If a sentence does not make any sense read by itself in this manner, there's something wrong with it! Revise it until it does—or consult one of the tutors in the writing center to help you with it.