Creative Approaches To Editing

Modified and copied from A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One by Ben Rafoth and with the advice of Albright Writing Center tutors.

1. Take a break before proofreading/editing.
2. Print a proofreading draft with extra space in margins, double-spaced text, and larger font size. Edit by computer and on a paper copy.
3. Create a personalized editing checklist based on your previous writing.
4. Read paper more than once, looking for a different problem each time.
5. Read or whisper aloud to yourself or someone else while you make changes.
6. Have someone read aloud while you follow along; stop and make changes to parts that sound confusing or unnatural.
7. Physically cover up all but the line you’re reading.
8. Read backward, word by word (to check spelling).
9. Read backward, sentence by sentence (so the brain can focus on grammar of individual sentences instead of getting distracted by the forward flow of ideas).
10. Point at words as you read them aloud to yourself.
11. Circle all verbs—then check for tense, agreement, voice, mood and so on.
12. Circle prepositions (words that show relationship like “in,” “on,” “of,” “with,” etc.) For sentences that seem wordy or difficult to read, reword/restructure sentence so that your sentence uses fewer prepositions.
13. Circle commas, then check to see if they are used correctly.
14. Use “find” function to search for likely misspellings or wrong words (ex: their/there; are/our)
15. Check for consistency across the paper in verb tense (ex. present vs. past) and pronoun usage (ex. “I…” vs. “you…”)
16. Use handbook/google to look up grammatical topics and then apply to your paper.