

How to Proofread

from the Business Communication Center



Proofreading Factoids:

- Proofreading requires concentration!
- Proofreading is slower than other types of reading, and requires more than one reading.
- Proofreading checks for sense, clarity and correctness.
- When someone has typed for you, do not submit, sign, or okay the document until you proofread it yourself. Don't rely on another's skill or accuracy when a document is your responsibility.

Proofreading on the Fly

1. Run spell check and grammar check BEFORE proofreading.
2. Put important documents aside for an hour or more before you proofread them.
3. Proofread from the screen before printing.
4. Proofread the body of the text first, and then return to headers, captions, tables and other aspects of the document.
5. Read each sentence slowly for sense, correctness, and clarity.
6. Read the document backwards, from the last word to the first.
7. Proofread again from printed pages.
8. Read the final draft aloud, look for errors as well as listen for them.
9. Let someone else look over your document.

Proofread for

Capitalization
Format
Grammar
Meaning
Number Accuracy
Number Usage
Punctuation
Sentence Construction
Spelling
Typographical Errors
Word Choice
Word Division

Not so Tips for Proofreading

- Avoid proofreading under fluorescent lights; the slower flicker rate of bulbs could lead to missing small details.
- Listen to music or chew gum. Create a good workspace (comfortable, well lit, and uncluttered).
- Keep a list of common mistakes you make, so you can specifically look for them.
- Review grammar rules, style issues, and formatting and layout conventions for at least a half an hour a month.
- On screen: Highlight sections to proofread and edit. Work in small segments and reduce reading too quickly to detect errors.
- Use "Track Changes" if using Microsoft Word or similar software.
- On paper: Use a pointer (or closed pen) to mentally "underline" or use a ruler to focus on one line at a time.
- Check language for inappropriate or sexist usage.
- Double check names, dates, boilerplate items (letterhead), numbers, little words, unusual fonts and small text.
- Count items in lists, check tables horizontally and vertically.
- Take breaks proofreading long documents. Give your eyes and mind a chance to rest!

"The difference between the almost-right word and the right word is really a large matter. It's the difference between the lightning-bug and the lightning." – Mark Twain









Continued on reverse...

Proofreader Marks













These proofreader marks are standard US/UK marks. Although proofreader marks are not used as often now because of desktop publishing, if you write frequently or review other's writing, they can be helpful. Using a pen that differs in color from the printed text makes it easier to see corrections!

Delete and Insert






-  Delete, take it out
-  Delete and close up
-  Delete extra space
-  Insert space
-  Insert text
-  Correct letter

Punctuation marks











(use caret to show point of insertion)

-  Insert period [^]
-  Insert comma [^]
-  Insert colon [^]
-  Insert semicolon [^]
-  Insert quotation marks [^]
-  Insert single quotes [^]
-  Insert apostrophe [^]
-  Insert question mark [^]
-  Insert exclamation point [^]
-  Insert hyphen
-  Insert parentheses
-  Insert dash


















Other

-  Spell out abbrev.
-  Check spelling
-  Let it stand
-  OK "with corrections"
-  or "as corrected"

Style of Type

-  Wrong font
-  Make lower Case
-  Set in LOWER CASE
-  capital letter
-  SET IN capitals
-  Set in Lower case with Initial Caps
-  Set in Roman type
-  Set in italic type
-  Set in lightface type
-  Set in boldface type

Paragraph and Position

-  Move to right 
-  Move to left 
-  Center 
-  Move up
-  Move down
-  Flush left
-  Flush right
-  Align horizontally
-  Align vertically
-  Break, start new line
-  New paragraph
-  No new paragraph run on
-  No paragraph indentation
-  Transpose letters, words, or

Information compiled from: Lynn Quitman Troyka's Quick Access (1998); Leila R. Smith's english for careers (2002); LR Communication Systems, Inc Proofreading and Editing Tips http://www.lrcom.com/tips/proofreading_editing.htm; Daily Writing Tips <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/8-proofreading-tips-and-techniques/>;