

PROOFREADING

The very last step in writing an essay is **PROOFREADING** and **CORRECTING ERRORS**. Different writers have different ways to proofread, but most agree that one way that really works is to read your essay **OUT LOUD**, either to yourself or into a tape recorder. Often times, when we read aloud, we "hear" things that we don't always "see." So try reading out loud.

After you have corrected the errors you could hear, read your essay through several times, each time checking for something else. You may need to reread your essay **FOUR** or **FIVE** times, looking carefully at something different each time. It can help to read from the end of the paper to the beginning, so you can isolate each sentence from its context.

Get to know your own **PATTERNS OF ERROR**. Here are some which may apply to your writing:

- Read your essay and look at each sentence individually. Are all of your sentences really sentences? Do you have any **run-together sentences or fragments**?
- Read your essay again, this time when you read look at your **verb tenses**. Are all of your tenses correct and consistent? Do all past regular verbs have -ed endings?
- Now look at your **subjects and your verbs and make sure they agree**. Remember that third person singular subjects need an **-s** on the verb. Remember that the word people is plural and phrases like one of the students needs a singular verb (because one is singular).
- Read your essay again, and this time look at your **pronouns**. Are you consistent in your pronoun use? Do you ever use you when you mean he, she, I, they, or one?
- Now for the fine tuning; read your essay again, correcting for **spelling errors, punctuation, and capitalization**.

After you are all done, read your essay **ONE LAST TIME** just to make sure you have caught all of the problems. Now congratulate yourself.