

Tips for Proofreading

1. Don't proofread until you're completely finished with the actual writing and editing.

If you make major changes while proofreading, even if it's just within sentences, you're still in an artistic, creative mode, not a scholastic mode.

2. Make sure you have no distractions or potential interruptions.

Shut down email and social media, hide the cell phone, shut off the TV, radio, or music, and close the door. Print your document if you need to get away from the computer altogether.

3. Forget the content or story.

Analyze sentence by sentence; don't read in your usual way. Focus on spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Work backwards, if that helps, or say the words and sentences out loud. Concentrate.

4. Use several sittings and readings for different types of errors.

Try checking spelling and end punctuation in one sitting, grammar and internal punctuation on another, and links or format on yet another sitting. Develop a system that works for you

5. Take notes.

If you notice a format issue while checking spelling or if you need to look something up, make a quick note and come back to it so you don't lose your focus.



6. If you do make a last-minute change to a few words, be sure to check the entire sentence or even paragraph over again.

Many errors are the result of changes made without adjusting related words and issues.



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7. Check facts, dates, quotes, tables, references, text boxes, and anything repetitive or outside of the main text separately.

Focus on one element or several related aspects of your writing at a time.

8. Monitor yourself.

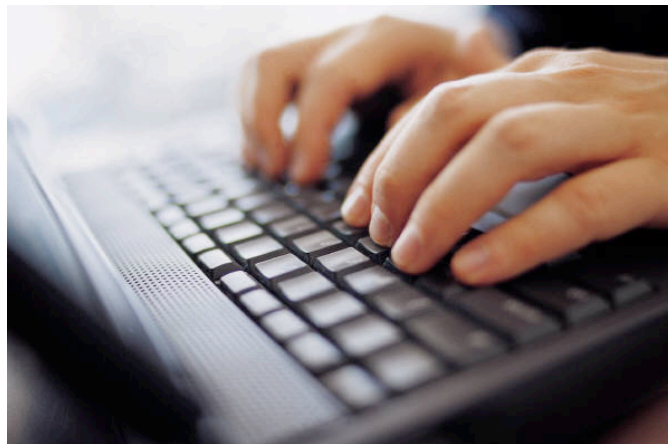
If you find yourself drifting off and thinking about something else, go back over that section again. Try slapping your hand or tapping a foot in a rhythm as you examine each word and sentence out loud. Or even give yourself a short break; get some air or coffee before coming back to your proofreading.

9. Get familiar with your frequent mistakes.

Even the most experienced writer mixes up their, they're, and there or too, two, and to. When I'm tired or writing fast, I right what I here in my mind and just get careless. Not a big deal. That's what proofreading is for. You caught those errors, didn't you?

10. Check format last.

Every document has format, even an email, whether it's paragraph spacing, text wrap, indentations, spaces above and below a bullet list or between subheadings and text, and so on. Leave this for the end because content may shift during handling.



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References - The following works were used during the creation of this handout: [*Get Your Eagle Eye on 10 Tips for Proofreading Your Own Work*](#)



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