

PROOFREADING

Proofreading is paying attention at the formatting and grammar levels to ensure that readers can easily read and understand the discipline/genre of the work. At this level, words are looked at for typos and misspellings in sentences, quotes, bibliography entries, bullet points, captions, and page design. Proofreading gives credibility to the writer by polishing the work to its final draft so that it is formatted correctly and contains no mistakes.

Proofreading is the third level of altering a work: 1) Revising, 2) Editing, 3) Proofreading. See also our handouts on Revising and Editing.

PROOFREADING STRATEGIES

Being the last step of the writing process, proofreading can sometimes be overlooked when a writer wants to finalize their work. Here are proofreading strategies to help finalize your work:

- Read the paper aloud or put it in a program to have it read aloud to you. You might hear errors that you missed when reading silently. If you get tongue-tied, an error probably exists there
- Pay attention to errors that you make repeatedly, such as typos, misspellings, punctuation, and citations. Once you learn the how to correct it one time, you will more easily be able to correct it every time
- When rereading your paper, focus on one concern each time you read so you don't get overwhelmed and miss things
- Watch for the recommendations in Microsoft Word or other text editors regarding spelling and grammar. Their suggestions are not always correct, however, so pay close attention
- Double check the style guide (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.) to see how the paper should be formatted and how to set up the citations
- Check if the paper requires a title page, page numbers, headers, and any other formatting elements

QUESTION CHECKLIST

To help you focus at the proofreading level, it may be helpful to ask yourself these questions:

- Have I run spell-check through an app or program?
- Have I reviewed each quotation and citation to check for accurate punctuation and formatting?
- Do the pages of my paper look correct? For example, should your text be double-spaced, is the font size appropriate, or are the margins too wide?
- Is every source cited in the text of the paper also cited in the references page? Is every source cited in the references page also cited in the text?

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- Have I consulted my discipline's style guide or Writing Center handouts for formatting help?