



How to Proofread

Step 1: Arm Yourself

- Recognize your grammar, spelling, and formatting weaknesses. If there is a mistake that you are often making or an issue that you are not comfortable with (e.g. essay formats), then recognize it!
- Find information on your weaknesses, and learn or relearn grammar and spelling rules. Learn how to correct and avoid your mistakes.
- Practice **preventative problem-solving**. When writing, be aware of your weaknesses and try to avoid them *before they happen*. Remember the English proverb “A stitch in time saves nine.” Writing things correctly the first time will save you time during the editing process. In addition, you will become a more confident writer.

Step 2: The Proofreading Process

- Before handing your work to someone else for a once-over, check it yourself. While other people are more likely to find mistakes that will appear “invisible” to you, they may not be as committed as yourself in thoroughly proofreading your document. After you proofread your own document, have a thorough and knowledgeable person go through your work.

When Proofreading:

- **Slow Down.** Focus on reading one word at a time. When we read, we automatically skip over certain words or word groups. To avoid this, read slowly throughout the entire document, beginning to end. You might even want to try reading your document from the end to the beginning. This technique forces you to concentrate on every word.
- **Read the document aloud.** This allows for your hearing to proofread along with your sight. Your ears are guaranteed to catch things that your eyes miss.
- **Watch out for your weaknesses.**
- **Look for misspelling and make sure that each word is the right word.** Words such as *there* and *their* are often confused. Commonly, students will accidentally choose the wrong word when using the computer’s spellchecker (*i.e. core instead of care*).
- **Look for improper grammar (*i.e. sentence structure*).**
- **Make sure that your writing format is correct.** For example, *essays have an introduction with a thesis, a body, and a conclusion*.