
Proofreading Tips

Proofreading is the careful reading of a text for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Proofreading is the last stage of the writing process, occurring after revision.

Why bother proofreading? Mistakes in an essay distract the reader from the content of the essay and make an unprofessional impression on the reader. Always try to make reading your work a pleasure rather than a chore. Don't make the reader do all the work! *Remember that Academic Services does not proofread essays; instead, tutors will focus on the revision process.*

1. **Do not rely on the spelling/grammar checker to locate your errors.** These programs have limited dictionaries and often do not highlight homonyms, compound words, or misused words. Consider the following spell-checked sentence: No more Miss Steaks. (It should read "No more mistakes.")
2. **Proofread in a quiet place without distractions.**
3. **For out-of-class essays, do not try to proofread immediately after writing or revising an essay.** Write the draft ahead of time, and set it aside for a few hours or a day. You will identify more errors if you give yourself time to "forget" what you wrote.
4. **Proofread slowly.** If you hurry, you will end up reading groups of words rather than individual ones, and you will miss errors.
5. **Try to focus on the errors you most commonly make.** For major errors such as fragments or run-on sentences, proofread the essay for only one type of error at a time.
6. **Change the look of the essay to make it easier to see mistakes.** Some people prefer to proofread on the computer while others find they are better at spotting mistakes on the written page. Changing the font size, spacing, or color of the print also can help you see errors.
7. **Read your essay out loud.** Your ears will hear errors that your eyes miss. This will also force you to consider each word and slow down the reading process for better results. Again, be sure to proofread slowly.
8. **Always proofread your essay both before having a tutoring session and before turning in the assignment.**