



WRITING CENTER PROOFREADING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to guide you through the proofreading process.*

*This checklist is not comprehensive and should be used as a guide in addition to specific assignment or discipline guidelines.

Before you start: Tips for successful proofreading

- ☐ Take a break: Set aside your paper for a while before trying to proofread (10 min, a day, a week) but make sure to leave yourself plenty of time to revise your paper after proofreading.
- ☐ Work from a paper copy: Print your paper out and work from that instead of your computer.
- ☐ Read your paper aloud: Read aloud to the tutor while they follow along on their own paper copy.
- ☐ Move slowly: Read each sentence individually and carefully. Use blank sheets of paper to cover the rest of the paper and read one line at a time.
- ☐ Read your paper in reverse: Read one sentence at a time, starting at the end of the paper.
- ☐ Break it up: For longer papers, work in pieces. Read a couple pages, take a break, read a couple more pages, take a break, etc.
- ☐ Have something to write with: As you work, make notes directly on your paper as necessary.
- ☐ Make a list: Identify the things that you know might need work. Refer to common mistakes made in previous papers.
- ☐ Utilize technology but don't rely on it completely: Make use of features like grammar/spell check and the "Find" feature but remember that they are not always correct.

Content

- ☐ Is your thesis clearly stated? Can someone else identify it with ease?
- ☐ Does your introduction explain what the paper will cover and provide a thesis?
- ☐ Are your topic sentences clear? Do your paragraphs stay focused on the topic sentences or do they digress? Have you explained the evidence/made it relevant to your claim/topic sentence?
- ☐ Are your quotations relevant and useful or are they just filler? Are they from credible sources? Have you explained their connection to your claims?
- ☐ Are your arguments/thoughts easy to follow? Is there a logical progression of information?
- ☐ Do you adequately use transitions? Do you move smoothly from one paragraph to the next?
- ☐ Do you adequately conclude your paper? Do you sum up your main points without repeating yourself? Do you make any final, relevant observations?
- ☐ Have you fulfilled all the parts of the assignment? (Minimum page/word count, # of sources, etc.)

Language

- ☐ Is the tone appropriate for the audience/discipline? Is it consistent?
- ☐ Are your word choices appropriate for your audience/discipline? Do you utilize appropriate terminology?

- ☐ Do you understand the meaning of the words you are using? Are they being used correctly?
- ☐ Have you avoided wordy expressions, euphemisms, clichés, pretentious language, and slang?

Grammar

- ☐ Are sentences properly structured? Are they fragmented or fused?
- ☐ Are modifiers used correctly? Are they placed correctly?
- ☐ Do subjects and verbs agree?
- ☐ Are all verbs used correctly? Are the tenses correct and consistent?
- ☐ Do all nouns, verbs, and pronouns agree?
- ☐ Are adverbs and adjectives used correctly? Are they used excessively?
- ☐ Do you vary your sentences in length and structure? Is the rhythm fluid or monotonous?
- ☐ Are your sentences properly organized? Do they flow logically?
- ☐ Have you misused any common homonyms? (There, their, they're, to, too, two, etc.)
- ☐ Have you left out or repeated words?
- ☐ Are there redundancies in your sentence? (E.g. In the end, he decided not to go to the party in the end. Phrases like added bonus, revert back, software programs, etc.)
- ☐ Are articles used correctly? A, an, the, etc.

Spelling / Punctuation

- ☐ Is everything spelled correctly? Are things properly capitalized?
- ☐ Have you checked for words that you have mistyped as other words? (From: Form, There: Three) These will not show up on spellcheck.
- ☐ If applicable, are necessary accents present and properly placed?
- ☐ Does each sentence end with the proper punctuation?
- ☐ Are commas used correctly? Are comma splices avoided? (Comma Splice: using a comma instead of a period to separate two separate sentences)
- ☐ Are colons, semi-colons, dashes, and hyphens used correctly?
- ☐ Are apostrophes used to denote possession, mark contractions, or to show missing numbers correctly? (Don't you like the mayor's tie? He got it in '72.) Beware exceptions to this rule. (Its = possession; It's = It is.)
- ☐ Are quotation marks used correctly? Does every opening quotation mark have a closing mark? Does the punctuation work correctly within the quotations? (Period, comma, question mark, etc. placement)

Quotations / Citations

- ☐ Is the paper formatted according to the required citation style? (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) If the style is your choice, are you consistently using the same style throughout the paper?
- ☐ Do all quotations have the appropriate in-text citation? (Parenthetical, footnote, etc.)
- ☐ Do the in-text citations adhere to the proper citation style?
- ☐ Are quotes properly integrated into sentences? Are they grammatically correct? Should they be in quotations marks or in a block quote?
- ☐ Is your Works Cited page or Bibliography properly formatted per citation style guidelines? Are your sources in the right order?
- ☐ Are all of the sources cited in the paper included in the Works Cited/Bibliography? Are all sources in the Works Cited/Bibliography used in the paper?