



Proofreading

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1. Whenever possible, do not proofread your paper directly after you have written it. You will not have the necessary perspective to find errors or stylistic weaknesses. Take an hour, an afternoon, or an entire day away from your essay to regain perspective.
 2. If you use a word processing program that includes this feature, run spell check and grammar check. Pay attention to the corrections your program suggests, so that you avoid embarrassing errors/substitutions.
 3. Print your paper. We often see errors in hard copy that we do not notice on screen.
 4. When proofreading for grace and clarity, read your paper out loud. Sentences that sound “off” or that make you stumble in your reading should be reworded.
 5. When proofreading for grammar and stylistic conventions, read your paper backwards, meaning start with the last sentence and work your way up. This will prevent you from getting caught up in the flow of ideas and allow you to focus on the sentences as sentences.
 6. Look out for common errors, including:
 - a. Typos, including dropped or repeated words
 - b. Comma splices
 - c. Titles that have not been italicized or placed in “quotation marks”
 - d. Titles that have been italicized when they should be in “quotation marks,” or titles that have been placed in “quotation marks” when they should be italicized
 - e. Mistakes with apostrophes. Did you include an apostrophe when you meant to write the plural form of a noun?
 (“Annie gets a lot of help from her friend’s”)
 - f. Run-on sentences
 - g. The its/it’s error
 - h. Homonyms (did you type “accept” when you meant “except”)?
 - i. Misspelled names/mistaken dates. Check the texts you’re quoting and make sure author names have been reproduced correctly and that dates have been accurately stated.
 - j. Missing citations
 - k. Any other errors that have been consistently marked in previous papers (Read your margin notes! These are meant to help you write stronger essays in the future.)
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