

Proofreading

Proofreading is the **final step of the writing process** and is **also known as polishing!** Proofreading refers to the **careful reading process before final submission**. Proofreading includes reading for **spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other minor errors**.



What Do I Look For In Proofreading?

Proofreading is less about larger content-related issues and more about minor errors on the word and sentence level. While these errors may seem insignificant, they can distinguish a good paper from a great paper! Here are some mistakes to keep an eye out for:

- **Homophones:** Words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different definitions (Ex: there, their, they're). See more examples on page 2 of our [word choice](#) handout.
- **Spelling:** Ensure spelling of names, places, and ideas is correct. Microsoft Word and Google Docs have built-in spelling check software.
- **Punctuation:** Verify commas, semicolons, colons, em/en dashes, hyphens, and apostrophes are used correctly. See our [hyphens and dashes handout](#) to learn more.
- **Technical and Formatting Elements:** Ensure the document adheres to the citation style required for the piece. Check heading formatting, page numbers, title/references page, etc.

Strategies for Proofreading

Print out your paper. Oftentimes, when writers write their papers in an online document, they can miss errors that can be more easily detectable when reading line by line on paper.

Take time away from the writing. Whether this be an hour, a day, or a week, you will be more likely to catch any mistakes after you walk away from the piece for some time and can return with fresh eyes.

Read aloud. When writers read their work out loud, they are more likely to catch where phrases or sentences might be clunky or confusing.

Change the look of your document. Try altering the font, text color, or text size of your paper. This can make you think you are reading an unfamiliar document and become more vigilant to possible mistakes.

