

Proofreading and Editing:

How to proofread and edit your way to a perfect paper

What is Proofreading?

- The final step in the revision process
- The focus is on surface errors:
 - You are looking for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation

What is Editing?

- This is done at the end of your first and/or second draft
- The focus is on content:
 - You are looking for content, flow, overall structure, clarity, style, and citations

Why are Proofreading and Editing Important?

- They help improve grammatical accuracy
- They help correct spelling errors
- They help improve word choice
- They help correct punctuation errors
- They improve “readability”
- They help improve the flow
- They help increase your GRADE!

Using a Checklist

- When proofreading/editing, look for patterns
- Write your common errors down on your check list
- Use this check list when rereading your papers

Common Surface Errors

- Verb tense
- Subject-Verb agreement
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Word Choice
- Sentence level errors
 - I.E. Run-ons, fragments, word order (SVO)

Commonly Confused Words

- **Their** (possessive-belongs to them)
 - Ex. I think that is their car.
- **There** (location)
 - Ex. Park your car there.
- **They're** (contraction-they are)
 - They're going to be late.

Commonly Confused Words

- **Its** (possessive-belongs to it)
 - The dog is looking for its toy.
- **It's** (contraction-it is)
 - It's cold outside today.

Commonly Confused Words

- **Than** (used for only comparisons)
 - He is bigger than his sister
- **Then** (refers to a time in the past or to identify the order of something)
 - Back then life was easier
 - First he kissed her hand (and) then he kissed her cheek
 - "and" is optional

Commonly Confused Words

- **To** (preposition, also pairs with a verb to form the infinitive form)
 - They are going **to** the store this afternoon.
- **Too** (synonym for also, can mean a lot or extremely)
 - I want to go **too**.
 - It's **too** noisy in the cafeteria.
- **Two** (the number 2)
 - I have **two** pets.

Commonly Confused Words

- Spell-check and grammar-check can't always catch these word errors.
- These words are called "homonyms"
 - Even though the word is spelled correctly they may be used in the wrong context
 - When in doubt, check the dictionary

Proofreading/Editing Tips

- Read your paper a day after you have finished writing it
 - This allows you to see errors you normally would not see
 - This also reduces procrastination because it requires you to finish writing the paper well ahead of the deadline

Proofreading/Editing Tips

- To catch grammatical and sentence errors, read your paper backwards (from bottom to top)
 - This also helps catch mistakes you may not see when reading from top to bottom
 - You are less likely to mentally correct or compensate for errors
 - This can be done instead of or in addition to reading your paper a day after it has been written

Proofreading/Editing Tips

- Feel free to have a tutor or someone else look over your paper
 - They may see things that you did not see
 - They can offer objective advice
 - Sometimes we are too attached to our own writing to make changes
 - They can tell you if there are mistakes in your argument or if your ideas do not flow

Utilizing a Tutor and Tutoring Services

- Feel free to take your paper to a tutor
 - There are many tutoring centers available on campus
 - The Writing Center can help with writing assignments for ANY class
 - Tutoring centers on campus are FREE

Utilizing a Tutor and Tutoring Services

- Tutors can:
 - Offer suggestions about the ideas in your paper
 - Help you to find grammatical or sentence errors in your paper
 - Give you recommendations on how to better organize your paper and improve its flow
 - Catch errors that you may not see

Utilizing a Tutor and Tutoring Services

- Tutors can not:
 - Edit your paper for you
 - Correct grammar or sentence problems for you
 - Add their own words or ideas to your essay
 - Force you to change anything
 - Remember, tutors only offer recommendations and suggestions

Proofreading and Editing

- The best way to insure that your paper is properly edited and proofread is:
 - To utilize both your own skills and the skills of a tutor, friend, or family member
 - It never hurts to have more than one person look over your paper
 - Each person may find something in your essay that you did not see
