

Writing Centre

Proofreading Tips

Proofreading is the final step in the writing process. This is when you correct errors in grammar, formatting, spelling, and punctuation.

Preparing to Proofread

Before you proofread, make sure that:

- \checkmark The assignment is complete.
- \checkmark You have rested since the last revision.

Remember, larger issues (e.g., introduction, thesis, and conclusion) should already be resolved when you proofread.

- **Read Slowly.** Don't rush through the draft. Try using a metronome to read at a steady pace. This will make you slow down and notice any errors.
- **Read Aloud.** Many errors are easier to hear than they are to see. Use your ears to identify mistakes.
- **Pause for Punctuation.** Pause for a second when you see a punctuation mark like a comma, period, semicolon, or hyphen. This will help you "hear" if the pause belongs there.
- Limit Concerns. Don't try to check for all possible errors at once! Instead, read the draft several times, and check for a different kind of error each time. For instance, check the paper for comma errors, and then read it again for missing semicolons.
- Use a Resource. The Writing Centre has many resources to help you find a specific kind of error. For instance, if checking for article errors, use our *Articles* resource!
- **Take Breaks**. Just like any aspect of writing, we proofread more effectively after a rest. Eat a snack, drink some water, or go for a walk to give your brain a boost.
- Change the Appearance. When we get used to seeing an error, it stops looking like an error. Changing the text size or font, adding a background color, zooming your screen in or out, or printing your draft can help you see your writing with fresh eyes.
- Use a spell-checking program. Free software such as Grammarly can help you remove basic grammar and spelling errors. However, be sure to review each suggestion rather than accepting everything these programs make mistakes, too!
- Ask someone else to read it. Ask a friend, roommate, or study buddy to read the paper aloud. Listen for places where they stumble or slow down these sentences may need to be revised.