

Proofreading tips:



INKYGIRL.COM: Daily Diversions For Writers
Copyright©2008 Debbie Ridpath Ohi

1. Always proofread from a hard copy. Do not try to proofread from the computer screen – you will miss lots of mistakes this way.
 2. When you spot an error, make the change you need to make clear. Don't simply underline or circle the error, make sure that you can follow: where the changes need to go; what they are. If necessary, write them out again on another piece of paper with clear instructions as to the page number, paragraph etc.
 3. Where possible do not proofread your own work. You know what you mean to say, so you are more likely to see what it should say, and so miss mistakes. If possible ask more than one person to read your work – we all have our own strengths. If this is not possible, make sure that you leave several days between writing and proofreading. This way you will avoid some of the 'seeing what you want to see' problems.
 - ❖ Do remember that the University is unable to provide proof-reading, although services such as Academic Support can offer advice to help you manage the process yourself.
 4. Break the task of proofreading down into smaller chunks; you can't do everything at once.
- Go through checking spelling and punctuation. If you know that you consistently get some words wrong e.g. 'form' instead of 'from'; 'to' instead of 'too' use the 'Find' or 'Find and replace' function on Word (click on Edit on the tool bar) once you have identified the errors on your hard copy. It may be helpful to use previously marked work to help identify your 'typical errors'; make a list of them and keep it beside you. Make sure that you have not misspelt/miscopied technical vocabulary or names, as spell-check may not have the capacity to give the correct spelling. Remember: use spell-check and grammar-check as a guide; they are not infallible!



- Next, check your grammar.
 - Finally, check for consistency – particularly in referencing. Refer to your department guidelines on how they want you to reference material and if you are unsure seek advice. Also, check your facts – did 'Smith' really say that? Have you quoted accurately? Have you left the original words in your work without indicating that it is a direct quote? You may need to use a ruler or the straight edge of a piece of paper as a guide to help you keep your place when you are doing detailed checking. This will also allow your eyes to focus on small areas of text at a time.
5. When checking for spelling mistakes it often helps to read the text from the back to the front. This helps you to look at individual words out of the context of the sentence. You are less likely to miss spelling errors this way.
 6. When you have made your corrections, check that they are all in the new version of the document. Now re-read the new version and check for any further mistakes. You may find it helpful to read your work aloud at this point. This will help you check for long sentences; repetition; wordiness



It really doesn't have to get to this!!