



Proofreading Tips

If possible, do not proofread your own writing. If you do proofread your own writing (or writing you have been editing) take a break before proofing. Proof from a printed copy whenever possible. Before printing, change the color, spacing, font size or font style. Make your corrections in red (or another easy to see color) ink.

Slow your reading speed down. Try:

- Reading the piece aloud.
- Reading the entire piece back to front.
- Reading each page bottom to top.
- Using a screen (such as a blank sheet of paper) to keep you eyes and mind focused on one line at a time.
- Running your finger along the text to make it easier to read one word at a time.

Make a style sheet. Include:

- People's names and titles of books, articles, etc.
- Technical terms
- Phone numbers and addresses
- Correct form of common terms or phrases
- Preferred spelling of words that can be spelled different ways
- Preferred formatting and style of numbers, heading, urls, lists, etc.

Comparison

When you are doing a comparison proofread (comparing a typed version against an original, as in a large section of quoted text), work with another person if possible. Have your partner read the original while you compare it to the new version. If you have to work alone, use a pair of straight edges (rulers or pieces of paper) to make it easier to compare the two pieces line by line.

Legacy Book Solutions

612.386.7587

beth@legacybooksolutions.com

Make several passes.

- Use your computer's spell checker and grammar checker as a first pass, but don't depend on them.
- Proof the body of the text. Be alert for homonyms (words that share the same pronunciation, but have different meanings such as *accept/except* or *there/their/they're* or *to/two/too*) and little words (such as *or, of, it, is*) that can be easily interchanged.
- Focus just on punctuation. Does each sentence have a period or question mark? Is there a close quote or parenthesis for each opening and vice versa? Are you consistent in your use of comma before "and" or in a list? Circling every punctuation mark forces you to look at each one. As you circle it, ask yourself if the punctuation mark is correct.
- Focus on your common errors. Keep a list of your most common errors (or those of the writer whose work you are proofing) and use it for this pass.
- Make a pass for each of the special situations listed below.
- Finally, look at the document as a whole. Are the margins consistent? How about the indents? Is it consistently justified and aligned? Is there correct and consistent spacing between sentences and before and after paragraph and section breaks? Is the font and size consistent?

Special situations

Instructions or procedures:

- If possible, do every step in procedures to make sure they are complete, accurate and in correct order.
- Count the number of steps a list promises to make sure they are all there.

Numbers:

- Have someone read the numbers from the original source while you double check.
- Do any math included in the text.

Tables:

- Read down columns in a table if readers are supposed to read across the table. Read across if readers are supposed to read down.

Illustrations:

- Make sure figure numbers match their references in the text and are sequential.
- Make sure illustrations, pictures and charts are right-side up.
- Make sure captions match the illustration, picture or chart.

Table of contents, page numbers and headings:

- Make sure all chapter titles and headings in the table of contents match the text.
- Make sure page numbers match table of contents.
- Make sure page numbers are in the correct order.

Final review of revised text. After corrections have been made, print piece out again.

- Compare revised version check to original to make sure all the corrections were made.
- Read over the document one more time to make sure you didn't miss anything.