PROOFREADING

PROOFREADING means carefully reading your final written work to catch errors. It is best done after you are finished writing and are preparing to turn your paper in.

Below is a checklist of common errors to serve as a guide. Use this list and a grammar book as you read your paper over, checking every sentence for these items.

Run-on Sentences and Sentence Fragments
Check each sentence to make sure it has a subject and verb and a complete thought.

Review each sentence to make sure you have not run two sentences together without using a period, conjunction, or semicolon to separate them.

Subject-Verb Agreements
Locate every subject and verb to make sure that with singular subjects you used a singular verb, and with plural subjects you used a plural verb.

Tenses
Check that you maintained the same tense throughout your paper.

Have you used the correct form of the verb to express the tense you want?

Sentence Length
Have you varied the length of sentences in each paragraph?

Do any sentences seem too long? Break them into shorter ones.

(over)
Here are some useful proofreading strategies:

- **SLOW DOWN.** You must read slowly to see all the letters in each word.

- **FOCUS ON EACH WORD.** You might want to use a pencil or pen to point to each word and say it aloud or to yourself.

- **READ BACKWARD.** Instead of reading left to right, move backward through each line from right to left.

- **READ WITH A COVER.** Hold a sheet of paper or a note card under each line to help you make a detailed review.

- **WATCH FOR PATTERNS.** Look for those errors that occur most frequently in your writing, including misspellings.

- **READ ALOUD.** Reading your paper aloud encourages you to read and hear every little word.

Always begin after you have taken a break -- allow yourself some time between writing and proofreading to give your paper a fresh eye and mind.

(Adapted from handouts produced at the Purdue University Writing Lab, and the Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage, 2nd edition, by Muriel Harris.)
PROOFREADING (Continued)

Are any sentences too short? Connect them with other sentences.

Do the sentences relate to each other in some way? Are transitions needed?

**Punctuation**

Have you ended every sentence with a period, question mark, or exclamation point?

Are commas used correctly? Check a handout or a handbook for rules to be sure.

**Quotation Marks**

Are exact quotes within quotation marks?

Did you place all periods and commas inside the quotation marks? (Place semicolons and colons outside of quotation marks.)

**Apostrophes**

Review to see if you have used them correctly to indicate possession.

**Capitalization**

Have you capitalized names of persons, cities, countries, streets, and titles?

Have you capitalized a quotation according to the original and the needs of your sentence?

**Spelling**

Check any word you have doubts about.

Use the spellchecker on the computer to help flag words to check in the dictionary.

**Omissions**

Have you left out any words in your sentences?