

Proofreading is the final step in revising your writing. After focusing on the argument or organization, writers proofread essays to catch minor errors in spelling, grammar, and style. Here are some tips for effectively proofreading your essay. Before you begin:

- Be sure larger aspects of your essay have been revised; you are not ready to proofread if you are still working on the thesis, focus, or organization of the text.
- Take a break between writing the paper and proofreading; taking a short break of 20 minutes or even a full day will freshen your perspective and help you easily catch minor errors in your writing.
- Be aware of common mistakes you make. By being aware of comments professors or Writing Center tutors have given you on past assignments, you can be mindful of those errors while proofreading.

Proofreading Strategies:

- Print out your paper instead of reading it on the computer
- Read your paper out loud
- Read slowly in order to catch small errors

Common Mistakes

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Example</i>
Misplaced or dangling modifiers	Modifiers are words or phrases that provide description in sentences. They should appear near the words they describe.	My parents adopted <u>a cat</u> for my sister <u>called Whiskers</u> . X My parents adopted a cat called Whiskers for my sister. ✓
Subject-verb agreement	The subject of every sentence is either singular or plural, and that determines the ending of the verb.	<u>One</u> of the boxes <u>are</u> open. X One of the boxes is open. ✓
Faulty parallelism	When creating a list in a sentence, make sure all elements of the list such as parts of speech, verb tense, and voice are consistent.	He liked <u>to play</u> soccer and <u>riding</u> horses. X He liked to play soccer and ride horses. ✓
Noun-pronoun agreement	Each pronoun must agree in number (singular or plural) with the noun (person, place, thing or idea) to which it refers.	<u>Cats</u> are good pets for apartments because <u>it</u> is quiet. X Cats are good pets for apartments because they are quiet. ✓

Common Punctuation Mistakes

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Sentence fragments	Each sentence should reflect a complete thought and stand on its own.	Pizza critics argue that pizza is <u>unhealthy</u> . Because it is a mouthful of saltiness and grease. X Pizza critics argue that pizza is unhealthy because they argue that it is a mouthful of saltiness and grease. ✓
Run-on sentences	Run-on sentences occur when two complete sentences are joined together without conjunctions or punctuation.	Jenn liked the roses Robert gave her on prom <u>night</u> however she likes tulips more. X Jenn liked the roses Robert gave her on prom night; however, she likes tulips more. ✓
Missing commas	Commas should be used to: 1) List three or more items in a series 2) Between two complete sentences joined by the FANBOYS conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)	Her inspirations were her parents, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. X Her inspirations were her parents, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King Jr. ✓ He stayed up late watching <u>television</u> so he was tired the next day. X He stayed up late watching television, so he was tired the next day. ✓
Too many commas	Unnecessary commas make the sentence difficult to read and understand.	School trips are required, in several courses, such as, museum studies, anthropology, and art history. X School trips are required in several courses such as museum studies, anthropology, and art history. ✓
Comma splices	A comma cannot separate two independent clauses (a group of words that can stand on its own as a sentence). 1) Use a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) after the comma. 2) Replace a comma with a semicolon. 3) Change the comma to a period.	Pizza tastes best when it is <u>hot</u> , pizza can be a healthy meal. X Pizza tastes best when it is hot, and it can be a healthy meal. ✓ Pizza tastes best when it is hot; it can be a healthy meal. ✓ Pizza tastes best when it is hot. It can be a healthy meal. ✓