

PROOFREADING STRATEGIES



Proofreading involves looking for sentence- and word-level mistakes such as **spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting**.



Proofreading is the **final stage** in revising and editing your writing, whereas revision looks at more global aspects of your writing such as argument, flow, logic, evidence, and organization. Generally, you should focus on **revision first** and **proofreading second**, unless grammatical errors are so cumbersome that they affect the reader's ability to understand your content.

Note that the Writing Centre will not proofread your paper and make changes for you. We will help you determine your personal problem areas and teach you to proofread your own work.



Proofreading Strategies

- 1 **Put your work aside** for several hours before proofreading so the words seem new to you.
- 2 Read your paper **out loud**.
- 3 Read from a **hard copy**.

What Do I Look for?

Style

- 1 Make sure you have employed strong, vibrant **verbs**.
- 2 **Eliminate repetition** of words or phrases, especially in consecutive sentences.
- 3 Be **concise**: if you can eliminate a word and the sentence still makes sense and is thorough, then eliminate it.
- 4 Ensure that you have used a variety of **sentence structures**.
- 5 Check that **pronoun references** are clear. Your reader should easily be able to link pronouns to the nouns that they represent.

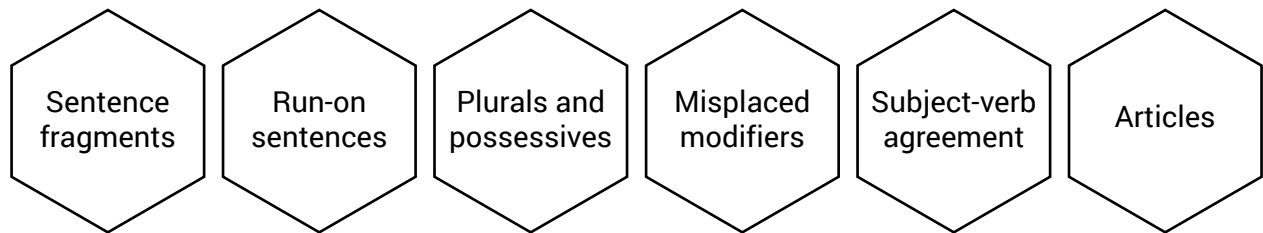
See our **pronoun handout** for more information on using pronouns clearly and effectively.



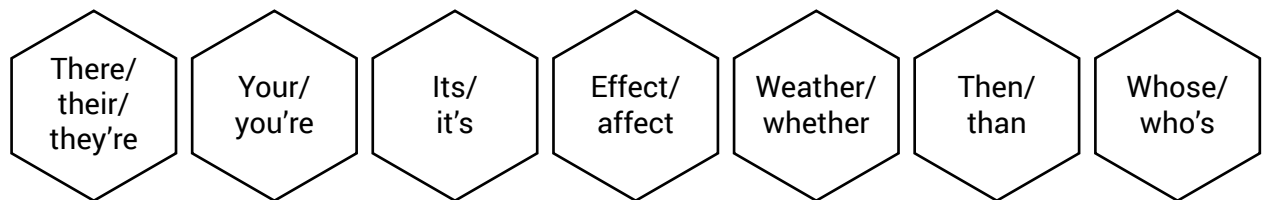
Grammar

- 1 Check that your **verb tense** is consistent throughout the paper.
- 2 Pay attention to the **spell checker** (but be careful – it can make mistakes!).
- 3 Look for appropriate **capitalization** and **punctuation**.

Look for these grammatical tricky spots:



...and these commonly confused words:



Format

- 1 Make sure all tables, graphs, charts, and images are appropriately **titled** and **cited**.
- 2 Check to make sure you're using **country-specific spelling** if required (e.g., colour, cheque, etc.).
- 3 Check **page numbers**.
- 4 Compare titles, subtitles, and works cited list against samples in your **discipline's particular style** (APA, IEEE, MLA, etc.).
- 5 Check that **quotations** and **in text citations** meet style requirements.
- 6 Check that **margins** and **fonts** meet specified requirements.

If you're unsure about formatting or stylistic conventions in your discipline, ask your instructor and consult field-specific academic journals.

