

Proofreading Strategies

General tips

- Take a break between writing and proofreading
- Ensure your work is left aligned, not justified, to increase your chance of spotting errors
- Proofread your work several times in different formats: on screen and hardcopy, and in different fonts and font size or enlarged by the zoom feature on your software programme
- Use a brightly coloured pen to make changes so that you don't miss the changes when typing up your edits
- Read your writing out loud and get someone else to read it out to you – you can often hear when your writing does not make sense or does not flow

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling

- Know your common errors and read through your writing several times, focusing on one error at a time
- Read your paper backwards sentence by sentence to focus on sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and grammar
- Stop at every punctuation mark to ensure you have used them appropriately
- Check all words your spell checker may have incorrectly autocorrected (e.g., their/there, two/to/too)
- Check the spelling of all proper nouns (e.g., names of people, organisations, brand names, and places) to ensure they are presented exactly as they are given

Structure and quality of writing

- Underline or highlight the topic sentence of each paragraph to check the flow of ideas throughout your work
- Read each sentence to check that it relates to the topic sentence of the paragraph
- Highlight all the words you use for transitioning of ideas (e.g., also, however, additionally, in contrast...)

to check for too much repetition and to remove subsequent use

- Highlight strings of small words and consider rewording with fewer words to make your writing succinct

Formatting

- Use the negative zoom feature on your software programme or lay all pages of a hard copy side by side to check for consistent layout
- Use the positive zoom feature on your software programme, or print your work in a large font size, to detect spacing errors and inconsistent or inaccurate presentation of headings or titles

References

- Check that citations and reference list match. Separate reference list from main work. Look through your work and stop at each citation. Tick the matching reference on the reference list and compare spelling and date to ensure the citation and reference match
- Stop at each citation and compare the citation format, including punctuation, with the format given in the referencing resources
- For each reference in your reference list, identify what type of source it is (e.g., website, journal article, book, blog, encyclopedia, etc.), locate the relevant example in the examples guide and compare the format, including punctuation, and use of italics and capital letters
- Stop at each figure and table. Compare the formatting of the headings and the reference in your note with those given in the figures and tables guide. Look for use of punctuation, bold, capital letters, and line spacing. For tables, check you have removed all vertical borders

See also the essay checklist on MYEIT:

<http://www2.eit.ac.nz/library/OnlineGuides/Essay%20Checklist.pdf>

Bibliography

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