

Proofreading Strategies

Distance Yourself:

If you composed the document, put time between writing and correcting. Sit in a different chair to gain objectivity.

Establish a System:

Show your associates the proofreading marks you will be using. Consistency on the team is important.

Review the Project:

Before you begin proofreading, review the entire document to assess your challenge. Select a plan of action using the options below.

- Comparison Method:
Move your eyes from the original copy to the copy recently updated or corrected.
- Reading Aloud:
The “see and say” method will highlight some punctuation errors as well as missing words.
- Partner Proofreading:
Correct the new copy as your partner reads aloud from the original. Change places to break the monotony. For highly technical text, this method provides great accuracy.
- Editing:
Revise words and sentences to improve style *if* it is your role to do so, **Do Not Change** the message or meaning.
- Spelling Proofreading:
Read the document backwards word by word.
- Visual Proofreading:
Use these techniques to check the document’s alignment:
 - Run a straight edge down the left and right margins.
 - Turn the document upside down.
 - Hold the document at arm’s length.
 - Use a light colored overlay.

Communicate Tactfully:

When it is appropriate, give feedback to the writer. Be helpful and focus on the mistake, not the person who made the mistake. Use courtesy and diplomacy.

Keys

- * Accuracy is the #1 priority in proofreading. Speed is secondary.
- * Thorough proofreading requires going through the document more than once.
- * When proofreading hard copy produced on a word processor, keep your screen and hard copy at the same place in the document. Corrections and updates will be easier and faster.
- * If you are proofreading a form letter, carefully read the first letter printed out. Then proofread just the changes for all future letters.
- * When you proofread copy transcribed from dictation equipment, return to the start of the tape, and read the document as you listen.

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