

Some Proofreading Tips

Before you begin proofreading, make sure your document is reader-focused—with a clearly stated main point, clear organization, easy-to-read formatting and concise language. Then follow these guidelines and you'll present a consistent professional image every time:

Take a break between writing and proofreading. The best proofreading is done when you have distance from a document.

1. Use the spell-checker and grammar-checker slowly and carefully to help you catch your typos. When used mindfully, both are helpful tools. When used carelessly, they will lead you to make new errors almost as often as they help correct existing ones.
2. Whenever possible, proofread from a printed page. Errors are easier to see on paper than on a screen.
3. If you have to proofread on a screen, zoom in so that the text is very large. This will allow you to see errors you might otherwise miss.
4. Read your work aloud. By slowing down and articulating each word, you'll catch most of your mistakes. And remember, if it doesn't sound right, it probably isn't.
5. Use your word processing program's "Find" feature to catch your writing demons—those pesky little mistakes you frequently make. For example, if you tend to confuse "accept" with "except", or "their", "there", and "they're", then type those words into Find so you don't have to hunt for them. Here's one a lot of folks confuse: lead and led. He "led" them down the wrong path; NOT he lead them...
6. Proofread several times, taking breaks in between.
7. If the document carries a lot of weight, give it to a trusted co-worker to proofread after you've given it your best shot.