



Proofreading

You have finished writing your assignment - now you need to proofread!

What is proofreading?

- Checking your document for any kind of error.
- Proofreading is part of the academic process.

Why is proofreading so essential?

Submitting work containing mistakes may:

- Lose you marks
- Give the impression you do not care about your work
- Make your work difficult to read or understand.

What are you looking for?

Spelling errors - use a dictionary if you are in doubt about the right spelling or use of a word.

Word omission – especially when you are typing quickly.

Homophones – words that sound the same but have different spelling and meanings – their, there, to and too.

Punctuation & grammar issues – capitals, full stops, commas.

Root word – sometimes it's easy to use the wrong form or tense of a word, e.g. simple, simply.

Layout errors – especially for a report – check numbering, headings, paragraphs.

Referencing errors – check against the University of Bolton standard. Have you cited the source each time you have quoted, paraphrased or included facts and figures? Have you cited all of your sources?

Make sure you are proofreading for meaning as well as spelling and punctuation errors – do your sentences make sense?

Double check any numbers that you have included for accuracy – particularly dates.

How to do it.

These are suggestions – develop what works best for you!

1. Make sure you finish your assignment in plenty of time before the deadline. This will give you valuable time to proofread and improve your work before you submit it.
2. Use a spell check to pick up the most obvious errors. But a spell check alone is not enough.

A spell checker would mark the following sentence as correct!

Joe and Ali pick up there grocery and drove home.

It should be:

Joe and Ali picked up their groceries and drove home.

3. It may be more effective to search for only one type of error at a time.

So, spelling, then punctuation, then layout etc.

This is especially true for long documents.

4. Take a break!

If your eyes are glazing over when you are reading - give your brain a rest!

Do something else or chill out and recharge before you proofread your work.

You will then be focused and in a good position to:

Read through your work with a 'fresh' pair of eyes

Spot any errors you may have made

You may even decide to re-write some sentences once you've had a break.

5. Decide if you prefer to proofread on screen or paper.

It's down to your personal preference.

If you are proofreading on print make sure you clearly mark your corrections – highlight, circle, and underline.

6. Read it out loud!

Reading out loud forces you to read every word instead of skipping ahead.

It helps to check if your writing makes sense as well as spotting errors.

It is particularly useful for spotting punctuation errors.

7. Do not rush. Remember to stop at your full stops and pause at your commas.
8. Ask yourself the following questions as you read:
 - Am I expressing myself clearly?
 - Could I say anything better?
 - Are any of my sentences too long?
 - Have I repeated any information?
 - Have I referenced my sources?
9. Ask someone else to double check it for you, especially for important documents. Someone unfamiliar with the text is more likely to spot any errors
10. Learn from your mistakes.

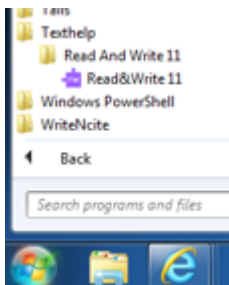
Spot repeated errors – are there words that you constantly misspell? Keep a special look out for these and make an effort to learn the correct spelling.

E.g. it is a common error to confuse 'ent' and 'ant' endings – independent or independant, attendant or attendant?

Pay particular attention to any errors highlighted in the feedback from your last assignment – were there punctuation or grammar errors highlighted?

Software

Read & Write Gold is available on the University network and can read your text back to you.



Develop your own proofreading technique to improve your academic writing.

It's an essential part of the academic writing process – don't miss it out!

Access LEAP Online at: www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline