



Writing Center

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Strategies for Editing and Proofreading

Here are some helpful online resources:

Our favorite, from UNC Chapel Hill's Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/editing-and-proofreading/>. This resource distinguishes between editing and proofreading and gives specific, applicable proofreading pointers. At the bottom is suggested reading for ESL students trying to correct grammar.

The Purdue OWL: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/01/>. Basic strategies include taking a break and reading your paper out loud. This website offers a list of common problems and how to identify them and fix them (parallelism, subject-verb agreement, etc.)– helpful!

This one is a fun, sort of cheeky website: <http://www.copyblogger.com/edit-your-writing-2/>. It offers advice like “Step away, Renee!,” “Imagine you’re not you” and “Listen to your high school English teacher – except when it’s best to tune her out.”

Other tutor-tested proofreading methods:

- 1) **Read backwards.** Read from the last sentence of the last paragraph to the first sentence of the first paragraph. By reading each sentence totally out of context, you'll likely catch grammatical mistakes and strange wording.
- 2) **Highlight every sentence in a different color.** If every sentence is a different hue, you'll be more likely to read sentences on their own, separate from one another. And hopefully you'll catch errors.
- 3) **Get out the scissors.** That's right – cut up every paragraph and then rearrange all of the paragraphs on a large, clean surface. Your paper will automatically get an organizational facelift as you figure out what is out of place, what REALLY needs to go first, and what sequence makes the most logical sense.
- 4) **Make a dumpster document.** As you're drafting, don't be afraid to pull out entire paragraphs and stick them in a separate “dumpster” document. If you decide you'd like to go back later and integrate whatever you took out, you can go dumpster diving in this doc. This way you won't be afraid to lose those great nuggets, but won't be so attached to them that you leave them where they don't necessarily fit.

5) **Use the (often hilarious) text-to-speech readers.** Macintosh users have probably already played around with the British, Australian and other ambiguous accents in the speech-reading tool. If you're a PC user, find a free text-to-speech reader and use it. You're guaranteed to catch mistakes when you hear your writing in someone else's voice.