LUC WRITING CENTER – "HOW TO PROOFREAD"

Proofreading is a way to review your writing for common errors or smaller mistakes before you submit a paper. Generally, proofreading is the last step in the writing process, after you have made any major revisions.

Techniques for Proofreading:

- **If possible, get some distance from your paper.** Take some time between finishing your draft (and any revisions) and reviewing your paper.
- **Read the paper out loud or read the paper backwards a few sentences at a time** (you can use a blank piece of paper to cover up the rest of the paper). This will help you focus on sentence-level items such as grammar and word choice.
- **Create a reverse outline of your paper.** Go through each paragraph and identify the topic sentence, evidence you used, and the conclusion. Your outline should be coherent and flow logically. You should also be able to see how each part of your paper relates back to your thesis.
- **Review your paper for only a few errors or issues at a time.** If you try to look for too many things you may lose sight of smaller issues or problems.
- Look for any issues that you have had in the past or that your professor has already commented on. **Search for common mistakes in your paper using the search function.**
- **Do not rely on the spell-checker!** Spell check will not catch if you misused words like they're/their/there or are/our or here/hear.

Common Errors to Look for:

1. **Sentence Fragments**: An incomplete sentence that cannot stand on its own. Many times it is an incomplete thought or you may have revised part of the sentence and this fragment was left on its own.
2. **Run-on Sentences:** Two or more independent clauses that are not joined properly with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet) or a semicolon.
3. **Comma Splices:** Two independent clauses linked by a comma *without* a coordinating conjunction.
4. **Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers:** Modifiers that are separated from the word(s) they modify or describe.
5. **Subject-Verb Agreement:** When the subject and the verb do not agree in a sentence.
6. **Parallelism:** When the words in a sentence (usually in a list) follow the same form.
7. **Pronoun Reference Agreement:** When a pronoun in your sentence does not match up with a noun.
8. **Confusable Words:** Words that have different forms but sound the same such as here/hear, their/there, bear/bare, except/accept, and effect/affect.

For more information:

- [Pearson Writer: Writing Review](#)
- [Purdue Owl](#)

Essay Checklist:

Format
- Paper is formatted correctly and in the correct style according to the assignment _____
- Paper includes an introduction, thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion _____
- There are transitions between sentences and paragraphs _____
- Sources are cited properly and your paper includes a Work Cited or Bibliography page _____

Writing and Style
- The paper is directed to a specific audience and uses language and information appropriately _____
- The argument of the paper is clear and consistent throughout the paper _____
- Sentences are clear and concise and contain a subject and verb that agree _____
- The sentences and paragraphs are of different lengths and complexity _____
- The text is free of spelling and grammar errors _____
- If used, quotes are seamlessly incorporated into the text and cited appropriately _____

Paragraphs
- Each paragraph has a clear main idea and the ideas flow logically and coherently _____
- Paragraphs are appropriately sized so the reader does not become lost or tired when reading _____
- Each paragraph builds on one another to develop the paper's thesis _____

Introduction
- Uses an engaging opening or hook _____
- Is focused and direct _____
- Introduces your topic and provides (brief) summary background information for your argument _____
- Provides a clear thesis statement that contains an argument, i.e., not just a statement _____
- If necessary, provides organizational structure for readers _____

Body Paragraphs
- Contain a topic sentence, evidence (supporting details) and analysis, and a concluding sentence that relate back to the argument's thesis _____
- Use transitions between ideas and sentences _____
- Contain one or two *related* ideas (unrelated ideas should be in separate paragraphs) _____
- Quotes and evidence are used appropriately and do not dominate the paragraph _____

Conclusion
- Provides a brief summary of your argument _____
- Highlights the significance of your argument _____
- Leaves readers with a lasting impression of your discussion _____
- May gesture towards future work _____