



### **Definition**

The process of finding and correcting mistakes in text before it is printed or put online (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022).

### **What is proofreading?**

Reading written work and correcting any surface errors, is referred to as proofreading and this is a key part of the academic process. The most common errors when proofreading relate to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and consistency (LEAP Online, 2022).

### **What is the significance of proofreading?**

- You may lose marks if you submit an assignment that contains errors
- Change common grammatical or punctuation mistakes in your assignment
- Make your assignments challenging to read or understand
- Overall, proofreading shows that you care about your work

### **So, what common errors should you look for?**

- Spelling errors and omissions (e.g., transposition errors and letter omissions)
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Capitalisation
- Use of Articles

If you're unsure what these are, don't worry! There's more on these common errors further on in this tutorial.

**REMEMBER ...** It is important to use a dictionary and thesaurus if you are unsure about the correct spelling or usage of a word. In addition, always double-check your work for transposition errors and spelling omissions as these are the most common mistakes found in academic assignments.

## **Spelling errors and omissions**

### **Transposition definition**

The error is caused by the mis ordering of two adjacent letters, such as "lable for label". (On rare occasions, a single letter may be wrongly placed by more than one position in a word, such as 'litgh' for 'light'; this should be regarded as a transposition.)

### **Spelling Omission definition**

The absence of a letter from a word is referred to as letter omission. This is common when there is a double or silent letter somewhere in the word. E.g., 'profesional' instead of 'professional'

For more information on spelling, complete the [Academic Writing Level 1 - English](#) section on LEAP Online.

### **Grammar and Punctuation**

For more information on grammar and punctuation, complete [the Academic Writing Level 1 - English](#) section on LEAP Online.

### **Capitalisation**

In English, the first word of a sentence and all proper nouns are capitalised (see examples below)

- The very first word in a sentence
- Proper nouns, which are names of people, places, businesses, and organisations, such as the 'University of Bolton', the 'Department for Education'
- Weekdays and months of the year
- Adjectives derived from proper nouns e.g. Since you live in England, do you enjoy English food. The adjective based on 'England' is 'English' and needs to be capitalised
- Religious names, such as the 'Bible' and the 'Quran'
- Names with titles, e.g., Mr. Smith, Mrs. Miller, Dr. Green

## Use of articles

### Articles

Articles are modifiers before nouns or noun phrases. They, like other adjectives, aid in the clarity of the meaning of the noun in your phrase. The English language has only articles: 'and, 'a' or 'an' used before a word with a vowel sound.

#### **Definite article:**

The definite article 'the' is used before a noun to indicate that the reader is aware of the noun's identity.

#### **Indefinite article:**

Indefinite articles, such as 'a' and 'an' are used with singular nouns when the reader will not know which one the writer is referring to. For example:

*The book belongs to **a student***

In this example, the writer doesn't know which student the book belongs to so the indefinite article 'a' was used.

It can also be used to show that the person or thing is one of a group. For example:

*The book belongs to **a student at the University of Bolton***

In this example, writer shows that the student is part of the University of Bolton.

## Homophone confusion

A homophone is a word that sounds like another but is spelled differently and means something different. For example, some common homophones you may use include:

- 'Their', 'they're' instead of 'there'
- 'Affect' instead of 'effect'
- 'Cite' or 'sight' instead of 'site'
- 'Loose' instead of 'lose'
- 'Quiet' instead of 'Quite'
- 'Then' instead of 'than'
- 'Too' or 'two' instead of 'to'
- 'Whether' instead of 'weather'
- 'Coarse' instead of 'course'
- 'Maid' instead of 'made'
- 'Write' instead of 'right'
- 'Wear' instead of 'where'

## **Steps to proofreading**

To proofread your work effectively consider proofreading your paper one time for each of these areas:

### **Time Management**

Make sure you finish your assignment in plenty of time before the deadline. This will give you time to proofread and improve your work before you submit. To find out more about time management techniques visit the LEAP Online Time Management section.

### **Take a break**

If you proofread your work straight from writing, it is likely you will miss errors because you're familiar with what you have just written. Therefore, if possible, take a break from your work and return to it later with a fresh pair of eyes.

### **Take your time**

It is important that you do not rush proofreading. It's a good idea to make sure you take it slowly and read your work more than once, for instance:

Proofread your paper at least 3 times:

1. Firstly, for general organisation
2. Secondly, a chance to spot grammar errors
3. Thirdly, to spot typos in your work, such as spelling and omissions

When proofreading, try breaking down the text into manageable chunks, rather than reading all of it at once. For instance, when reading a paragraph, read one sentence at a time, then the whole paragraph. Once you have read all the paragraphs, read all of your work.

### **Read aloud**

Sometimes you may miss an error if you read the text in your head. Therefore, try reading it out loud. You can always use software, such as 'Read Aloud' on Word to help you with this task. To help you with this, try:

- Ignoring the content and context – concentrate on expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar and omissions; and
- Consider that each page contains at least one spelling error.

## **Office365 EDITOR**

Will assist you in improving Spelling, Grammar, Clarity, conciseness, Formality and Punctuation conventions to name a few.

### **Language**

Make sure the proofing language is set to English and you write your assignment early. Proofreading is crucial and takes a lot of time.

### **Referencing**

Always check your in-text citations and referencing is consistent with the preferred conventions of your course. For more information, check out Referencing –Level 2 on LEAP Online.

### **Be careful with any changes**

If you decide to make amendments to your work e.g., move text around, make sure you read the text again to ensure it makes sense and it doesn't affect the structure of your work.

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

Access LEAP Online at: [www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline](http://www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline)