

Proofreading Checklist

Make sure to proofread your work! Ideally, you should put your piece of writing aside for a day or two before you proofread. Doing so will help you see it with fresh eyes and catch more mistakes.

The following checklist is a basic guide to help you polish any written work product. Check issue specific Writing Center handouts for more in depth review.

Key Grammar

Are you using active voice as much as possible? When you use passive voice, are you doing so for a specific reason?
Have you ended any sentences with prepositions?
Does your piece have any split infinitives (e.g., “to boldly go”)?
Do you say in one long or confusing sentence what you could say in two concise and clear sentences? Don’t be afraid to start sentences with conjunctions!
Do you use the singular form of a verb for singular nouns? And plural for plural nouns?
Are there contractions in your piece? (Use Ctrl+F to check for apostrophes.)
Are you using “nor” when both options are negative?
Are you using dangling modifiers?
Are you using i.e. and e.g. correctly? The former is used to clarify something you’ve said, while the latter means for example.
Are you using “that” with restrictive (essential) clauses and “which” with nonrestrictive (nonessential) clauses?
Are you setting off nonrestrictive clauses with commas?

Effective Punctuation

Are you consistently using Oxford commas?
Do you appropriately set off parenthetical phrases with commas, parentheses, or em-dashes? Remember to close these phrases with the same punctuation mark if the phrase does not end the sentence.
Do you appropriately separate independent clauses with a semicolon, a period, or a conjunction + comma?

When a period or comma ending a quotation is needed, have you placed said period or comma <i>inside</i> the closing quotation mark? Have you placed all other punctuation marks to close the quotation outside the closing quotation mark, <i>unless</i> that punctuation mark appears in the original source?
Have you consulted with Bluebook Rule 5 in order to correctly indicate omissions in quotations?
Have you utilized em-dashes effectively to replace parentheses, commas, and/or colons, or to emphasize a sudden break in thought or a key point?
Did you use en-dashes to represent a range of numbers, dates, or time?
Did you single space after periods? (Use Ctrl+F [period][space][space] to check and fix double spacing between sentences.)
When using a colon, have you checked whether you should capitalize the first letter after the colon?
For quotations within quotations, have you used single quotation marks (')?
Have you consulted with Bluebook Rule B8 to ensure you have capitalized “court” only in appropriate situations?

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Use Ctrl+F to search for the following words/phrases to make sure you are using each correctly. Refer to the Writing Center handout on Commonly Misused Words and Phrases for further explanation.

Word	Use/Definition	Word	Use/Definition
Affect	<i>Generally a verb</i>	Effect	<i>Generally a noun</i>
Among	Relationship in a group	Between	Direct one-to-one relationship
As such	<i>Not a synonym for therefore</i>		
Attain	Achieve a goal	Obtain	Acquire an object
Begs the question	Delete this and substitute a different phrase		
Consequent(ly)	Indicates cause-and-effect relationship	Subsequent(ly)	Indicates chronological relationship
Farther	Indicates physical distance	Further	Indicates time, metaphorical distance, or in addition
Felt	Emotions and physical contact; <i>not a synonym for thought or a concluded</i>		
Forego	Come before	Forgo	Reject
Imply	The <i>speaker or writer</i> implies	Infer	The <i>listener or reader</i> infers
Irregardless	Drop the “ir”; the correct word is “regardless”		
Less	Uncountable nouns	Fewer	Countable nouns

	Principle	Rule	Principal	Superior position (n.); first or main (adj.)
	Proscribe	Forbid	Prescribe	Lay out a rule
	With regards to	Drop the "s"; the correct word is "regard"		
	Than	Used for comparisons	Then	Indicates chronological order
	Towards	Drop the "s"; the correct word is "toward"		
	Tortious	Relating to torts	Tortuous	Full of twists and turns
	Very	Intensifier, though often a vague one	Really	In actual fact