

# PROOFREADING – THE ULTIMATE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A C-PAPER AND AN A-PAPER

## Tips ‘n’ tricks for proofreading

Editing or proofreading a paper once it is done can seem difficult – a chore that is too much to do after slaving away, pouring blood, sweat and tears, into your final draft of the paper! But more often than not, reading your essay over a few times and checking for errors will point out some of the simplest mistakes that could have easily been avoided! Why would you want to work as hard as you have to finish the paper only to get a low mark on an easily identified mistake? Here are some valuable tips, tricks and techniques that, tried and true, have worked wonders on many papers!

- ✓ Write, re-write, proofread, write, re-write, proofread, write... Repeat at least 3-5 times (or more!!!) per essay.
- ✓ Do several read-throughs – the first can be for structure (Do I have a clear thesis statement? Does my paper have an outline that is obvious to the reader? Do my arguments and the details support my thesis statement? Does each paragraph have a clear topic sentence? Etc.), the second for grammar (Do I have sentence fragments? Subject – verb agreement? Comma splices? Etc.), the third for punctuation (Do I have commas where periods should be? Have I used quotations properly? Do I have run-on sentences? Etc.) and so on.
- ✓ Read your paper out loud
  - Read it to yourself – use a tape recorder or simply read it out-loud.
  - Read it to a friend; ask him or her for advice.
  - Have your friend read your paper to you. Listen carefully.
- ✓ Take a little time off. Manage your time to give yourself a couple days between writing the paper and re-reading it (if possible). You’ll be amazed at how many more errors you’ll notice once you’ve had a little “breathing space” away from it!
- ✓ “My common errors” fact sheet – what do I “know” I always do? What does my teacher ALWAYS tell me about my work? Write these things down on a sheet of paper or in a workbook. Refer to these to check your current paper. Get to know your common mistakes and you’ll be able to watch for them in the future.
- ✓ Read your paper backwards, sentence by sentence, making sure that each sentence can grammatically stand on its own.
- ✓ Check the basics - have I written the title of the book correctly? How about the author’s name? The teacher’s name? Have I properly formatted my quotations, footnotes, bibliography, etc.?

It may seem like a lot of hassle to go through, but it can make the ultimate difference between a C-paper and an A-paper