

Proofreading Techniques

Methods of Diagnosis: Know *What* to Look For

- ❖ Get suggestions from your teacher/thesis director to help you know what to look for.
- ❖ Get explanations from the Writing Center to understand how to fix your errors.
- ❖ Make your own proofreading checklist to look for your patterns of errors and mistakes.

Techniques of Focus: Know *How* to Look Carefully

- ❖ Rid your environment of distractions: no electronic interruptions or multi-tasking!
- ❖ Work in short blocks of time (30 minutes to an hour at a stretch) to avoid mental burnout.
- ❖ Use your computer's spelling and grammar checkers as an initial screening, but beware of their limitations. Many people find it helpful to then print a hard copy for more proofreading.
- ❖ Read through once for each type of error/mistake on your personal checklist. (All this proofreading process should come after earlier readings for content and clarity—see the workshop on “Revising for Clarity” in this series).
- ❖ Cover text with a sheet of paper and focus on one line at a time.
- ❖ To find missing or extra words, read aloud and touch each word with a pen as you say it.
- ❖ Read the text backwards, sentence by sentence.