

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PROOFREADING STRATEGIES

(If you do not understand or remember some of this terminology,
check with a tutor or your handbook.)

- 1.) Type your rough draft.
Many common types of errors may be caught by your word processor, and you are more likely to catch your own errors. Regardless, a typed paper is more readable for Writing Center tutors or peer critique groups. Plus, once your paper is saved on a disk, corrections will be much easier to make.
- 2.) Separate yourself from your draft.
Allow time (1-2 days if possible) between your last draft and your final paper. You will be more objective in your reading.
- 3.) Read your paper aloud slowly--every word--to someone else, if possible.
Slide a blank sheet of paper down the page isolating each line as you read. Think about what you are reading. Does it make sense? If you have problems reading a sentence because it is awkward or confusing, reword it. Did you leave out any sentences when you were typing? Verify the typed draft against your original or first rough draft.
- 4.) Look at graded papers for a pattern in the types of errors you make.
Learn how to correct the errors with the help of a tutor. Look specifically for those errors in all papers you write.
- 5.) Read your paper carefully for the following common errors. Make notes in the margin of your paper if you have questions for the Writing Center staff.
 - a) Frequently confused words
its or *it's* (*it is*)
their or *there* or *they're* (*they are*)
two or *too* or *to*
your or *you're* (*you are*)
then or *than*
 - b) Periods and commas should be inside quotation marks.
 - c) Consistencies
capitalization
point of view - check personal pronouns. Are they vague or inconsistent?
Tense - past, present
 - d) Sentences
fragments (incomplete sentences)

- run-ons (sentences run together)
- comma splices (run-on with a comma)
- e) Agreement
 - subject-verb (singular or plural)
 - pronoun-antecedent (gender and number)
- f) Modifiers and modifying phrases
 - Are modifiers near the word(s) or phrases they modify?
 - Are they punctuated correctly?
- g) Punctuation
 - Check every end mark and internal mark.
 - Periods, question marks, exclamation marks
 - Commas, apostrophes
 - Semi-colons, colons
 - Recheck documentation punctuation.
- h) Spelling
 - After using the spell-check on your word processor, double-check words which may have several meanings and spellings. Are you using the word you want?

You may also want to use Editor or Writer's Workbench, style-checking computer programs available in the Writing Center that can help you correct problems such as passive voice, word choice, redundancy, and jargon.

NOW, READ THE PAPER ONE MORE TIME TO YOURSELF.

THAT'S PROOFREADING!

For more proofreading strategies, visit the Purdue University Online Writing Lab:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/index.html>