PROOFREADING TIPS

The following proofreading tips can help you locate and correct different kinds of surface-level errors in your writing.

In no particular order…

• Take a break between writing/revising and proofreading (several hours or even days).
• Proofread a printed copy, not just an on-screen copy.
• Print a proofreading draft using a larger font and with extra space between lines (double-spaced or even triple-spaced).
• Create a personalized editing checklist, based on your previous (graded) papers.
• Read your paper more than once, looking for different problems each time (first time looking for typos, second time checking verb tenses, third time…).
• Read your paper out loud to yourself or to someone else who also has a copy.
• Have someone read out loud while you follow along.
• Physically cover up all but the line you’re reading.
• Read backwards, word by word or sentence by sentence.
• Point at words as you read them.
• Use your computer’s “find” feature to search for likely misspellings or wrong words (example: their/there/they’re confusion).
• Circle all verbs, and then check for tense, agreement, mood, etc.
• Read the work out loud exactly as it is typewritten.
• Circle all punctuation and double-check.
• Read the writing sentence-by-sentence, beginning at the conclusion of the work.
• Use the ‘word search’ feature to locate common usage errors, such as your/you’re; It/it’s; affect/effect; could have/could of
• Read for single features, for example, full sentences, passive voice, unnecessary repetition
• Run spell and grammar check, but evaluate any suggestions you are given