

Ready, set, proof: The ultimate *proofreading* checklist



Ah, proofreading. That final, crucial step in the editing process. But proofreading is about so much more than spelling and punctuation.

So before you send off that report or letter, pull up this proofreading checklist. And... go!



Broken links

Click every hyperlink and make sure it goes to the right place. You can do this as you go, or in one big wave at the end.



Key details

Always check names, dates, times and contact details.

Your killer press release might be enticing and punctuated to perfection. But if the media contact's phone number is wrong, it could be all for naught.



Poor sentence construction

Does a sentence feel off to you? If you don't fully understand what a sentence is trying to say, no matter how many times you re-read it, flag it or rewrite it!



Inconsistent Word styles

If your organisation uses Word styles – and it should! – make sure they're used consistently. Readers can get lost among a confusing heading hierarchy.



Bolded or italicised punctuation

Don't confuse small for insignificant. Full stops shouldn't be italicised even if the last word of a sentence is. And if items in a bulleted lists are bolded, their colons should be, too.

The important thing really is that whatever you do, be consistent – throughout the document.



Stick to company style

How well do you know your company's style guide? Have it handy while you're proofreading – and make sure the writing obeys its every command.



Extra spaces

It's all too easy to get trigger happy with the space bar.

Flick on your formatting symbols (the ¶ button in Microsoft Word) and keep those words evenly spaced.



Typos

Duh.

Sound out every word – slowly – in your head as you go. If there are any mismatched 'I's and 'E's, you'll catch them.



Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelt differently – and mean different things. If you're moving too fast, they're easy to miss.

A few common ones are:

- Meter and metre
- Affect and effect
- Here and hear



Tautologies

Look out for phrases that say the same thing twice. They're called tautologies, and they're a recipe for bloated writing.

'A necessary requirement'? Aren't they always?

Got a project that needs an expert eye from start to finish?. [Contact us](#). We'd love to hear about it.

