



## Cheat Sheet: How to proofread your own work

These are a few suggestions for how to proofread your own work. Print this out and use it as a guide to help you.

1. **Wait a few days before proofreading your work.** Doing this will help you look at your work from a new perspective and make you more likely to notice your mistakes. Keep this in mind when planning your deadlines.
2. **Avoid distractions.** Do your proofreading in a quiet, calm place. You'll need to concentrate quite hard, so even listening to music isn't a good idea.
3. **Read your work out loud to someone.** By reading your work out loud you'll be able to hear the errors you have made. Also, if someone else is listening they will be able to tell you if something doesn't make sense.
4. **Double check spellings of academic, scientific and technical terms.** You might think you know how to spell these words, but subtle changes in spelling can have a different meaning.
5. **Proofread all parts of your work.** Don't just read the main body of text. Proofread the titles, tables, charts, footnotes and bibliography. Do this even if you have copied some of these from other sources.
6. **Print out a hard copy of your work.** Mistakes are easier to spot on paper than they are on a screen.
7. **Check your work for overused words.** Using the same word again and again will make your work unappealing and monotonous. Have a look at this cheat sheet for useful synonyms for overused words. <http://www.englishproofreading.co.uk/content/cheat-sheet-overused-words>
8. **Proofread small chunks of text at a time.** Reading small chunks or sections of text is much easier than trying to do the whole thing at once.
9. **Use a spell checker.** This is a very simple thing you can do, which is often forgotten. Make sure you have configured the spell checker to the right language (British English or American English for example.) Make sure you double check the spelling yourself, sometimes computers make mistakes. Also see this article for a list of free software tools. <http://www.englishproofreading.co.uk/2009/03/13/10-free-spelling-and-writing-tools>
10. **Proofread your work slowly.** There is no point in rushing the final stage of your work when you have spent so long on it. Leave enough time to do a proper job.

If you need another pair of eyes to look over your work, I offer a fast, reliable and affordable proofreading service. <http://www.englishproofreading.co.uk/contact>