

A MUST HAVE FOR GRAMMAR GEEKS!

How To:
BOOST

**YOUR
PROOFREADING
SKILLS FAST!**



BY DARCY PELTZ

I used to believe that proofreading my own work well, was impossible.

Even after I entered the writing field for the first year. But as I started my journey into the depths of blogging (for both business and pleasure) I discovered there are five GREAT ways to proofread your work in a timely and professional manner. Yes, boosting your proofreading skills is easier than you think! In fact, it can be done in five steps! And seeing as how I am not the only one out there who endures deadlines on a regular basis, I am going to share those steps with you today!



Step 1

Take a Break

This step may seem counterintuitive, but taking a break should actually be the ***first thing*** you do after you complete an article. Yes, siree, if you try to proofread your beautiful words right away the stress of staring at a screen for several hours will start taking its toll, and believe me, you don't want to suffer from computer migraines— or any type of migraine for that matter!

So, after you complete your writing task, try taking a break for at least an hour. Close your eyes and listen to music or meditate. Or if you enjoy the quiet, just have a rest. It is important to avoid all screens and unnecessary reading in order to prevent head pain. ***If you are really under the gun*** to make a deadline, taking a fifteen to twenty- minute break will still make a world of difference. But if it is possible, I strongly recommend taking an hour to recoup.





Read Out loud

Nothing has ever sounded the same in your head than it does when you speak it outloud. When you are proofreading, it is very easy for your mind to play tricks on you by filling in words that are missing and even putting words that are out of order (or spelled wrong) in the right order automatically. But, if you read your document outloud, the sound of your voice makes it easier to stay focused which will allow your eyes to catch all kinds of errors. It is almost like having a second pair of eyes!





Step 3

Start from the Bottom

I use this method every single day! When you start from the very top, it is easy to grow tired from reading the same thing over and over again. But if you take a moment to start from the very end paragraph and work your way up, the reading will feel like an entirely new process because you are less familiar with the ending of your article than you are with the beginning. This will trick your brain into thinking it is reading something brand new, and your ability to focus will increase. Sometimes, this method can even cause feelings of excitement to stir inside you as you read.

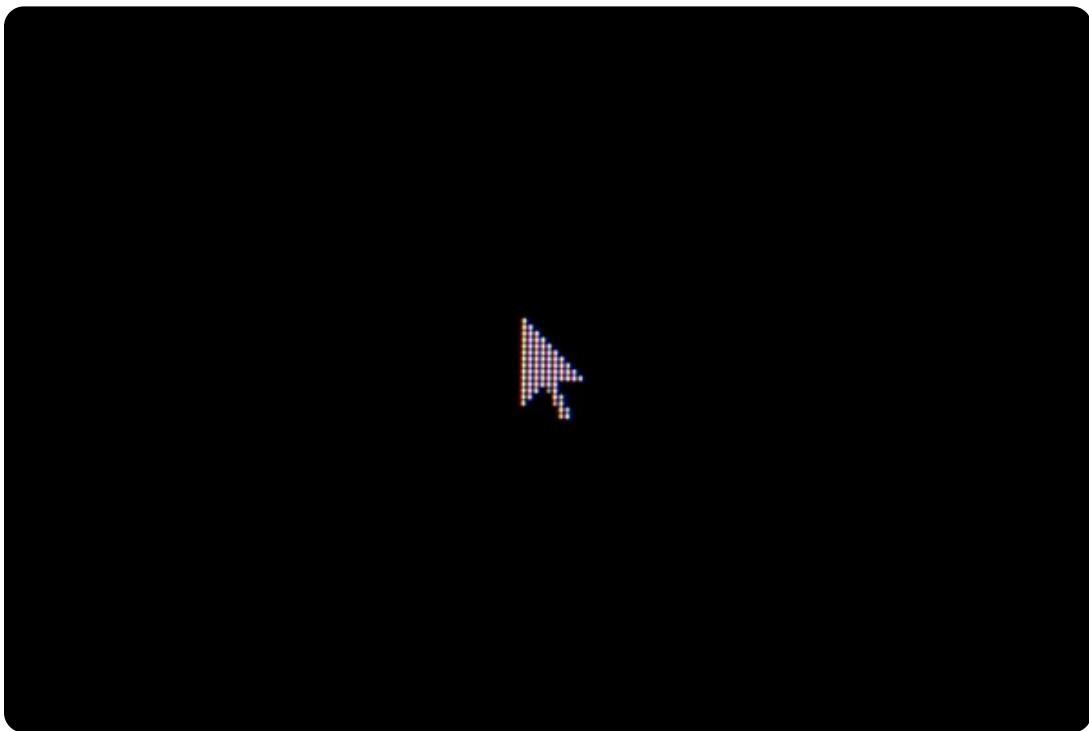




Step 4

Use Your Cursor

Traditionally, proofreading was done by hand. If you take a look at books such as *Copyediting and proofreading for dummies*, you will find lessons on how to use handwritten symbols on printed works. But even so, the most common method of proofreading is done through a computer. Often with Microsoft Word track changes. So instead of using a ruler like you would do with a printed manuscript, use your mouse cursor under each word as you go along. This will keep your eyes from wandering.





Keep a List of Commonly Misused Words

There are tons of words out there that are either misused or misspelled. This is through no fault of your own. The English language is very complicated and it is not uncommon for teachers to misuse words when teaching a class. And of course, there are words that sound the same but mean different things, which makes it very easy to make spelling mistakes as you go along.

A good example of commonly misspelled words is, *“there,” “their,”* and *“they’re.”* So keep a list next to you of all the words you struggle to remember the use of on a regular basis. This will make your proofreading journey an easier one!





By Darcy Peltz
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