Better Proofreading of Your Writing

Proofreading is reviewing of your paper for grammatical and writing errors. It is a vital part of the writing process.

Before You Proofread:

- Make sure you've made most of your large revisions.
- Eliminate unnecessary words. Academic writing should be concise.
- Set the text aside for at least fifteen minutes before proofreading.

Tips When Proofreading:

- Work from a printed copy instead of looking at the computer screen. Make notes on the page!
- Find a quiet place to work.
- If possible, review it in several short blocks of time.
- Read it out loud.
- Use a blank sheet of paper to cover up the lines beneath the one you are reading.
- Use the computer search function to look for mistakes you commonly make.
- End with a spelling check on the computer.
- You may need to review it more than once.
- Allow some time before reading it a second time. This allows you to go from ‘author mode’ to ‘reader mode’ and you’ll catch more errors.
- Get a second person to review it!

What You Should Look For:

- Review the content: Have you done everything the assignment asks for? Is your argument complete? Do you provide evidence for all of your claims?
- Examine the structure: Does it have an introduction and a conclusion? Is your thesis clearly stated? Is it clear how each paragraph relates to your thesis? Are your claims and points arranged in a logical order?
- Consider the clarity: Is the meaning of each sentence clear? (Try reading each sentence one at a time!) Is it clear who/what each pronoun (he, she, it) refers to? Does it use your normal vocabulary? (Avoid using thesaurus terms you wouldn’t normally use.)
- Review subject-verb agreement: Are singular subjects being incorrectly paired with plural verbs?
- Check spelling: Get a dictionary and check spelling!
- Review evidence: Does your evidence or sources include proper APA citations?