

# Proofreading Strategies

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After you've drafted your paper, sought feedback, and revised (see our handout "Revision Strategies" if you haven't done this yet), you might be ready to begin editing or proofreading your work. It can be difficult to find your own mistakes within your papers, so here are some strategies to make this process easier:

- Read the paper backwards paragraph by paragraph or sentence by sentence. This separates the words from the content, allowing you to more easily identify mistakes.
- Read your work aloud, so you can actually hear any awkward spots. (Hint: read slowly enough that you catch typos and missing word).
- Have someone else read your work aloud to you. Listen for places where the reader stumbles or reads something different than what you wrote.
- Circle verbs to locate passive voice.
- Circle prepositional phrases to locate potential wordiness.
- If you are aware of several sorts of errors you make consistently, read through your draft several times, looking for only one error each time.

## Helpful Hints

- Print a draft in 14-point font size to make editing easier.
- Run your spelling and grammar check features in your word processing program, but be aware that they'll locate errors that really aren't errors at all—and overlook misused homonyms and repeated words.
- Be patient. Good editing takes time.
- Use spell checker, but understand that a word might be spelled correctly, and not identified by the checker, but still have the wrong meaning.
- Put the paper aside for a short while, then re-read it fresh.

For quick answers to questions about grammar, punctuation, and documentation, try Grammar Chat, available online via the Meijer Center for Writing. See [www.gvsu.edu/wc](http://www.gvsu.edu/wc) for more details.