



Editing & Proofreading

For Orange County Government

Facilitated by Chris Friend
The John Scott Dailey
Florida Institute of Government
at the University of Central Florida



Meet Your Facilitator

Christopher R. Friend has taught Freshman English in Seminole County Public Schools since 2000. His current endeavors involve completing the Texts & Technology PhD program at UCF, as well as teaching online with Seminole County Virtual School (fulfilling a dream of combining teaching and computing, all without having to leave his house). He expects to earn his degree in 2013 by researching the use of technology to improve student learning across various learning styles.

While in class, he is often caught laughing, most often at himself. He is typically found using some kind of technology; he experiences withdrawal pains when more than thirty feet away from his MacBook Pro. To express his musical side, he participates as a choir member in the Candlelight Processional and Massed Choir Program at Walt Disney World, and he is a proud alumnus of the UCF Marching Knights, reprising his role as a mellophone player one day a year at the UCF homecoming football game.

CREDENTIALS

- UCF Trustees Doctoral Fellow, 2009
- MEd—Curriculum & Instruction (Gifted Ed) | UCF 2006
- BA—English (Creative Writing) | UCF 2000
- Secondary English Education Certification | FLDOE 2000
- Computer Science K–12 Certification | FLDOE 2008
- Gifted Endorsement | FLDOE 2008

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government (IOG) at the University of Central Florida is one of six university locations of the statewide institute. The IOG mission is to provide training and technical assistance to local governments, state agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Located in Research Park in East Orlando, the Institute of Government is administered in the UCF College of Health and Public Affairs. The UCF IOG has served Central Florida government and non-profit agencies since 1982, and has been directed by Marilyn Crotty since 1990.

Contact us at by phone at 407-882-3960 and by email at iog@mail.ucf.edu, or visit us online at www.iog.ucf.edu.

Services offered to government and non-profit agencies include:

- Training Programs
- Technical Assistance
- Organizational Development
- F.A.C.E.

Popular workshop topics include:

- 21 Laws of Leadership
- Supervisory Skills Series
- Leading Change
- Emotional Intelligence
- Self-Awareness with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Conflict Resolution with the Thomas Kilmann Instrument
- Written Communication Series
- Emerging Leader
- Strategic Planning & Visioning
- Business/Office Etiquette

The Importance of Proofreading

The sentences below come from actual letters received by a welfare department in Pennsylvania and a school district in California. These examples show why we should carefully check what we write.

1. I am forwarding you my marriage certificates and six children. I have seven, but one died when he was baptized on a half sheet of paper.
2. I am writing the Welfare Department to say that my baby was born two years old. When do I get my money?
3. Mrs. Jones has not had any clothes for a year and has been visited regularly by the clergy.
4. I cannot get sick pay. I have six children, can you tell me why?
5. This is my sixth child, what are you going to do about it?
6. You have changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make any difference?
7. I was very much annoyed to find you have branded my son illiterate. This is a dirty lie as I was married a week before he was born.
8. Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.
9. Please excuse Sue from class. Yesterday she fell out of a tree and misplaced her hip.

Proofreading Pre-Test

The necessity of training farmhands for first-class farms in the fatherly handling of farm	
livestock is foremost in the minds of farm owners. Since the forefathers of the farm	
owners trained the farmhands for the first-class farms in the fatherly handling of farm livestock,	
the farm owners feel they should carry on with the family tradition of training farmhands of	
first-class farms in the fatherly handling of farm livestock because they believe it is the	
basis of good fundamental farm management.	
Total Count	

Guidelines for Successful Proofreading

How do you handle your proofreading? Are you one of those “Oh, I didn’t notice that mistake” people? Responsibility for content usually rests with the writer; responsibility for error-free copy usually rests with the person doing the typing. If you find proofreading a hard part of your job, here are some suggestions to make the task more bearable.

The kind of material you must proofread determines the proofreading technique to use. Is it

- ▶ a legal description of a plot of land or a memo to a department head down the hall?
- ▶ a letter, 5000 copies of which are going into citizens’ utility bills?
- ▶ a set of notes for the boss’s speech tonight?
- ▶ the annual department budget with column upon column of million-dollar figures, and now you face the tedious task of being sure that every number is correct?

General questions to consider *before* proofreading:

- ▶ How important is the document?
 - ▶ Does it warrant the attention of a pair of proofreaders?
 - ▶ Does it need only a quick scan?
 - ▶ How essential is accuracy in the opinion of your supervisor?
- ▶ How much time is available for proofreading?
- ▶ What is your own feeling about mistakes?
- ▶ Who will be seeing this? (How widespread is the potential damage?)
 - ▶ What is your department policy about error-free copy?
 - ▶ How much time will readers spend with the material?

Things you can do *while* proofreading your material:

First use your computer’s spell check and grammar check. Studies show, however, that these tools, while helpful, are not perfect. The five steps in the next section are an effective technique of proofreading that involves reading every word carefully several times. For most proofreaders, just one reading is not enough to ensure error-free copy. Therefore, proofread in planned stages involving several readings, each one focused on a specific area, in the order listed on the next page.

The Proofreading Process

1. Sense and Completeness

Look for major twists or omissions in this first reading, such as missing words, contorted, incomplete, or nonsense sentences, out-of-place paragraphs, or even entire omitted or unnecessary sections. As you read, don't worry about the look of the text. Instead, ask yourself, "Do these ideas make sense?" The less you focus on writing detail here, the better. Your goal on this read is to pay attention to the meaning, not the content.

2. Grammar and Usage

This time through, look at each sentence as a whole. Rather than looking for misunderstood parts of the thinking, check the phrasing and word choice in each sentence. If you always got in trouble in school for a particular error (sentence fragments, subject/verb agreement, etc.), keep that tendency in mind. On this read, work sentence-by-sentence to ensure your writing style is clear.

If you are typing for someone else, you may need to consult with the original author on matters of usage, phrasing, or word choice. Only you can know how much flexibility you have in typing someone else's words; however, if you're ever in doubt, consult with the author. Attention to detail is often seen as a skill, not an annoyance.

3. Spelling and Typographical Errors

Look for misspelled words, improper endings of words, plus transposed numbers/letters/words. On this read, your focus now moves to the word-by-word level of detail. Question tricky spelling or frequently confused words. If you're unsure of yourself, look it up! Again, knowing your own trouble spots can help you pay more attention to what's likely to need fixing.

4. Reading Backwards

This sounds crazy until you try it. Obviously, it works best for short material, since reading long passages in reverse will make you crazy. The material will not make sense, but reading backward allows you to focus on spelling and repetition. It might surprise you how many little errors can be skipped over when reading quickly. Re-read that sentence backward to see what you notice.

5. Capitalization and Punctuation

Focus on letters not capitalized (scan for periods and check the letters after them) and capitals which should be lowercase. Double-check acronyms for accuracy. Check for missing punctuation, such as hyphens. Check for extra spaces or unnecessary punctuation, such as commas. Now that the words have all settled into their final places, you can look for the marks that connect them. This last read-through adds the polish to your masterpiece so you're sure everything is set.

When you use this five-step method, you are more likely to produce error-free copy. Train yourself to perform all five readings and to read only for the errors suggested in each reading. Of course, if you find you an error you are not reading for, go ahead and correct it once spotted. But the emphasis of this process is to start with the big-picture problems and get increasingly detailed as other issues are resolved.

Proofreading Tips for Document Types

The ideas below can help you proofread more easily. Divided by type of document, they can help draw attention to the particular trouble spots common to each product. This isn't an all-inclusive list, but rather a collection of helpful reminders that apply in various scenarios.

1. Short Narrative Copy

- ▶ Pay attention to dates. Do not assume a date is correct just because you have typed the same date dozens of times. Check the spelling of months, even the correctness of the year, especially if other than the current year. Be especially careful every January!
- ▶ Check the name, address, subject, and reference lines in letters. Those parts of letters are often copied and pasted from other files. Be sure the content is correct for the current document.
- ▶ Examine the endings and beginnings of lines to be sure you have not repeated a little word like “that” or “of.” Reading backwards can *really* help catch this error.
- ▶ Do a separate punctuation check: periods and commas always go within quotation marks.
- ▶ Read only the personalized parts of letters and memos which are otherwise identical.
- ▶ Arrange with a coworker to proofread each other's material if time allows and if neither of you is sensitive about having another person find your mistakes.

2. Long Narratives

- ▶ Rely on the styles feature of your word processor to ensure fonts, spacing, coloring, alignment, etc. match across the document. The earlier you set this up, the easier your life will be.
- ▶ Use your word processor to add page/section/figure/image numbers, page counts, and the current date as automatically updating fields. It's one less thing to worry about, and it can automate tables of contents—particularly handy for last-minute content changes.
- ▶ Make a style sheet for content. Keep a copy by you as you type to assure consistency in capitalization, punctuation, use of names and titles, and spelling of specialized technology, etc.
- ▶ Make sure any references to other parts of the copy are correct. For example, “See page 8 for a similar list.” Be sure that list has not moved to page 7! (Using automatic references in your word processor can make this a non-issue. It's worth learning how.)
- ▶ Read the body of the new copy (live copy) against the original (dead copy), sentence by sentence. It's helpful to have another person read the dead aloud while you check the live.
- ▶ Highlight with a marker handwritten inserts on the original before you begin to type. Be sure in your proofreading that the new copy includes them all by crossing out (or checking off) each edit as it's made in the document.
- ▶ If the dead copy is on scraps of paper which you must “merge” into the new, count the paragraphs on the original papers and compare with the number in your new copy to be sure you have all of them.

3. Technical Material and Tables

- ▶ Use two proofreaders, one reading the dead copy aloud and the other checking the live copy, to verify technical data.
- ▶ If you have typed the columns by tabbing across the page, proofread down the columns by folding the original from top to bottom and laying it next to the corresponding column of the live copy.
- ▶ If you have typed the columns down the page, proofread across by folding the original above each line and laying it under the corresponding line of typed entries.
- ▶ Lay a ruler under each line to keep your place when proofing—especially when interrupted!
- ▶ Proofread outlines by breaking the job into components: check headings; then check mechanics (numbers, indentations); finally read each item against the original. Use styles in your word processor to automate the formatting of outlines so you really only check content.
- ▶ Count the number of entries in each column. Be sure the totals on old and new are the same!
- ▶ Total the columns on your live and dead copies, and be sure they match. Note: most software, including word processors, has the ability to automatically generate totals. If you can't with the software you use, copying the data and pasting it into a spreadsheet can also work.

4. Generic Material

- ▶ Keep a list of the words that are hard for you to spell handy on the pullout portion of your desk. Referring to this list and typing these words correctly the first time is often faster than using spell check or correcting the misspelled words your computer program underlines.
- ▶ Watch closely for omissions of “ed” or the final “s” on third-person singular, present tense verbs. For example, be sure to type “he works,” not “he work.”
- ▶ Watch out for the interchanged words that are so easy to overlook: their/there, our/are.
- ▶ Mentally repeat syllables of long words that have many vowels: Kissimmee, evacuation.
- ▶ Refer to *The Gregg Reference Manual* (or a current/online dictionary) to determine whether to use a compound word or a hyphenated word and find rules on capitalization.

5. Numbers

- ▶ Be sure numbers make sense. “September 3 1” is always wrong, no matter what’s in the original.
- ▶ After reading for content, read again to check all numbers (figures, dates, etc.) in an extra step.
- ▶ Separate long numbers into parts. For example, read the social security number 243–70–1959 as “two forty three/seventy/nineteen fifty-nine,” instead of remembering nine separate digits, your ear/eye will more easily remember five.
- ▶ Be sure columns of numbers line up: hyphens under, dollar signs aligned, etc. Your word processing software can automatically do this, saving you time and making your work look more professional than “spacing over” to the line.

- ▶ When proofing several columns of numbers (like phone numbers), read down, not across, each column. For example, read the area codes first.
- ▶ Be sure all phone numbers have ten digits.
- ▶ Add column totals on live and dead copies to be certain the totals match.

Color Hunt

This exercise will help your concentration and ability to overcome the restrictions of habit that keep you from seeing what is actually in front of you! Find the color in each sentence.

1. Newspaper editors decided to go on strike. (Red; get it? Now you find the rest!)
2. A big, old hungry dog appeared at our door every morning.
3. The Brazilian student, Paulo, lives just around the corner from us.
4. You shouldn't let an upstart like him bother you.
5. He let out a big yell, owing to the injuries he received when he fell.
6. The cop persuaded him not to create a disturbance.
7. La Jolla vendors decided to cut their prices in half.
8. Long rayon fabrics were loaded on the truck.
9. You shouldn't sell this fossil very cheaply because it is a rare specimen.
10. The new law hit everybody's pocketbook pretty hard.
11. Bob's car let out dark fumes when he tried to drive it up the steep hill.
12. He decided to leap, in keeping with the agreement reached with the referee.
13. The old ogre entered the argument with obvious relish.
14. A huge dog called Lobo ran gently toward me.
15. They ate lime jell-O for dessert.
16. After you've let the cat in, dig out the buried treasure.
17. After you wipe the sweat off your brow, nestle a little closer to me.
18. They wanted to stay on the island of Crete a little longer.
19. She always adds cream to her coffee.
20. The ability to check for errors is a quality worth having.

Common (Not All) Proofreading Symbols

^
blah insert text or punctuation

^
insert space

⊙ insert period

” insert apostrophe or quotation mark

⌫ delete

↔ transpose (swap)

⌋ close up

¶ begin new paragraph

⌌ no new paragraph

≡ capitalize

/ make lowercase

Proofreading Exercise

There are twenty-one errors in the following letter. Correct them by checking punctuation, spelling, capitalization, numbers, omissions, verb tenses, typos, and grammar. Use the symbols from above.

Dear Mr. Blanton:

This is in reply to your letter of Jan. 28, 2010 about the benefits Mr. Thomas Kaiser is receiving for his disability retirement under the Civil Service Retirement System.

To alleviate any financial hardship to Mr Kaiser while his claim was being processed monthly payments of \$40.00 was authorized. When final approval of the award was made, his rate was established at 61.00 a month comencing March 4, 2009. His payments was then increased to \$64.00 effective April 30, 2009. With a 37.93 per month deducktion for health benefits his current net rate is \$26.06. Mr. Kayser had been paid all anuity due to date. Future checks mailed to him on the first bussiness day of the month.

Any inconvenieince caused Mr. Kaiser is regreted.

Sincerely Yours,

Customer Service

Or These Write?

“Too Bee Oar Not Two Bea”

I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC
An plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I kin not sea!

I’ve run this poem threw hit
(I’m sure you wood be pleased to no!)
Its letter perfect in it’s weigh:
My check toiled me sew!

Dear Ann Landers:

Sum won toiled me wee wood knot knead two
learn how too spell because computers or secre-
taries wood dew it four us. Eye disagree. Dew
Ewe?

—St Louis Park

Dear St. Louis Park,

Ewe our write. Thank ewe four a good cloths
look at what “progress” has dun fore education.

Worrisome Words

Part I—Understanding the Differences

For each of these, don’t guess. The point is to confidently *know*, using resources (which can include a partner), rather than to haphazardly *guess*, using a hunch.

1. **In which was the legendary bowman surprisingly careless?**
 - a) Robin Hood was about to loose his arrow.
 - b) Robin Hood was about to lose his arrow.
2. **Which sounds conspiratorial?**
 - a) We’d like to invite you to dessert with us tomorrow evening.
 - b) We’d like to invite you to desert with us tomorrow evening.
3. **Which draft board’s needs were the greatest?**
 - a) The medical board accepted men with perforated eardrums.
 - b) The medical board excepted men with perforated eardrums.
4. **Which statement is concerned with ethical standards?**
 - a) The principles in the case are well known.
 - b) The principals in the case are well known.
5. **Which Joe is very obedient?**
 - a) Joe submitted to many orders.
 - b) Joe submitted too many orders.

Part II—Matching Meanings

English is full of words that sound alike or almost alike that have different spellings and meanings. How many of these can you and your partner figure out?

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 6. assembly of lawmakers | a) ascent |
| 7. advice or the one who gives advice | b) assent |
| 8. the full quantity or number | c) altar |
| 9. praise | d) alter |
| 10. to use an example, to quote | e) capital |
| 11. location | f) capitol |
| 12. the art of climbing, an upward slope | g) cite |
| 13. agreement, agree | h) site |
| 14. main governing city, money, upper-case letter | i) complement |
| 15. building which houses lawmakers | j) compliment |
| 16. to change | k) council |
| 17. a table used in ceremonies | l) counsel |

Part III—Pick the Term

Can you and your partner decide which is the correct word in each case? For bonus points, figure out what each wrong answer means to explain the difference to the group. Tip: be very deliberate with your pronunciation of the words you read. Choices for each answer don't sound alike if you're careful.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 18. to suit oneself to | 20. to withhold | 22. to blame | 24. clashing |
| a) adapt | approval | a) censor | a) collision |
| b) adept | a) disapprove | b) censure | b) collusion |
| c) adopt | b) disprove | | |
| 19. to influence | 21. to solicit | 23. direction | 25. friend, advisor |
| a) affect | a) canvas | a) coarse | a) confident |
| b) effect | b) canvass | b) course | b) confidant |

A Comedy of Commas *(by Maxwell Numberg)*

- 26. Which is a libel on the fair sex?**
a) Thirteen girls knew the secret, all told.
b) Thirteen girls knew the secret; all told.
- 27. Which sentence shows extraordinary powers of persuasion?**
a) I left him convinced he was a fool.
b) I left him, convinced he was a fool.
- 28. Which is the foursome?**
a) Henry James and I will play golf with you tomorrow.
b) Henry, James, and I will play golf with you tomorrow.
- 29. Which headline seems cannibalistic?**
a) SENATE GROUP EATS CHICKEN, CABINET SPOUSES, SEAFOOD.
b) SENATE GROUP EATS CHICKEN; CABINET SPICES, SEAFOOD.
- 30. Which is easier for the children?**
a) In the parade will be several hundred children, carrying flags, and many important officials.
b) In the parade will be several hundred children, carrying flags and many important officials.
- 31. Which is unflattering to the play?**
a) The play ended, happily.
b) The play ended happily.
- 32. In which case has Miami only one game left to play?**
a) Miami still must play Iowa, which tied Notre Dame, and Missouri.
b) Miami still must play Iowa, which tied Notre Dame and Missouri.
- 33. Both show manners, but which is harder to do?**
a) Do not break your bread or roll in your soup.
b) Do not break your bread, or roll in your soup.
- 34. Which will require a lot of postage?**
a) Shall I stick the stamp on, myself?
b) Shall I stick the stamp on myself?
- 35. Which is the neurotic personality?**
a) She, too, eagerly awaits the spring.
b) She too eagerly awaits the spring.
- 36. In which sentence is Mrs. Rogers likely to get in trouble?**
a) Mrs. Rogers, the secretary is two hours late.
b) Mrs. Rogers, the secretary, is two hours late.
- 37. Which saleswoman has more going for her?**
a) A pretty young saleswoman waited on me.
b) A pretty, young saleswoman waited on me.

Pesky Punctuation

Punctuation marks are to a reader what road signs are to a driver, making it easier for a reader to understand what the writer has written. Here are some basic guidelines. Make note of the ones you (or the writer you're typing for) tend to mix up so you can learn the differences.

- I. Apostrophes
 - A. Use the apostrophe to
 1. Indicate contractions or omitted letters
 - a) I've
 - b) it's (it is)
 - c) TV'ers
 2. Indicate the plurals of uppercase letters-as-letters **only if omitting it may confuse**.
 - a) Italicize all A's. (not As)
 - b) There are two U's in the word *usurp*. (not two Us)
 - c) Non-examples (clear meanings)
 - (1) Study the three Rs.
 - (2) His report card shows three Cs.
 3. Indicate the plurals of lowercase letters referred to as letters and abbreviations.
 - a) dotting the i's
 - b) p's and q's
 - c) four c.o.d.'s
 - d) wearing pj's
 4. Show possession
 - a) Add apostrophe+s when singular noun is \geq two syllables long or is one syllable long and **does not** end with an *s*.
 - (1) one officer's badge
 - (2) Mr. Ruiz's car
 - (3) one glass's lip.
 - b) Add only the apostrophe to a noun that ends with an *s* and is either plural or only one syllable long.
 - (1) Mars' orbit
 - (2) Mr. Jones' office
 - (3) two officers' cars
 - (4) the Joneses' house
 - (5) two glasses' lips
 - c) In compound nouns, add an apostrophe or 's to the final word.
 - (1) one brother-in-law's boat
 - (2) six wheeler-dealers' deals
 - d) Show joint possession in nouns in series by adding apostrophe or 's to the last noun.
soldiers and sailors' home
 - e) Show separate possession in nouns in series by adding apostrophe or 's to each noun.
John's, Thomas's, and Henry's ratings were each good.
 - f) Show possession in indefinite pronouns by adding 's to the last part.
 - (1) someone's desk
 - (2) somebody else's books
 - B. Do not use the apostrophe to
 1. Form the possessive of personal pronouns.
my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs

2. Form the plural of spelled-out numbers, words referred to as words, and words already containing an apostrophe—unless adding an apostrophe makes the word easier to read.
 - a) twos and threes
 - b) ifs, ands, and buts
 - c) yeses and noes
 - d) which's and that's
 - e) dos and don'ts
 - f) pros and cons
 - g) yeas and nays
 - h) or's or nor's
3. Follow names of countries and other organized bodies ending in *s* or after words more descriptive than possessive, except when the plural does not end in *s*.
 - a) United States control
 - b) United Nations meeting
 - c) merchants exchange
 - d) children's hospital

II. Brackets

- A. Use brackets in pairs to
 1. Enclose a correction.
He arrived at 13 [12] o'clock.
 2. Supply something omitted.
Mr. Adams arrived [to the meeting] late.
 3. Explain or identify.
The president pro tem [Joe Arnold] spoke briefly.
 4. Instruct or add comment.
The report is as follows. [Read first paragraph.]
 5. Enclose *sic* to show that you have recognized but not changed an error in a quotation.
"It's [sic] identification number is missing."
- B. Use a single bracket:
 1. At the beginning of each paragraph when brackets enclose extensive material running to more than one paragraph.
 2. At the end of the last paragraph of such a sequence.

III. Colons—Used to

- A. Separate an introductory statement from following explanatory or summarizing material.
 1. The board consists of three officials: chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.
 2. These measures are necessary while the country is at war: give up conveniences, demand no special privileges, do not stop work.
- B. Introduce formal statements, questions, or quotations.
 1. The committee stated the principal thus: In foreign relations, people, not governments, are our first concern.
 2. These questions about the project arose for discussion: How much? When? Where?
 3. He said: [If the quotation is only one sentence, use a comma instead of a colon here.]
- C. Follow a formal salutation in a business letter.
 1. Dear Mayor Smith:
 2. Ladies and Gentlemen:
- D. Separate the hour and the minutes in clock time.
 1. 8:15 a.m.
 2. 11:59 p.m.
- E. Separate citation parts.
 1. Luke 4:3
 2. *Education Journal* 3:5-7.

IV. Commas

A. Use the comma to

1. Separate words or figures that might be otherwise misunderstood or misread.
 - a) Instead of hundreds, thousands came.
 - b) To John, Smith was very helpful.
2. Set off explanations or introductions that precede, break, or follow a short quotation.
 - a) I said, "Don't you understand the question?"
 - b) "I understand it," she replied, "but I disagree with the answer."
 - c) "Why?" I asked.
 - d) "Because it's so unreasonable!" she exclaimed.
3. Show the omission of an understood word or words.
Then he was enthusiastic; now, indifferent.
4. Separate a series of separate modifiers of **equal** rank.
 - a) It is a young, eager group.
 - b) He is a clever young man. (*The phrase "young man" works as one concept.*)
5. Follow each member in a series of three or more.
 - a) Red, white, and blue
 - b) him, her, or me
6. Separate an introductory phrase from the word it modifies.
Beset by mosquitos, he ran to the tent.
7. Mark names.
 - a) To set off abbreviations like Esq., academic degrees, and religious orders.
 - (1) Joe Smith, Ph.D., wrote a book.
 - (2) The Reverend Tom Doe, S.J., will lead the prayer.
 - b) To set off suffixes like Jr, Sr., II, or III.
 - (1) Joe Smith, Jr. (*Use one comma when name is on a line by itself.*)
 - (2) Joe Smith, Jr., director of... (*Use two commas when other copy follows.*)
 - (3) Joe Smith, Jr.'s promotion (*Drop second commas after a possessive ending.*)
 - c) To show inverted order.
Smith, Joe, Jr.
 - d) Inc., Ltd., Co.: Generally used without commas for modern companies; check press releases or websites to verify preferred corporate branding.
 - e) City, state, country.
I lived in Provo, Utah, before moving to Bangor, Maine; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta, Georgia, and London, England, where I finally retired.
8. Set off parenthetical (unnecessary to the sense of the sentence) words, phrases, or clauses.
 - a) The atom bomb, which was developed by the Manhattan Project, helped end WWII.
 - b) The Middle East situation, according to the Secretary of State, is volatile.
 - c) The person who started that fire is undoubtedly an arsonist. (*all phrases are necessary*)
 - d) He wants action, not words, from the court.
 - e) Mr. Jay, the plaintiff's attorney, asked for a delay.
9. Connect sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet).
Sue is unfailingly polite, and she welcomes visitors with a big smile.
10. Set off a noun of direct address.
 - a) Sue, please type the memo.
 - b) Please, Sue, type the memo.
11. Separate thousands, millions, etc., in numbers of four or more digits.
 - a) 4,280
 - b) 2,000,000

12. Set off the year in a three-item date within a sentence.
 - a) We met on May 3, 2003, in Reno.
 - b) We met in May 2003 in Reno. (*No commas in a two-item date.*)

B. Do not use the comma to

1. Precede an ampersand unless name order is reversed.
 - a) A.H. Jones & Sons. (normal name order)
 - b) Jones, A.H., & Sons. (reversed name order where the comma indicates the reversal)
2. Precede a dash.

Of the factors—time, cost, and quality—quality is paramount.
3. Separate two nouns, one of which identifies the other.
 - a) The booklet Safety is available.
 - b) My son Ben lives in Paris.

V. Hyphens

A. Connect the parts of certain compound nouns.

- a) self-control
- b) walkie-talkie
- c) ex-governor
- d) H-bomb
- e) quasi-accident

1. Note: Some compound words are written as solid words; some are written as separate words, and some are hyphenated. The correct style for many words is constantly changing. For best advice, check an up-to-date (online) dictionary or the “Compound Words” Chapter of *The Gregg Reference Manual*.
2. Note: Make compound nouns *plural* by adding *s* to the main word (sisters-in-law) but *possessive* by adding *s* at the end (my sisters-in-law’s house).

B. Indicate the continuation of a word divided at the end of a line by placing a hyphen on first line. This is almost always handled automatically by word-processing software and typically should not be done manually.

C. To combine adjectives that work together to create a single description.

1. A yellow taxi driver is someone cowardly who drives a taxi (of any color).
A yellow-taxi driver is someone (brave or not) who drives a taxi painted yellow.
2. Ordering flash-fried chicken gives poultry cooked quickly at high temperature.
If a flash fried chicken, a bright light (or comic-book hero) prepared the food.
3. A comic book hero is a funny protagonist.
A comic-book hero is an animated person with superpowers.

D. Separate the letters of a word spelled out for emphasis.

d-o-l-l-a-r-s

VI. Dashes

A. Not to be confused with a hyphen (-); see above.

B. The en-dash (—)

1. Used to connect numbers.
 - a) See pages 3–5.
 - b) Call us at 407–882–3960.
2. To type:
 - a) Mac: option + hyphen
 - b) PC: alt + 0150 (or control + number-pad minus in MS Word)

C. The em-dash (—)

1. Should be used sparingly and deliberately.
2. Marks a sudden break or abrupt change in thought.
 - a) He said—and no one contradicted him—“The battle is lost.”
 - b) If the bill should pass—and Heaven forbid!—the service will be wrecked.
3. Indicates an interruption or unfinished word or sentence.

- a) He said, “Give me lib—.”
- b) Did you see—?
- 4. Separates an afterthought from the main part of the sentence.
We offer the best service in town—and the fastest!
- 5. Shows hesitation.
I will—or, maybe I can’t—I don’t know—go with you.
- 6. Sets off repetition.
Don’t miss this chance—the chance of a lifetime.
- 7. Emphasizes single words.
 - a) Jogging—that’s what he lives for.
 - b) Don’t believe him—ever!
- 8. Attributes quotes.
“Never put off until tomorrow that which you can do today.”
—Benjamin Franklin
- 9. To type:
 - a) Mac: shift + option + hyphen
 - b) PC: alt + 0151 (or in MS Word, control + shift + number-pad minus, or by typing two hyphens between two words)

VII. Exclamation Points

- A. Note surprise, disbelief, admiration, or other strong emotion.
- B. Can terminate a sentence.
 - 1. Oh, that’s beautiful!
 - 2. He absolutely adores her!
- C. Can emphasize an interjection.
 - 1. Wow!
 - 2. Bam!
 - 3. Ouch!
- D. Should be used with restraint. Exclamation points are rare in most writing, extremely rare in business writing, and almost never appropriate in multiples.

VIII. Parentheses

- A. Set off material not grammatically part of the sentence.
The results (see figure 2) are surprising.
- B. Set off parenthetic (extra) material for a stronger interruption than commas.
You can’t find good wine here (at least, I can’t) at any price.
- C. Enclose an explanatory word not part of the statement.
His favorite newspaper is the Erie (PA) Ledger, not The Ledger of Erie, PA.
- D. Enclose letters or numbers designating items in a series. This construction is rarely needed in a single sentence and could be more clear as a list.
She has (1) a horrid haircut, (2) an unbecoming style, and (3) a poor dye job.

IX. Periods

- A. End declarative or imperative sentences.
 - 1. He works for Orange County.
 - 2. Complete the application and return it to our office.
 - 3. Tell me how you filed the form.
 - 4. We wish to hear from you soon.
- B. Indicate omission within a sentence (a three-dot ellipsis) or at the end of one (four dots: three for the omission and one for the period). Do not add space between periods; most word processors will convert three consecutive periods to an ellipsis.
He called...and left....
- C. End most lowercase abbreviations made of single initials.
 - 1. a.m.

2. i.e.
 3. PBS (Capitalized abbreviations are called *acronyms* and do not need punctuation.)
 4. UCF
 5. PIN
- D. End capitalized geographic names (U.S.A.), academic degrees (B.A.), and B.C. and A.D. (*This “rule” is fading; many institutions are not using periods in these cases.*)

X. Question Marks

- A. Indicate a direct query.
1. Did he do it?
 2. He did what?
- B. Express more than one question as a continuation of the same sentence. This construction is rarely appropriate for business writing.
Can he do it? or you? or you?
- C. Express doubt about a specific element inside a sentence.
He said the boy was eight (?) feet tall.

XI. Quotation Marks

- A. Enclose a direct quotation. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.
1. She said, “I love learning about punctuation marks.”
 2. The answer is “No.” Bob said, “John said ‘No.’” Bob said he heard John say he can’t go.
- B. Identify the title of *portions* of published works,—such as poems, essays, articles, songs, etc. The titles of *complete* published works—books, magazines, music albums, etc.—are italicized.
He read the poem “Trees” from The Complete Poems of Joyce Kilmer.
- C. To punctuate:
1. Periods and commas always go inside end quotation marks.
 - a) He read the poem “Trees.”
 - b) He read the poem “Trees,” and then he memorized it.
 - c) Colons and semicolons always go outside end quotation marks.
 - d) Mark shipments of these goods “fragile”: china, glass, and ceramics.
 - e) He read the poem “Trees”; he then memorized it.
 2. Question marks, exclamation points, dashes, and parenthesis go either place, depending on the meaning.
 - a) Sue asked, “Have you read your mail?”
 - b) Bob cried, “How I love Fridays!”
 - c) Why did Joe say, “I am not happy here”?
 - d) Bob absolutely detests the poem “Trees”!
 - e) He said, “If only I had listened—.”
 - f) If I hear one more word about “political correctness”—
 - g) He agreed to pay “by Friday (May 5).”
 - h) Joe (known as “the boss’s gofer”) will get the job.

XII. Semicolons

- A. Separate connected sentence with no coordinating conjunction between them.
Sue is unfailingly polite; she welcomes all visitors with a warm smile.
- B. Separate items in a series if any of the items already contain commas.
He has lived in Miami, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; and Chicago, Illinois.

Proofreading With a Partner

This variation of the solo technique of proofreading takes two people. One reads aloud from the dead (original) copy while the other checks the live (new, retyped) version. When they have finished the first proofreading, they exchange papers and assignments: the original reader now rechecks the original checker's corrections on the live copy while the original checker now reads the dead copy aloud for the second time. This way, two pairs of eyes check the new copy.

The objective is to make the live copy a perfect copy of the dead, just as if you ran it through a copy machine.

First reading: A reads dead copy aloud while B checks live (new) copy.

Proofreaders **exchange papers** and switch roles.

Second reading: B reads dead copy aloud while A checks live (new) copy.

The reader must read aloud in a way that makes it easy for the checker to find the errors. For instance:

- ▶ Read slowly. (The checker must tell the reader to slow down if he or she reads too fast.)
- ▶ Read capitalization and punctuation. (Say, "Director, underlined, starting with capital 'D.'")
- ▶ Mention anything out of the ordinary, like spacing between lines and lengths of blanks.
- ▶ Read every digit of every number.
- ▶ Spell proper names.
- ▶ Spell technical terms.
- ▶ Indicate paragraph breaks.
- ▶ Check to be sure lines start and end with the same words on both copies.

The dead copy on the next page is the original. While A reads the dead copy aloud, B corrects the live copy (the new, retyped material on the page after). When you have finished the first reading, exchange booklets. A now corrects the live copy that B has just marked while B reads the dead copy out loud again. This way, two pairs of eyes correct the *same* material.

See whether you find any more errors on the second reading!

▶ Dead Copy.

NOTICE OF LIQUIDATION

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the provisions of Title II, section 207(a) (2) of the Federal Credit Union Act, the _____ Federal Credit Union, Charter Number _____, has been placed into involuntary liquidation by order of the Administrator, National Credit Union Administration, Washington, D.C. All creditors having any claim or demand against said credit union are required to present their claims and make legal proof thereof to the National Credit Union Administration, _____. Under the provisions of said Act, all claims not filed within four months from the date this advertisement first appeared shall be barred, and claims rejected or disallowed by the Liquidating Agent shall be likewise barred. All claims of creditors of said credit union should be submitted under oath or affirmation dully administered by a notary public or other person legally empowered to administer the same.

Agent for the Liquidating Agent

▶ Live Copy

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the provisions of Title II, Section 207(a2) of the Federal Credit Union Act, the _____ Federal Credit Union, Chapter Number _____, had been placed into voluntary liquidation by order of the Administrator, National Credit Union Administration, Washington, D.C. All having any claim or demand against said credit union are required to present their claims and make legal proof thereof of the National Credit Union Administrator, _____.

Under the provisions of said Act, all claims not filed within 4 months from the date this advertisement first appeared shall be barred, and claims rejected or disallowed by the Liquidating Agent shall be likewise barred. All claims of creditors of said credit union should be submitted under oath or affirmation duly administered by a notary public or other legally empowered to administer the same.

Agent for the Liquidating Agent

Tongue-Tied Proofreading

Proofread and make corrections to the live copy below. Have fun with it—the text is more difficult than it looks!

▶ Dead Copy

TONGUE-TRIPPER TEST USED FOR APPLICANTS FOR TV/RADIO JOBS

I bought a batch of baking powder and baked a batch of biscuits. I brought a big basket of biscuits back to the bakery and baked a basket of big biscuits. Then I took a big basket of biscuits and the basket of big biscuits and mixed the big biscuits with the basket of biscuits that was next to the big basket and put a bunch of biscuits from the basket into a box. Then, I took the box of mixed biscuits and a biscuit basket and brought the basket of biscuits and the box of mixed biscuits and the biscuit mixer to the bakery and opened a can of sardines.

▶ Live Copy

TONGUE TRIPPER TEST USED FOR APPLICANTS FOR TV-RADIO JOBS

I bought a batch of baking powder an baked a batch of biscuits. I bought a big basket of biscuit back to teh bakery and baked baket of big biscuits then I took a big basket of biscuits and the basket of big biscuits and mix the big biscuits with the basket of biscuit that was next to the big basket and put bunch of biscuit for the basket into a box. Then, I took the box of mix biscuits and a biscuit basket and bought the basket fo biscuits an the box of mixed biscuit and the bisciut mixer to the bakery and opened a can of sardine.

The Readability of Writing (The Gunning-Fog Index)

The Gunning-Fog Index is a test designed to measure the readability of a sample of writing. The resulting number is an indication of the number of years of formal education that a person requires in order to easily understand the text on the first reading. That is, if a passage has a fog index of 12, it has the reading level of a U.S. high school senior. The test was developed by Robert Gunning, an American business man, in 1952.

A piece of writing with a Fog Index of more than twelve runs a serious risk of not being understood or even read. The index is not a measure of the intelligence level of the reader, or of the intensity of the subject matter, but only of reading ease.

Gear your writing to the reading level of your audience. Aim for the “lowest common denominator” so that everyone in your intended audience can read your writing. The average American reads on the sixth grade level. The lower the reading level of the writing, the easier it is for your reader to understand what you write. Only if you are positive that your entire audience can easily understand technical terms and difficult vocabulary should you choose a higher Fog Index.

Two versions of a memo appear below. The first version has a Fog Index of between 16 and 17, which suggests that it’s designed for an audience of college graduates. The second version has a Fog Index of between 7 and 8. What if the audience of the memo consists of high-school graduates? Is there any reason for the higher level of complexity?

Index of 16/17

Since general safety conditions are one of the responsibilities you have within your department, we would appreciate your disseminating the following information.

In a recent inspection of all areas the most obvious hazard detected was the manner in which office equipment is placed or used in relation to personal movement or traffic.

All personnel in your area should be made aware of possible Safety Hazards and take precautionary measures at all times so that a high “Safety Level” may be maintained.

- ▶ Electrical cords on equipment such as typewriters, adding machines, etc., should not be permitted to lie loose on the floor where the possibility of someone tripping over them exists.
- ▶ When not in immediate use, desk and files drawers should be kept closed at all times.

Index of 7/8

Safety in your department is your responsibility. Please see that your people are made aware of hazards and that they take measures to prevent them.

A recent inspection revealed a chief hazard to be office equipment placed in the way of people moving about.

- ▶ Electrical cords of typewriters, adding machines, etc., should not lie loose on the floor. Someone may trip over them.
- ▶ Keep desk and files drawers closed when not in use.

Finding the Reading Level

When editing writing, the reading level of the words should be kept to a level appropriate for the audience. We've talked about simplifying our writing, and this is a good way to put a number on an idea. If your writing is intended for the public, this is especially important, as the average reading level is often far lower than we normally expect. Here's how to find the reading level of something you're writing:

- ▶ In MS Word:
 - ▶ First, look in preferences for "Show readability statistics" and be sure it's checked. Also check "Check grammar with spelling." Determining readability is part of Word's grammar check.
 - ▶ Run a full grammar check of your document.
 - ▶ When finished, you'll see this sort of report:

Readability Statistics	
Counts	
Words	271
Characters	1196
Paragraphs	3
Sentences	10
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	3.3
Words per Sentence	27.1
Characters per Word	4.2
Readability	
Passive Sentences	30%
Flesch Reading Ease	65.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	10.9

- ▶ Manually:
 - ▶ The Gunning-Fog Index
 - ▶ Choose a sample of 100 words or more.
 - ▶ Count the number of words in the sample.
 - ▶ Then, count the number of independent clauses. Divide the number of words by the number of clauses. This determines the **number of words per sentence**.
 - ▶ Count the number of words of three or more syllables. Don't count capitalized words, easy combination words like bookkeeper or manpower, or verbs made into three syllables by adding -es, -ed, or -ing. Divide the number of these big words by the total number of words. This determines the **percentage of big words**.
 - ▶ Add the number of words per sentence and the percentage of big words.
 - ▶ Multiply that total by 0.4 to find the Gunning-Fog Index.
 - ▶ The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (what MS Word uses)
 - ▶ Count the number of words in the sample, then count the number of sentences. Divide the number of words by the number of sentences. This determines the **average sentence length (ASL)**.
 - ▶ Count the number of syllables in the sample. Divide the number of syllables by the number of words. This determines the **average syllables per word (ASW)**.
 - ▶ Grab a calculator. $(.39 \times ASL) + (11.8 \times ASW) - 15.59 = \text{Grade Level}$.