

The Creative 5280 Proofreading and Editing Guide

Proofreading

Traditionally, proofreading takes place after editing and done on a final printed copy called a “galley proof” of your book, eBook or document. The concept behind proofreading is to catch any final errors that were missed before printing. Today, with eBooks and electronic documents, proofreading is often done to the electronic or online version before publishing and printing. When proofreading is done to the electronic or online version of text, the author needs to be aware that mistakes in format and nuance in punctuation could be missed. For this reason, it is advisable to only print one or two copies and do a print proofread before publishing and offering your work to the public.

Proofreading is the process of reviewing the mechanical elements of your text addressing issues around:

- **Spelling** – Sounds easy enough. However, common mistakes in writing happen due to habit or lack of formality. For example, while the word “alright” is in the dictionary, the proper spelling and form is “all right.” Compound words are also problematic. Finally, the “ing” form of words is often misspelled. For example, “canceling” versus “cancelling.” While both are technically correct, the one “l” is proper US English spelling while two is United Kingdom, Canadian, and Australian English. Is she blonde or blond? Hopefully, you begin to see the nuance.
- **Capitalization** – A word can change meaning when it is capitalized or not. Universe is one that gets confusing. Universe is always lower case according to the Chicago Manual of Style (COMS). However, some will insist that when talking of *the* Universe then it is capitalized while *a* universe is lower case. Additionally, the directional words like north, south, east, and west. If you are writing about direction, then it isn’t capitalized. However, if you are using it to define a specific region, then it is. He drove west and he lives in the West. I could go on!
- **Punctuation** – Comma use is always a challenge—so is the use of ellipsis (...), hyphenation, and dashes. Do you know when or how to use the en dash (–), em dash (—), or hyphen (-)? In quotes and dialogue, writers often rearrange the order of punctuation. For example, having the quotation marks before a period at the end of a sentence. Then you have the question of using a comma for compound sentences or should you split the comma splice and make two sentences.
- **Grammar** – The famous “there, their, and they’re” isn’t the only grammar issue. The proper use of “that” or “which” and “to” or “for” get missed frequently. Common phrases like “in

that moment” or “to the contrary” are incorrect. When speaking of time, “in,” “on,” and “at” are misused. The word “at” is used for shorter periods of time (at this/that/the moment). The word “in” is meant for longer periods of time (in October). Finally, “on” is reserved for a specific date or day (on October 1st, on Monday). We also check for homonyms (there, they’re, their), malapropisms, and use of pronouns, articles, etc.

- **Formatting** – When you think proofreading and formatting, it is all about uniformity (not design). Formatting corrections include ensuring that every sentence is separated by one space, not two or three. We check to see that font sizes and line spacing are consistent. We look to see that all quotation marks are curly or straight but not both. Do all the titles and headings follow the same format?
- **Page Layout** – Finally, proofreading ensures that your margins, paragraphs, font styles, page numbering, etc. are consistent and correct. We review and correct page breaks where necessary. For example, you might have a subheading on the bottom of one page and the beginning of that section on the next. The subheading should be on the same page as the beginning of that section.

Copy or Line Editing

Copy or line editing is a little different than proofreading. Copy or line editing is after developmental or substantive editing and before proofreading and focuses on improving readability. Copy and line editing works to fix awkward phrasing or syntax, wordiness, poor word choice, and tone or style inconsistencies.

- **Repetitiveness or redundancy** – Using phrases like “your own” are corrected. The word “your” and “own” together creating unnecessary redundancy. Use one or the other.
- **Wordy phrases** – Catching wordy phrases like “in order to” can be shortened to the word “to” and mean the same thing.
- **Dangling modifiers** – These are phrases that do not clearly connect to a specific part of the sentence.
- **Passive voice** – It is common for writers to write sentences where the subject of the sentence is unclear. **For example, this sentence:** “The relevant scientific work in psychology has shown that how we are brought up largely determines what we end up becoming.” **This has been changed to** “The relevant scientific work in psychology has shown that how *our caregivers raise us largely determines* what we become.” Here is another example, “This new competence must be learned at an unconscious level to create one.” **This has been changed to,** “*We learn this new competence at the unconscious level.*”
- **Avoiding the negative** – It is preferable to write in the positive. For example, “he didn’t want to go to the party” versus “he avoided going to the party at all costs.”

- **Incomplete comparisons** – When you leave a comparison incomplete by not comparing one thing to another, you leave the reader wondering. For example, “My writing style is better and more sophisticated.” While the sentence seems fine, the reader wonders better and more sophisticated than what? Is it better than Sally’s, better than AI?
- **Dialogue (or dialog)** – In fiction, one of the biggest and most time consuming tasks is to edit dialogue. Many new authors (and some experienced ones) fail at proper format and sentence structure. It is up to the editor to fix the errors so that dialogue flows smoothly. See the examples below.

Samples are the difference between proofreading and copy or line editing courtesy of Grammarly.com¹:

Copy Editing Example:

I think out loud sometimes but lose track of why I started thinking out loud in the first place. People who pass me by often think I’m asking them a question out of nowhere and for not reason. But there’s always a reason, they just don’t know it. “But that doesn’t make sense, now does it?” I’d cry out. And the young, college student sitting on on the same park bench responds, “What doesn’t make sense?”

Copy edited version:

I think aloud sometimes but lose track of why I did so in the first place. Passersby often think I’m asking them a question out of nowhere and for no reason. But there’s always a reason—they just don’t know it.

“But that doesn’t make sense, now does it?” I’d cry out.

“What doesn’t?” the young college student sitting on the same park bench responds.

Proofread version:

I think out loud sometimes but lose track of why I started thinking out loud in the first place. People who pass me by often think I’m asking them a question out of nowhere and for no reason. But there’s always a reason—they just don’t know it.

“But that doesn’t make sense, now does it?” I’d cry out. And the young college student sitting on the same park bench responds, “What doesn’t?”

Developmental Editing

Developmental editing is different than proofreading and copy or line editing. Developmental editing looks at the big picture with flow, consistency, etc. It is the first step in editing. The focus is

¹ https://www.grammarly.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-copy-editing-and-proofreading/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw--2aBhD5ARIsALiRlwDxTA5N22UckdG8BwNrwejhvbzVmx_WF0hFSecEIE-L-NzXRS-501caAk38EALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds

on character and plot development, voice, tone, and the logical flow of information. An editor will look for any gaps in information and the overall structure of the book to make sure themes and concepts are consistent throughout. Developmental editors usually do not make the changes to the writing but offer advice and suggestions on how to correct or improve the writing, so the overall experience is a positive one for the reader.

Here is an example for fiction:

Does the opening grab attention –

Great scene building through descriptive prose. We get a good glimpse of who Rachel is in the beginning. However, I think you could build Rick's character a little. He is a little flat in the beginning but plays a significant villain role. Maybe give a hint of what's to come. For example, he has a big ego and is very selfish but while he is waiting for Rachel he seems more like the typical impatient boyfriend. What is he really thinking while he is on the edge of the couch tapping his foot while Rachel is upstairs?

Do the characters feel well developed –

You do a great job with the character histories and backgrounds. Including Mac and Simon's family. Bring Rick forward a bit.

Does the main character (or characters) evolve –

You do a great job with Rachel and Simons personal growth—going from spontaneous and hot fling to responsible and something called love.

Is the world developed –

Good job describing the scenes. From the hotel and Manor to the apartment and farmhouse, you build a world in vivid descriptions. See notes below about correcting setting details in Boston.

Does the story flow well –

You do a good job keeping the readers attention. There aren't any areas that feel too slow or overly rushed.

Is there a logical flow to the timeline, any anachronisms –

Good logical flow to the timeline. Nothing feels out of place when reading.

1. The time period is correct. However, the usage of terms/lingo/language in Boston is incorrect. For example, the word "onsell" is not used in the US when describing the buying or selling of real estate.

Other terms that are not US English:

- Lounge is known as the living or family room
- Benchtops are countertops

- Cupboards are cabinets
- Council rates is not a known term in real estate leasing in the US
- Crockery is cookware
- The US does not have meters to put money in for power

Chapter 4

- Council Drawings would be architectural drawings or blueprints
- Need a liaison with “council” is unfamiliar in US real estate dealings. Sometimes “city council” or the building/zoning department will approve building codes, variances to current code, etc. The word council is used to mean legal counsel or meeting with attorneys.
- Harriet’s lounge room (living room) and biscuits are usually called cookies. Biscuits are a variation of bread that is more savory. Cookies are sweet.

Here is an example for nonfiction with rewriting as part of the engagement:**

I have reviewed the agent notes and found the following to be true:

The depth and range of the subject is unique and gives readers a holistic view of the connection we have with food. With that, it is an ambitious project that needs a regimented structure to connect the themes and allow the information to flow, keeping the reader engaged.

I worked to build a structure around the theme and sub-themes. The main idea is food is a thread that weaves into the fabric of our existence. It connects to ancient history, culture, society, and our mind, body, and spirit. Through food, recipes, and cooking we not only nourish our bodies but our souls. Our ancestors understood the importance of this connectiveness and cooking with love. We see it in the wisdom of ancient texts from science and religion. There is a clear resurgence in our centuries old interest in food connections. By sharing and combining old cookery and religious texts to modern tastes we bring the food connection into the present with modern twists on recipes and traditions.

The book needs to follow this path throughout.

I have reworked the Overview and then enhanced the Vision section to include the specifics of the book format for clarity and guidance.

Each part in the book has a distinct role to play. Parts 1, 2, and 3 should have an introduction on what the reader can expect in that part of the book.

Part 1 needs to introduce the importance of the old manuscripts and food’s link to our lives in the past and present. This needs to be developed more. I have created a structured outline for this section.

Part 2 needs to follow the flow by bringing the past into the present—how we can use ancient wisdom now to rebuild the food connections in our lives. I have written a short intro for this section.

Part 3 puts everything together by offering the specific food groups and recipes with each having a critical role to play in connecting food to tradition, health, etc. I have written a short intro for this section.

From there, each chapter should lay out the path of food, recipe, and food connectedness to our lives.

Each chapter summary seems to flow with a food connection to history, tradition, old and new, etc. I didn't do much on the summaries.

I have reorganized, reframed, and rewritten some parts of the book proposal to help guide the flow better. For example, I moved the chapter on sleep and the one on happiness and coupled them under larger themes. Sleep should fall under the health and body connection. Happiness under the spiritual connection. There is an undercurrent theme of the importance of cooking with love. I researched to try find the Arabic equivalent to the English translation. What I found is the word “nafas” or “cooking with nafas” is the closest translation. It translates to cooking with care, positive energy, passion, etc. I have incorporated this connection. If this culturally incorrect or there is religious/culture sensitivity issue, please let me know and I can take it out. Forgive my ignorance if this is the case.

****NOTE:** Developmental editing most often does NOT include rewriting. STRUCTURAL editing usually DOES include rewriting. There is an additional charge for structural editing that includes rewriting.

PROOFREADING CHECK FOR:	LINE EDITING CHECK FOR:
Quotations changed from straight to curly	Unnecessary repetition or words or phrases
Spacing between sentences changed to one space not two	Use of unnecessary words (really, like, just)
Font changed to Times New Roman 12pt	Sentence structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotonous passages • Fragments • Run on sentences
Headings and Subheading consistent with clickable ToC	Repetitive sentence length
Line spacing to 1.5	Ambiguous pronouns (he/him, they, she/her)
Paragraph breaks and indents	Awkward sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjective drifts • Unnecessary adverbs or prepositions • Parallelism errors “There are” sentences
Numbers spelled out up to 100 unless in percentage format	Unclear sentences, phrases, or passages Slang or jargon
Punctuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies in formatting dialogue vs internal thoughts • Usage of ellipsis, commas, quotation marks, apostrophe • Abbreviations consistent (Dr. or Dr) 	Inconsistence in tense usage
Capitalization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency in titles and headings • Improper use of capitalization for words • Missing capitalization • Acronyms with definitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguous dialogue tags • Correcting dialogue format to ensure each speaker is separated and the sentences are structured correctly.
Grammar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misused words or phrases (sit/set, who/whom) • Homonyms (peek/peak) • Proper word choice • Verb choice and tense • Misplaced modifiers • Missing or unnecessary use of articles • Pronoun disagreement • Adjective or adverb • Possessive nouns 	Inconsistent use of names or titles

Developmental or Substantive Editing Consistency Checklist:

X	DEVELOPMENTALLY CHECK FOR:	NOTES & PAGE #
	Logical flow	
	Any sections missing	
	Consistency in voice or tone	
	Consistency in settings	
	Consistency in point of view	
	Anachronisms	
	Narrative tense	
	Check repetitive POV statements and narrow psychic distance (e.g., sentences starting with "I")	

Style Sheet

Title: *Book title*
Author: A N Author

Language preferences/style

Regional spelling choice	Choose either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• British English: e.g. colour, kerb, behaviour• US English: e.g. color, curb, behavior• other preferred English (make a note of what this is)
iz/is suffixes	Choose, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• organization (acceptable in US and UK)• organisation (acceptable in UK) Watch out for words that always take -is- spelling: e.g., compromise.
Slang/jargon/idiom/other	Include brief notes on profanity, made-up words, foreign-word usage, and regional variations, e.g., lift vs elevator; sidewalk vs pavement.

Big-picture elements

Primary narrative tense	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• third-person past (She ran toward/towards the river. Jake was waiting.)• first-person present (I run toward/towards the river. Jake's waiting.)• first-person past (I ran toward/towards the river. Jake was waiting.)
Point-of-view structure	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one character's point of view throughout whole book• different single characters' points of view in different chapters• multiple points of view within one chapter
World-building rules	Include brief notes on anything of note, e.g., differences in physics.

Formatting and layout

Abbreviations/contractions	<p>Choose either of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Mr. Mrs. (full points)• Dr, Mr, Mrs (no full points) <p>Recommended: RPMs, FBI, NATO, BBC, NASA</p>
Chapters	<p>All chapters set on fresh page and numbered in chronological order (recommended).</p>
Ellipses	<p>Spaced either side (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'No. Not ... not again. Please.'• He fell to the bottom ... and sank.
Numbers (general)	<p>Numbers in a range are linked with an en rule (not a hyphen):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• London, 1987–1999 <p>Spell out numbers in narrative text unless doing so introduces awkwardness or goes against convention (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They ran for ten miles.• He turned fifty last week.• 'Quick. Call 911.'• In 1987 she was three months old.• The twenty-year-old woman is called Orla. She lives five hundred miles away.
Paragraph indentation	<p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• first paragraphs in chapter or section: not indented• body text paragraphs: indented• use proper indents, not tabs
Possessives	<p>Single possession: an apostrophe and s are generally used with personal names ending in an s, x, or z sound, as long as pronunciation isn't hampered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Louise's dog• Marx's treatise• James's essay• John Davies' car (the car belonging to John Davies)• John Davy's car (the car belonging to John Davy)

	<p>Plural possession: use an apostrophe alone after the name or word (unless it doesn't end with an s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Patels' house (where Mr Patel and his son live) • women's rights • people's thoughts on the matter • the houses' front gardens
<p>Public buildings and published works</p>	<p>Capitalize named buildings; use lower case for generic terms (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the River Thames; they walked along the river <p>Songs take quotation marks; albums take italic (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Box of Rain' from the album <i>American Beauty</i> <p>Magazine and book titles take italic; chapter titles take quotation marks (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2, 'The long walk home', in <i>A Trip of a Lifetime</i>
<p>Punctuation</p>	<p>Dashes: choose from either of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • en rules: spaced when used for parentheses: e.g. He – that is, my husband – is a gem (more common in UK style) • em rules: closed up when used for parentheses: e.g. He—that is, my husband—is a gem (more common in US style) <p>Special treatment at the end of sentences (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closed-up em rules for end of sentence interruptions: e.g. 'But—' • space before ellipses in trailing-off sentences: 'Oh, I see. Well ...' <p>The proper use of ellipses (...):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMOS recommended spacing between the dots . . . like this. • Is it an omission or pause? • APA recommended no spacing between dots ... like this. <p>Serial comma – choose to use or not, but aim for consistency (though be ready to break from consistency, or recast, to avoid confusion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like dogs, cats and mice. • I like dogs, cats, and mice.

	<p>Questions within sentences should include the question mark (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the hell's that? she thought.
Quotation/speech marks	<p>Choose either of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • singles (nested doubles): 'Did you hear that? She said, "Not in a million years." I can't quite believe it.' • doubles (nested singles): "Did you hear that? She said, 'Not in a million years.' I can't quite believe it."
Section breaks	<p>Aim for consistency.</p>
Spaces	<p>Replace double spaces with single spaces. Remove rogue spaces at end and beginning of paragraphs.</p>
Speech and thoughts	<p>Out-loud speech (recommended): use speech marks – double or single as per your preference.</p> <p>Unspoken speech/thoughts: choose from the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I can't do this</i>, he thought. • I can't do this, he thought.
Time styles	<p>Times of day in even, half, and quarter hours are usually spelled out in text. With o'clock, the number is spelled out (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her day begins at four o'clock in the morning. • The meeting continued until half past two. • We'll start again at ten thirty. • Cinderella needs to leave the ball before midnight. <p>With a.m. and p.m. and 24-hour clock, use numerals (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US style: The first train leaves at 5:22 a.m. and the last at 11:00 p.m. • UK style: The first train leaves at 5.22 a.m. and the last at 11.00 p.m. • 24-hour clock style: The first train leaves at 05:22 and the last at 23:00.
Titles and ranks	<p>Lower case when used generally, but an initial capital letter when used in a form of address, before a name, or as part of a name (recommended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sergeant; but 'Good evening, Sergeant!'

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I looked at my ma; but 'What do you think, Ma?'• 'Yes, sir.'• 'The president will see you now.' |
|--|---|

