

## What is the difference between editing and proofreading?

Proofreading is an often neglected, but crucial stage of the writing process. Even the smallest error can result in an embarrassing issue (misspelling a name, conflicting pricing).

To many people, editing and proofreading are one and the same thing. There is, however, a distinct difference between the two.

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### Editing and Proofreading

**Editing** is the first task that should be undertaken after finishing the first draft of a piece of text. It involves checking the content of the text to ensure that the ideas are expressed clearly and logically, and form a coherent and meaningful whole.

**Proofreading** involves checking over the text in finer detail after the editing stage, to detect errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and format.

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The importance of the two tasks is demonstrated by the fact that the publishing and printing industries employ different people who are specifically responsible for each of them. Proofreading requires a great deal of attention to detail and is not a task that can be done in a rush or squeezed in between other tasks: it is essential to be in the right frame of mind and devote sufficient time and concentration.

Proofreading is not merely casting a glance over what you have written: it requires concentration to disconnect your mind from the content of the text in order to focus on the language and layout. As it involves correcting small errors it does not require major rewriting.

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#### The aim of proofreading is to spot and correct errors in:

- ◆ spelling
- ◆ typography
- ◆ grammar, punctuation and use of language
- ◆ style and format
- ◆ anything missed at the editing stage

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When proofreading your own work, you are often so familiar with the text that you see what you think you have written rather than what you actually wrote. For this reason, you will get the best results by asking someone else to proofread your work. You will be amazed by what they will find!