Proofreading

WHY PROOFREAD?

Proofreading may not be fun, but it’s an important step in the writing process. Studies show that just one tiny mistake on a resume will get your application thrown in the trash. Even professionals proofread: the writing process inevitably comes with its minor errors—a misplaced comma here, a typo there, and so on. While these mistakes seem small, they can have a big impact on how you and your work are viewed. It’s best to do a thorough proofreading and be confident that your writing is error free.

HOW TO PROOFREAD

• Leave yourself enough time after your final draft.
  o Sleep on it. It’s easier to spot an error with fresh eyes.
• Read your paper out loud.
  o When you read out loud, your ears catch things your eyes miss.
• Know your weak points.
  o Refer to a grammar book or dictionary for things you are unsure on.
• Read your paper more than once.
  o Look at each sentence independently and dedicate each read through to finding specific errors.
• Don’t depend on spell and grammar check.
  o Word processors don’t understand context. Be smarter than the computer.
• Don’t be lazy about errors.
  o Errors create confusion and reduce credibility.
• Use a friend or tutor.
  o New eyes can often spot things the writer misses.

CAUTION:

Don’t be tempted to rely solely on spellcheck. Here are some examples of errors that a word processor will often miss:

• “The sun is a natural source of ultraviolet rays.”
  o Proofread: “The sun is a natural source of ultraviolet rays.”
• “Rome was invaded by the ballbearings.”
  o Proofread: “Rome was invaded by the barbarians.”
• “At the battle of Hastings the Angels and the Saxons were defeated by the Mormons.”
  o Proofread: “At the battle of Hastings, the Anglos and the Saxons were defeated by the Normans.”
• “Joan of Arc was burnt at the steak.”
  o Proofread: “Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake.”
• “Romeo and Juliet tell each other how much they love each other in the baloney scene.”
  o Proofread: “Romeo and Juliet tell each other how much they love each other in the balcony scene.”