Proofreading

Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to define the term “proofreading” and will practice proofreading a sample paragraph. This DLA should take approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete.

STEP 1: Understand the following information about proofreading:

After you’ve written the first draft of any writing assignment, you want to revise it. Revision includes making sure you’ve completed the assignment, answered all the questions, included enough examples, and developed your ideas thoughtfully and clearly. Then, you want to edit, checking for small errors including grammatical errors, spelling errors, capitalization errors, and missing words. This is called proofreading, and it requires some patience and lots of concentration. Here are a few tips for proofreading:

a. Print out your assignment, and proofread the printed page.
b. Read your assignment aloud, slowly, to catch any missing words or awkward phrases.
c. Then, look at every sentence individually. Start with the last sentence of your assignment and move backwards through your assignment, one sentence at a time. Look for:
   i. Capitalization errors
   ii. Mispelled words
   iii. Spacing errors
   iv. Missing words
   v. Anything that seems strange

d. You don’t have to be able to fix these errors; just find them. Then, ask questions in the WRC about these particular items and eventually fix them.
e. Look at this paragraph and the circled section are the errors found in proofreading:

The basketball game was exciting. Our team was playing its rival high school, and everyone showed up to see who would win. The gym was packed. We started off slowly with lots of turnovers and missed shots, but by the second quarter, both teams were playing their best. There were lots of three-pointers and exciting layups, but the most exciting moment was when our best player stole the ball, ran down court, and dunked it. The crowd went wild.

STEP 2: Complete the exercises on the following page and print that page to go over with an instructor.
Circle any errors that you can find in the following excerpt. Be precise about what you circle; for example, only circle the exact word where a spelling error occurs, the exact space where a missing word might go, the exact line that needs indentation, or the exact letter that needs to be un-capitalized or capitalized. You don’t have to know exactly what’s wrong, just that something is wrong. Find ten errors.

Like many students, you might be tempted to hurry through the editing stage. This impulse is understandable; it is often a long journey from brainstorming to final draft. Writers can stumble at the end of this journey, much like an overexcited backpacker who trips and sprains ankle at the end of a long journey. Of course, aside from being overanxious to complete the writing excursion, you often don’t know what to look for in your final draft. After all, if you don’t know the rule that tells you where to put the comma, how are you supposed to the spot were the comma is missing? Well, it would be great if there were a quick fix for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, but the simple truth is that you will be grappling with them for a long time. All writers do. But it may to remember that the Mechanics of writing are truly the least important element (though still significant). And even if you’re not a “comma whiz,” you can quickly catch many mistakes if you are willing to read your work slowly and carefully.

2. Apply to your own writing: look over your own writing assignment, and proofread a paragraph or page carefully. Work on finding any errors and fixing them. Show your work on the page.

3. Finally, bring this sheet AND your proofread page to an instructor to see if you found the right errors. Talk about your proofreading finds and how to fix those errors.