

3. Parallel Construction in Lists

As a dental hygienist, she had props: photos of inflamed gums, her oversized roll of dental floss, and her twenty-ounce bottle filled with nothing but sugar.

The word *her* should be included before *photos* to make all three items parallel.

Acknowledgments

Information for this brochure was adapted from: "How to Proofread." The Writing Center at University of Wisconsin – Madison. 27 Jan. 2009. <www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Proofreading.html>.

Accessing More Information

- Raimes, Ann. *Keys for Writers*. 5th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008, available at the Hamline University Bookstore.
- The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Where to Find Help on Campus

Consultants at the **Hamline University Writing Center**, located in the basement of Bush Library, are eager to help you with all stages of your writing. We will work with you whether you have just received an assignment and have no idea how to begin or you have a finished draft and want help with revisions.

You can make appointments online at WC Online. Simply follow the instructions at:

<http://rich37.com/hamline>

We look forward to seeing you!



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Proofreading



Effective Proofreading

Proofreading is important so that your hard work researching your topic and composing your paper will shine. Misspellings or grammar mistakes detract from your effort.

When you proofread, you examine your paper carefully to identify errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Before Proofreading

Make certain your paper is organized properly and that you've provided enough specific examples to support your points.

If possible, put aside your paper for a day or so in order to get "fresh eyes." The break will allow you to see your paper differently when you pick it up again, so that you can better identify mistakes.

Think about comments you have received in the past about your writing; watch specifically for mistakes others have pointed out.

Proofreading Methods

Print your paper out rather than view it on a screen. Printing it in a different font can make errors easier to spot.

Read your paper out loud. If possible, read it to another person. You can catch numerous errors that way.

If you are proofreading silently, use a piece of paper to cover up the text below the line you are reading. This will help you avoid reading too fast or skipping ahead.

Read for specific types of errors such as sentence fragments or subject-verb agreement one at a time.

Use your computer's search function. For example, if you tend to confuse "its" and "it's," search each example of "it" to make certain you have used the word correctly.

Common Errors to Look for

1. Sentence-level Errors

Fragments

The book was 500 pages long. Should have been shorter.

The first sentence is a full sentence. The second is a fragment because it doesn't contain a subject. Every sentence needs a subject and a verb, and must begin with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark. *It should have been shorter* forms a complete sentence.

Wordiness

My cousin did the best she could in order to understand what the teacher had told her. But eventually, after trying and trying, she decided to quit.

These sentences could be more effective if they were shorter: *My cousin tried to understand the teacher's instructions, but finally, she quit.*

Misplaced or dangling modifiers

Disappointed about the election results, the streets were crowded with people.

This sentence seems to indicate that the *streets* were disappointed. A correct version would be: *Disappointed about the election results, people crowded into the streets.*

Unclear pronoun references

My sister told her best friend that she should bring a camera.

Does *she* refer to the sister or the best friend? A better sentence would be: *My sister told her best friend to bring a camera.*

Commas: too few, too many, or splices

The doctor wrote out the prescription, unfortunately the pharmacist could not decipher it.

When you use a transitional expression such as *unfortunately*, end the previous sentence with a period or a semicolon and put a comma after, not before, the transitional expression: *The doctor wrote out the prescription; unfortunately, the pharmacist could not decipher it.*

2. Word-level Errors

Apostrophes

The menu listed two different pizza's.

Apostrophes are used for possession and contraction, not for making words plural: *The menu listed two different pizzas.*

Words easily confused

In history we learned all the European countries and their capitol.

The word *capitol* refers to a building in the *capital* city.

Misspellings

Use a dictionary to look up words you aren't sure how to spell.