

# Editing for Clarity and Proofreading for Correctness

Designed  
By  
Duke  
University's  
Writing Studio

# Announcement

- This Power Point slide presentation is not designed to take the place of a group workshop, where you are given handouts and have an opportunity to work with your own writing. It does, however, provide an overview of the topic for those who haven't taken the workshop and a useful refresher for those who have.

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- What are your most common errors?
- Which are matters of correctness and which are personal choice?

# Workshop Objectives

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- Consider how grammatical correctness is sometimes a choice.
- Gain confidence in your ability to write polished “professional quality” essays.

# Workshop Objectives Cont'd

- Determine in what way the context for your writing affects your choices.

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- Review 20 most common errors.

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- Review 20 most common errors.
- Update skills in grammar and punctuation.

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- Proofreading: To read (copy or proof) in order to find errors and make corrections
- Correctness: Freedom from error

# Editing Strategies

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- Use spell check and grammar check to help spot possible errors.
- Refer to your list of “Most Common Errors” list for patterns of errors you are most likely to make.
- Trace the line of reasoning for each error.
- Check your word choice.

# Additional Editing Strategies

- Check to see if you have documented quotations and paraphrases properly.

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- Check for gender inclusive language.

*“Any fool can make a rule  
and every fool will mind it.”*

— Henry David Thoreau

*“It is not wise to violate the rules  
until you know how to observe  
them.”*

— T. S. Eliot

# On-line Help For 20 Most Common Errors

Go to this web site:

[http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/  
lunsford/twenty.html](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/lunsford/twenty.html)

# 20 Most Common Errors

- 1. Missing comma after an introductory element
- 2. Vague pronoun reference
- 3. Missing comma in a compound sentence
- 4. Wrong word
- 5. Missing comma(s) with a nonrestrictive element

- 6. Wrong or missing verb ending
- 7. Wrong or missing preposition
- 8. Comma splice
- 9. Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe
- 10. Unnecessary shift in tenses

- 11. Unnecessary shift in pronoun
- 12. Sentence fragment
- 13. Wrong tense or verb form
- 14. Lack of agreement between subject and verb
- 15. Missing comma in a series

- 16. Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent
- 17. Unnecessary comma(s) with a restrictive element
- 18. Fused sentence
- 19. Misplaced or dangling modifier
- 20. *Its/It's* confusion

Go to [uwp.aas.duke.edu/wstudio](http://uwp.aas.duke.edu/wstudio)  
and “Resources for Writers” for  
on-line help.

# Proofreading Categories

- General (deleting, inserting, or spelling out)
- Paragraphing
- Margins
- Punctuation
- Style of type

# Helpful Proofreading Strategies

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- Read aloud.

# Additional Resources

- Use “AutoCorrect” to help mark patterns.
- Refer to a dictionary, thesaurus, and grammar and usage guides.
- Look at examples of “correct” writing you can use as models.

# On-line Resources

- For help with grammar, punctuation, and spelling:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar>
- Details on 20 most common errors:  
<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/lunsford/twenty.html>
- Check “Resources for Writers” at  
<http://uwp.aas.duke.edu/wstudio> for helpful links

# Useful Books

- Go Ahead...Proof It! by K.D. Sullivan (MLA)
- Line by Line by Claire Cook (Barron's)

# Interested In A More In-Depth Experience?

- To sign up for a group workshop, go to “Schedule An Appointment” and “Workshop/Group Sign Up” on the Writing Studio’s website:

<http://uwp.aas.duke.edu/wstudio/>