

Academic Essay Proofreading Checklist



Getting Set Up	
Create a track changes/clean copy of the document with the appropriate file name stem	
Check your client's style guide and/or brief	
Set the proofing language	
Use Find and Replace to check for double spaces (but do not use Replace All)	
Things To Look Out For	
Typos and spelling mistakes, especially ones that will not appear as errors (e.g. from/form)	
Dialect-specific spelling, grammar, and punctuation issues	
Use of quotation marks	
Comma usage (e.g. comma splices, use of serial/Oxford commas)	
Usage of hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes according to style guide and/or dialect (the Search function can be used for this)	
All other punctuation use (e.g. colons, semicolons, apostrophes, ellipses, parentheses)	
Capitalisation of common vs proper nouns, job titles, etc.	
How numbers are written (i.e. as numerals or written out in full)	
Use of acronyms and abbreviations	
Use of 'which' and 'that'	
Sentence fragments and misplaced modifiers	
Verb agreement and parallelism	
Verb tense switching	
Use of contractions and other informal, biased, or inappropriate language	
Use of passive vs active voice	
Overly complex language and excessive wordiness	
References and citations, in line with the client's style guide or referencing system	
Consistency of citations according to the author's style/referencing guide (obvious typos can be commented on, but do not fact-check or add in new information)	
Citations in the text have a corresponding entry in the reference list and vice versa (unless working with a bibliography)	
Presentation of reference list/bibliography according to style guide (e.g. adding a page break, changing the title alignment, applying a hanging indent, ordering entries alphabetically)	
Dates and spellings of author names in each citation match their corresponding reference	
All the required elements for each source type in the reference list are present and formatted correctly according to the relevant style guide	
Check Your Comments	
Comments should be...	
Only used on changes that might confuse the author or need their attention	

In full, grammatically correct sentences, polite, and free from errors	
Written using the same dialect as the rest of the document, including spelling and punctuation	

Final Checks	
Double check any specific requests in the client's brief	
Repeat Find and Replace to check for introduced double spaces	
Check your edits (especially larger ones that may have changed the meaning of the original text)	
Use a spellchecker to pick up any missed or introduced errors	
Create the second proofread version of the document (TC or clean) and give it the appropriate file name stem	
If necessary, provide any general comments or feedback that you think would be helpful to your client	