

Business Proofreading Checklist (Formal Documents)



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 and semicolons, apostrophes, ellipses, parentheses)	
Capitalisation of common vs proper nouns, job titles, etc.	
Use of 'which' and 'that'	
Sentence fragments and misplaced modifiers	
Verb agreement and parallelism	
How numbers are written (e.g. as numerals or written out in full)	
Use of passive vs active voice	
Biased or inappropriate language	
Excessive wordiness or repetition	
Overly complex language, including jargon and buzzwords	
Consistency of organisational pronouns (i.e. whether the client uses singular/plural pronouns to refer to their business)	
Use of acronyms and abbreviations	
Consistent and appropriate point of view (e.g. third person)	
Tone of voice (e.g. formal documents should be objective in tone with no contractions)	
References and citations, in line with the client's style guide or referencing system	
Introduction and formatting of quotes (including block quotes) in line with the style/referencing guide	
Positioning, captioning, and citation of visual elements (e.g. images, figures, charts)	
Formatting (only if specified in the brief and paid for on top of proofreading): page numbers, table of contents,	
heading and subheading styles, page/section breaks, font size and typeface, paragraph and line spacing, margin sizes	

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 in 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 (if provided)	
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	

