

Professional 8-Stage Proofreading Checklist

✓ First
Reading

✓ Second
Reading

Stage 1: Body Text

Before You Begin

- Review or set up a style sheet.

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Sense, Clarity, and Flow

- Text makes sense and flows well; none is missing and none is repeated.
- Wording is clear, in general *and for intended audience.
- Technical concepts are explained clearly.

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Spelling and Capitalization

- Spelling and usage of common words are correct.
- Spelling and capitalization of proper names and special terms are consistent.
- Abbreviations and acronyms are spelled consistently and defined as appropriate.
- Product names, trademarks, and registered trademarks are verified.
- Capitalization following colons is accurate and consistent.

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Grammar

- Subjects and verbs agree.
- Verbs are in correct tense.
- Pronouns agree with their antecedents and are in correct case.
- Modifiers are placed to keep meanings clear.

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Punctuation

- There is no missing, duplicated, or misplaced punctuation.
- Apostrophes are used only for possessives and missing letters and face the correct way.
- If used, series commas appear consistently.
- A comma, without a connecting conjunction, is not used to separate two complete sentences (use stronger punctuation instead).
- Em and en dashes are used correctly and spaced consistently.
- Hyphenations and word divisions are correct and consistent.
- There are opening *and* closing parentheses, brackets, and quotation marks.
- Period is inside parentheses when ending a separate and complete sentence; outside when the parenthetical matter—even a complete sentence—is included in another sentence.
- Double and single quotation marks are used correctly.
- Periods and commas are inside quotation marks; semicolons and colons are outside; other punctuation is inside or outside as appropriate to context.

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Numbers

- Numbers are treated consistently (either spelled out or numerals).
- Styles for area codes, phone numbers, dates, times, etc., are consistent.

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Spacing

- There is one (and only one) space between words and following periods and colons.

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Fonts and Symbols

- Italic and other special fonts are used consistently.
- Icons and symbols are used consistently.

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References and Links

- Text references to figures, tables, and other elements are present and accurate.
- Directional references (“above” and “below”) and cross-references to other parts of the document are correct.
- In electronic copy, Web and internal links work correctly.

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Professional 8-Stage Proofreading Checklist (*continued*)

✓ First
Reading

✓ Second
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Stage 2: Section Numbers and Titles

- Typeface, spacing, and placement are consistent.
- Any numbering is consecutive and in appropriate form (e.g., all roman or all arabic).
- Spelling, capitalization, and hyphenation are correct and consistent.
 - First letter after colons is capitalized; first letter after em dashes is capitalized or not per style guidelines.
 - Articles, conjunctions, and prepositions are lowercased, unless starting or ending a title or contrary to desired style.
 - First word and last word are capitalized, regardless of part of speech.
 - First word following a hyphen is initial-capped or lowercase per style guidelines.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stage 3: Text Headings

- *Heading levels reflect correct hierarchy.
- *Headings accurately reflect the content they introduce.
- *Heading style is consistent for each level (e.g., all third-level headings use active voice).
- Typeface, spacing, and placement are consistent for each heading level.
- Spelling, capitalization, and hyphenation are correct and consistent.
 - First letter after colons is capitalized; first letter after em dashes is capitalized or not per style guidelines.
 - Articles, conjunctions, and prepositions are lowercased, unless starting or ending a heading or contrary to desired style.
 - First word and last word are capitalized, regardless of part of speech.
 - First word following a hyphen is initial-capped or lowercase per style guidelines.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stage 4: Lists and Tables

- Punctuation at end of text introducing lists and tables is consistent per style guidelines.
- *Bulleted lists are used when sequence is unimportant or for sublists in numbered lists.
- *Unless content dictates another order, bulleted list items are alphabetical.
- *Numbered lists are used to indicate sequence.
- Numbering in each list is sequential and starts at 1 or A.
- Typeface, spacing, and placement of table headings and text are consistent.
- Bullet styles and numeral typefaces are consistent.
- Placement (flush left, indented, etc.) of lists and tables is consistent.
- Alignment of runover text and right margin style in list items are consistent.
- Space between bullet or numeral and start of text is consistent.
- Initial capitalization of list items is consistent per style guidelines.
- Typeface and punctuation of list item lead-ins are consistent.
- Punctuation at end of list items is consistent per style guidelines.
- Spacing around lists and tables is consistent.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stage 5: Captions and Art Labels

- Typeface, spacing, and placement of captions and labels are consistent.
- Numbered captions and labels are in consecutive order.
- Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct and consistent.
- Captions and labels accurately describe graphics.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professional 8-Stage Proofreading Checklist (*continued*)

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Stage 6: Page Numbers, Headers, and Footers

- Typeface, spacing, and placement are consistent. ☐ ☐
- Left and right (verso and recto) design and content are applied consistently. ☐ ☐
- Spelling, capitalization, and hyphenation are correct and consistent. ☐ ☐
- Content of headers/footers is correct for each section. ☐ ☐
- Page numbering is consecutive overall or within sections, as appropriate, and appears on all pages where it should. ☐ ☐

Stage 7: Table of Contents

- Listings exactly match text headings. ☐ ☐
- No headings of appropriate level are omitted; no inappropriate ones are included. ☐ ☐
- Formatting (typeface, spacing, leaders, indents, etc.) of listings is consistent for each level shown. ☐ ☐
- In print documents, all page numbers are present and correct. ☐ ☐
- In electronic or Web documents, all links to named sections work correctly. ☐ ☐

Stage 8: Final Look

- There are no lines too short or too long. ☐ ☐
- There are no stacked hyphens. ☐ ☐
- White space and overall spacing are appropriate. ☐ ☐
- *Overall layout is pleasing and presents content effectively. ☐ ☐
- A final spell-check produces no errors. ☐ ☐
- A search for double spaces shows no extra spaces. ☐ ☐
- In Web documents, navigation buttons work correctly. ☐ ☐