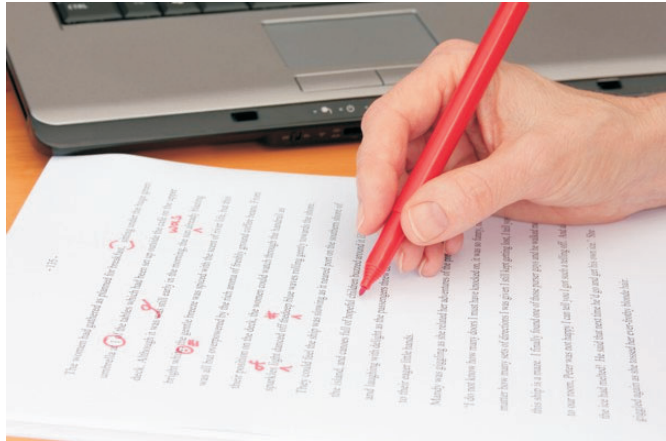


# Proofreading Symbols

**W**HEN EDITING and revising a document, learning to notate corrections can be useful. This is accomplished by learning to recognize types of errors and then by applying symbols to a draft document when errors are detected. Once learned, they can be applied to all materials written for school or business.



## Objectives:



1. Identify proofreading marks.
2. Demonstrate the use of proofreading marks.

## Key Terms:



content errors  
mechanical errors  
proofreaders  
proofreading marks  
transpositions

## Document Errors and Correction Process

Before being ready to make corrections, it is best to be familiar with some key terminology.

## PROOFREADING DEFINITIONS

The symbols and rules may vary slightly from teacher to teacher or business to business, but the general concepts are the same.

## Content Errors

**Content errors** are errors of information or fact that cause confusion or misunderstanding. When reading for these errors, ask yourself, “Does this make sense?” For example, a document may say the forthcoming meeting is at 2 a.m. on Jan. 1, but you know that is not right. So checking with the author is crucial if the document is not your own. If it is your own, use a website or make a phone call to verify any content questions that arise.

## Mechanical Errors

**Mechanical errors** are errors that can be recognized when looking at the material without specific reference to the meaning. For instance, a spelling or punctuation error is a mechanical proofreading error. Spelling errors can be letters of a word out of sequence or an incorrect letter that changes the meaning (e.g., “speck” instead of “speak”). Often, these mistakes can be found by reading the paper aloud or by reading the document slowly.

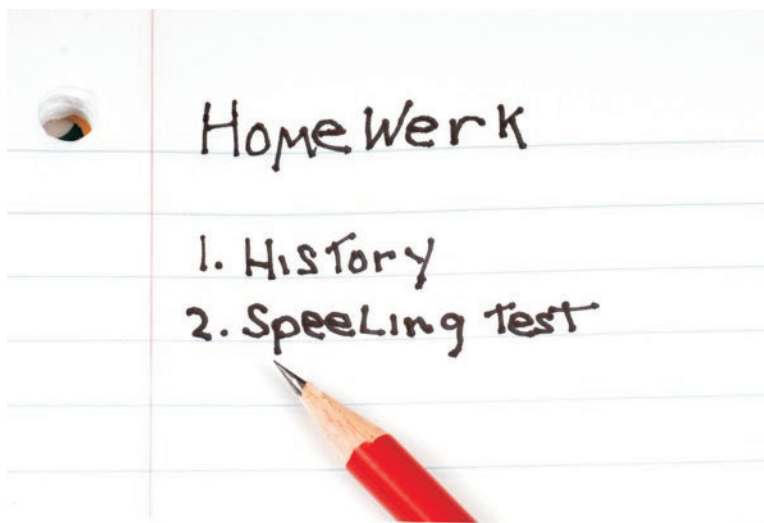


FIGURE 1. Can you identify the errors?

## Proofreaders

**Proofreaders** are people hired primarily to correct content and mechanical errors and may be responsible for setting format standards and training other office workers to follow those standards.



### DIGGING DEEPER...

#### UNCOVERING ADDITIONAL FACTS: Practice Is Important

See if you can find the errors in the following example. Place proofreading marks where they are needed.

My efforts at school is always rewarded. I got good grade with extra credit. The taecher even told the principle, mrs. Thompson. My mother and father proud. I will get an award on February 30th.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Improve Proofreading Skills

Strengthening your ability to use correct grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation will make it easier to proofread documents, detect errors, and apply proofreading marks. These elements of writing may improve your ability to craft a document and reduce errors. The following websites might be helpful:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>

<http://lifhack.org/articles/lifhack/fifty-50-tools-which-can-help-you-in-writing>

### Proofreading

Proofreading is the process of reading material and marking the errors to indicate the corrections required.

### Proofreading Marks

**Proofreading marks** are standard symbols used to identify errors and indicate the corrections to be made.

### Transpositions

**Transpositions** are letters, numbers, punctuation marks, words, or even sentences keyed out of order. Transpositions are mechanical errors. For example, sometimes the “i” in a word is first, and other times, the “e” is first. You have to be able to distinguish which is correct. For example, the word “friend” has the “i” first, and the word “receive” has the “e” first. The spelling rule is “i” before “e,” except after “c.”



FIGURE 2. Proofreading marks show where corrections need to be made.

## Applying Proofreading Marks

There are various approaches for knowing when a proofreading mark is needed. For example, skilled proofreaders verify errors through original sources, such as a calendar, an address file, checkbook records, purchase orders, and invoices. You should carefully compare what is

in your document to the resource material to validate that the information matches. This can be done with hardcopy (a printed copy of your document), reading an on-screen version, or with team members using hardcopy or reading on-screen. Then apply proofreading marks so corrections can be made.

## Summary:



When you are finished proofreading, the result should be an error-free document. In preparing documents, accuracy is highly esteemed because it moves goods and services quickly. Keep in mind that errors cause delays and usually cost money.

The reward for your effort is developing competence with proofreading and applying proofreading marks. This is a skill that can enhance your credibility and influence a favorable impression in school and business.



**FIGURE 3.** For accuracy, compare factual resource material to information in your document.

## Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Proofreaders look for what types of document errors?
2. What is involved in proofreading?
3. What is a proofreader's responsibility?
4. Name three resources that can be checked when proofreading?
5. What steps are taken before applying proofreading marks?

## Expanding Your Knowledge:



If English is not spoken at home, or if you live in a neighborhood where Standard English (representing correct usage of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation) is not part of your everyday conversation, it may be harder to find proofreading errors. Consider researching Resources for English as a Second Language (i.e., <http://UsingEnglish.com>), ESL Resources for Students (i.e.,

<http://seattlecentral.edu/faculty/biticed/>), and English as a Second Language for ESL Students (i.e., <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/5/25/>).

## Web Links:

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### **Grammar for Writing**

<http://www.powa.org>

### **Proofreading Symbols and Abbreviations**

<http://Webster.commnet.edu/writing/symbols.htm>

### **Punctuation Basics**

<http://www.write-better-english.com/basics-of-punctuation.aspx>