

Document Critiques and Evaluation

Unit: Legal Research and Communication

Problem Area: Draft Legal Documents

Lesson: Document Critiques and Evaluation

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Describe proofreading.**
- 2 Describe what to look for when proofreading.**
- 3 Explain how to critique peer's documents and correspondence.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

E-unit corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc. <http://www.mychaert.com>.

Adkins, W.D. "How to Proofread Documents," *eHow*. Accessed Oct. 2, 2015. http://www.ehow.com/list_7385461_common-mistakes-proofreading-legal-document.html.

"From the Legal Writing Clinic: Writing Tip of the Week—Proofreading Strategies," *University of Denver: Sturm College of Law*. Accessed Oct. 2, 2015. <http://www.law.du.edu/documents/aap/writing-tips-proofreading-strategies.pdf>.

Paschetto, John J. "Beyond Redlines and Spell-Check: Proofreading Tips from the Dark Ages," *The Practical Lawyer*. Accessed Oct. 2, 2015. <http://www.youngconaway.com/files/Publication/c77f16d8-822a-4a4e-98ba-c6afe30a80de/Presentation/PublicationAttachment/e8c79034-376b-4883-bb15-cc98e876573c/BeyondRedlines.pdf>.

"Proofreading Tips," *The Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs*. Accessed Oct. 2, 2015. <http://www.legalsecretaryjournal.com/?q=proofreading-tips>.



■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ first-word, last-line
- ▶ PDF
- ▶ proofreading
- ▶ redlining
- ▶ shadow method
- ▶ side-by-side, line-by-line

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

Explain the following to your students: Although proofreading is a time-consuming task, it is also important. When proofreading legal documents, it is important to examine the formatting and the mechanics. However, you must know legal language, too. When an incorrect word is used in a legal document, it may change the meaning that the writer intended. Depending on the severity of the issue, it may lead to lawsuits and other penalties for the client and the lawyer. In addition, it could be time-consuming because of the need to change the document.

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Describe proofreading.

Anticipated Problem: What is proofreading?

- I. **Proofreading** is reading to mark mistakes that need to be corrected on a written or printed piece of writing.
 - A. Proofreading is more about the mechanics of a document. It pertains to spelling, punctuation, grammar, defined terms, citations, cross-references, and all of the little details where things are most likely to be wrong.
 - B. It is also important to look at the formatting. Only one style should be used in terms of formatting. In addition, a person must choose a style manual he or she would like to use or must use the one from his or her place of employment.
 - C. Proofreading is different from editing. Editing is about the actual information in the document and its meaning.
 - D. The invention of computers and word-processing software has made proofreading much easier, but it is still a necessary step when producing an effective legal document.
 1. Spell check and grammar check are important and useful tools, but they can give a false sense of security in a document.
 2. Several tricks can be used to make proofreading easier than in the days before these computer tools.

Teaching Strategy: *Education World has a section called Every Day Edits to help students see mistakes that may be made in documents. They consist of short paragraphs with at least 10 mistakes while giving students a small piece of history. They are broken into events that happened during each month and on special holidays. Visit <http://www.educationworld.com> to use these handouts for free.*

Objective 2: Describe what to look for when proofreading.

Anticipated Problem: What should a person look for when proofreading?

- II. Proofreading requires a special frame of mind in which a person is looking for mechanics in each written piece of work. When proofreading a document, a person must break it down into sections and perform the tasks separately.
 - A. In legal documents, a person must go through the document and check the numbered sections.

- B. He or she must check the headings.
- C. He or she must check all of the citations.
- D. He or she must check all of the cross-references for consistency and accuracy.
- E. Finally, he or she must read the complete text, combining proofreading and editing.
 - 1. When reading the complete text, the person must be sure to look for the correct spelling, but the wrong word (homonym errors, such as “there” and “their”) in text. Misspellings are uncommon because of spell check.
 - 2. If the writer has deleted words or phrases, he or she must make sure he or she has gotten it all and replaced it with the right information. It is easy to not delete all of the words when making corrections to a document.
- F. Although this may seem like a lot of work, it is easier than trying to read the whole text and trying to find all of the mistakes at once.

Teaching Strategy: *Have students retype some of the Every Day Edits used previously, or make your own. Once they have been retyped, have them trade with another student to proofread what they have keyed. Did they use text type to finish quickly? Did they use the wrong punctuation, wrong word, or omit words when keying the information? Discuss other mistakes that they may have found in the retyped documents. Possibly have some students key the information with mistakes to see if the other students will find the mistakes when proofreading.*

Objective 3: Explain how to critique peer’s documents and correspondence.

Anticipated Problem: How can a person critique a peer’s document and correspondence?

- III. Various methods exist to proofread documents: redlining, side-by-side, line-by-line, the “shadow” method, and first-word, last-line method.
 - A. **Redlining** is the easiest way to proofread documents and is a computer process by which changes are identified between two versions of the same document for the purposes of document editing and review. It is used when two or more people are working on a document so each can see where the other has made changes. Sometimes the document is not available on the computer, so a person must use other methods.
 - B. **Side-by-side, line-by-line** is the process of laying hard copy next to another version and comparing the lines of the documents. This is the most laborious way to compare documents because a person must go back and forth on each document and mark the changes that need to be made.
 - 1. This is a tedious and time-consuming process, but it is thorough.
 - 2. A way to make it easier is to have someone read one copy out loud as the other person follows along on the other document.

- C. **Shadow method** is a process that involves holding the corresponding pages together, holding them up to the light, and making sure all of the characters line up.
1. Any differences should be seen easily with this method.
 2. A problem would be if one of the documents is a PDF because conversion can reduce document scale. A **PDF** is a portable document format used to present documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems.
- D. **First-word, last-line** is the comparison of the first word in each line and the entire last line of each paragraph.
1. If the documents were produced with the same typeface and type size, it should be easy to find mistakes that would affect the paragraph.
 2. This method may cause a person to think there are issues due to spacing on different computer versions, but it is quick and reliable when there is not time to complete a full word by word comparison.
- E. Reference books should be handy. A simple dictionary, grammar reference book, and a legal usage reference book could come in handy when proofreading legal documents.

Teaching Strategy: *Print several documents and have the students use each of the methods above to proofread them. When they have finished, have the students trade the documents and proofread again. Did the second proofreading find any mistakes that were not found during the first proofreading? In class discussion, what may be some advantages and disadvantages of the methods used? Which method do the students believe would be the best for them to use? Use VM–A through VM–C. Assign LS–A.*

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. If a textbook is being used, questions at the ends of chapters may also be included in the Review/Summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ Answers to Sample Test:

Part One: Multiple Choice

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. a
5. b
6. a

Part Two: True/False

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. F

Part Three: Short Answer

1. Answers should include these six items: grammar, spelling, punctuation, defined terms, cross-references, and citations
2. The three methods discussed are side-by-side; line-by-line—read each document thoroughly and comparing every word; shadow method—put the two documents together and hold them up to the light to make sure everything lines up; and first-word, last-line method—comparing the first word of each line and the complete last sentence of each paragraph

Document Critiques and Evaluation

► Part One: Multiple Choice

Instructions: Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The _____ of proofreading uses a light.
 - a. editing method
 - b. side-by-side, line-by-line method
 - c. shadow method
 - d. first-word, last-line method
2. The best way to approach proofreading is to _____.
 - a. thoroughly read the whole document
 - b. break it down into stages
 - c. use a computer
 - d. use word-processing software
3. The _____ method compares the first word and last line of each paragraph.
 - a. editing
 - b. side-by-side, line-by-line
 - c. “shadow” method
 - d. first-word, last-line
4. Proofreading differs from editing because it _____.
 - a. examines the mechanics
 - b. examines the whole document
 - c. examines the structure only
 - d. examines spelling only



5. The _____ compares both documents word for word.

- a. editing method
- b. side-by-side, line-by-line method
- c. shadow method
- d. first-word, last-line method

6. A PDF is a _____.

- a. portable document format
- b. professional document format
- c. portable document facade
- d. professional document façade

► Part Two: True/False

Instructions: Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- _____ 1. Proofreading is looking for misspelled words only.
- _____ 2. Editing is the same as proofreading.
- _____ 3. The shadow method is the fastest.
- _____ 4. Reference books were used in the past, but they are not necessary today.
- _____ 5. Mechanics consist of margins and other formatting types.
- _____ 6. You should proofread the whole document at one time.

► Part Three: Short Answer

Instructions: Answer the following.

- 1. List the six items discussed as mechanics of a document.

- 2. List and describe the three methods discussed.

TERMS

- ◆ First-word, last-line
- ◆ PDF
- ◆ Proofreading
- ◆ Redlining
- ◆ Shadow method
- ◆ Side-by-side, line-by-line



STEPS WHEN PROOFREADING

- ◆ Section numbering
- ◆ Headings
- ◆ Case citations
- ◆ Cross-references
- ◆ Overall text



THREE PROOFREADING METHODS

- ◆ Side-by-side, line-by-line method
- ◆ Shadow method
- ◆ First-word, last-line method



Proofreading

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to proofread documents.

Objective

Proofread a document.

Materials

- ◆ computer with Internet access and document-creation software
- ◆ printer
- ◆ projector and screen or Smart Board
- ◆ writing utensil

Procedure

1. Work in a small group or individually.
2. Review the examples (below) that need proofreading.
3. Choose one of the methods, and follow the procedures.
4. Mark the corrections that need to be made.
5. Discuss the method you used.

Example 1:

Where long sleeve, rubber gloves, and a mask may be necessary when cleaning. Unfortunately, many products on the market contain ingredients that can be harm full (Sholl, "8 Hidden Toxins"). Some item "cause acute, or immediate, hazards such as skin or respiratory irritation, watery eyes, or chemical burns" ("How Toxic Are Your Household



Cleaning Supplies?”). As a result, the skin, eyes, and lungs should be protected from exposure when using substances that pose risks to humans.

Some people are questioning the safety of items with dangerous ingredients, such as formaldehyde, styrene, organochlorines, APEs, pesticides, phthalates, and volatile organic compounds (“Household Cleaning Products May Do More Harm Than Good”). They have seen evidence that these products are “harmful to our health” (“Household Cleaning Products . . .”). Instead of purchasing high marketed cleaners, they are making their own or purchasing “green” alternatives to avoid carcinogens, neurotoxins, and endocrine disruptors. In these homes, cleaners may include vinegar, baking soda, borax, and lemon juice.

Warnings such as “Danger” or “Caution” are a signal for people to read labels to see if some of the danger ingredients are present. Typically, if items are not safe for children or animals, they will not be safe for adults. So a decision must be made to determine if the cleaning benefits outweigh the potential health risks of the products in question.

Sources:

<https://experiencelife.com/article/8-hidden-toxins-whats-lurking-in-your-cleaning-products/>

<https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/how-toxic-are-your-household-cleaning-supplies>

<http://www.greenclean certified.com/green-cleaning-facts/household-cleaning-products-may-do-more-harm-than-good>

Example 2:

The sedentary culture in the United States is increasing the obese epidemic and mortality rate. Sitting for prolonged periods simply are not safe. According to Dr. James Levine, Director of the Mayo Clinic-ASU Obesity Solutions Initiative and inventor of the treadmill desk, “Sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV, and is more treacherous than parachuting. We are sitting ourselves to death” (Gerstacker).

On average, people spend 64 hours per week sitting (Yeager). Excessive sitting can result in obesity, diabetes, and/or depression. It can also interfere with lipoprotein lipase, which is an enzyme that breaks down fat (Gerstacker). Despite exercising to combat weight gain and stay healthy, people can not reduce their risks of health issues from excessive sitting (Yeager).

Sitting can cause cancer. It increases the chance of colon, endometrial, and lung cancer. According to Dr. Graham Colditz, an expert on cancer prevention at Washington University in St. Louis, “the data is strong enough to say that sitting actually causes colon and endometrial cancer. Yet hardly anyone is doing anything to help Americans move around more” (Fox).

People do not have to quit their jobs to save their lives. They can work at standing desks. Also, they can take short breaks to engage in physical activity regularly to increase their blood flow and heart rate. In addition, people can consider alternatives to sedentary entertainment. For instance, they may want to hike, play basketball, or swim instead of reading a book or watching a movie. “Your body is designed to move” (Yeager).

Proofreading

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<https://experiencelife.com/article/8-hidden-toxins-whats-lurking-in-your-cleaning-products/>

<https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/how-toxic-are-your-household-cleaning-supplies>

<http://www.greencleancertified.com/green-cleaning-facts/household-cleaning-products-may-do-more-harm-than-good>

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Sources:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/the-active-times/sitting-is-the-new-smokin_b_5890006.html

<http://www.runnersworld.com/health/sitting-is-the-new-smoking-even-for-runners>

<http://www.nbcnews.com/health/cancer/heres-just-how-bad-sitting-around-you-n132471>