



Proof Your Writing II

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PowerPoint®
for the
Classroom



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Proofing to Assure Parallelism

A sentence with parallel—grammatically “matching”—words, phrases, and clauses is easier to understand and has a better flow to it.

To achieve this parallelism, a careful writer makes sure that sentence elements have the same grammatical structure and function.

Consider the following example:

On Sunday, we went to church, to the zoo, and ate dinner.

The verb phrase “*ate dinner*” after the prepositional phrases “*to church*” and “*to the zoo*” changes the parallelism of the first two and produces an awkward flow to the sentence.

Proofing to Assure Parallelism

On Sunday, we went to church, to the zoo, and to dinner.

The simple change “*to dinner*” brings logic, balance, order, and clarity to the sentence.

Proofing to Assure Transition

Used with care, transitions show logical relationships between ideas and convey them smoothly and clearly. Without transitions, your writing will become disconnected, choppy, and weak.

Transitional expressions in writing serve these functions:

Introducing examples

(Ex: thus, namely, for instance, for example)

Signaling sequences

(Ex: after, before, now, shortly, finally, when)

Proofing to Assure Transition

Adding information

(Ex: and, besides, moreover, first, also)

Showing contrasts

(Ex: although, on the other hand, yet, however, but)

Expressing emphasis

(Ex: certainly, indeed, in fact, of course, above all)

Establishing locations

(Ex: in the front, in the back, here, there, nearby)

Proofing to Assure Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

In well-written sentences, pronouns agree with their antecedents (the nouns that pronouns replace). A pronoun and its antecedent must agree in: **number** (amount: singular or plural), and in **gender** (masculine, feminine).

Consider an example:

Leslie gave her entire paycheck to the lawyer.

The antecedent, *Leslie*, and the pronoun, *her*, are singular in number, and feminine in gender.

It would mean something entirely different if the sentence read: Leslie gave *his* entire paycheck to the lawyer.

Proofing to Assure Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Take a look at the examples below referring to pronoun-antecedent agreement.

1. Sam will take the history class, which you need to graduate.

1. Sam will take the history class, which he needs to graduate.

Because Sam is taking the class, the correct pronoun is *he*, not *you*. Note that we must change *need* to *needs*.

2. If anyone complains about the men's clothing selection, tell them to call the manager.

2. If anyone complains about men's clothing selection, tell him to call the manager.

The singular pronoun *him* refers to the singular pronoun *anyone*.

Proofing to Avoid Tense Shifts

Verbs form different tenses to show the different times that things can occur. Tenses must be used correctly, however, to show how the timing of one event relates to another.

Shifting tenses in a sentence can leave a reader confused and can make your writing awkward.

There are six “basic” tenses in English:

Present (e.g., walk)

Present Perfect (have walked)

Past (walked)

Past Perfect (had walked)

Future (will walk)

Future Perfect (will have walked)

Proofing to Avoid Tense Shifts

There are also six “progressive” tenses:

Present (e.g., am walking)

Past (was walking)

Future (will be walking)

Present Perfect (have been walking)

Past Perfect (had been walking)

Future Perfect (will have been walking)