

Recommended Paper Proofreading Checklist

Paper Check	Topic	Proofreading Checks	
	<i>Paper font</i>	12-point Times New Roman for the entire paper; 10-point font for footnotes	
	<i>Spell check</i>	Please do it	
	<i>Paragraph Construction</i>	Make sure you have a topic sentence for each paragraph, that your paper flows from one major point to the next, and that your arguments are supported by historical evidence	
	<i>Past tense</i>	Always refer to historical events in the past tense, as an example Napoleon “ruled” or “conquered” or “abdicated” (The past tense of “lead” is “led” by the way)	
	<i>Possessive</i>	Use ‘s for single possessives (<i>the soldier’s rifle</i>); s’ for plural possessives (<i>the soldiers’ rifles</i>); the possessive of Jones is Jones’s; the possessive for “it” is “its”; and finally, the United States’	
	<i>Passive Voice</i>	Avoid overusing the passive voice; show ownership for ideas, events, and phrases	
	<i>Naming conventions</i>	Always use the full name—John P. Smith—when first introducing a character in your paper Also include rank and/or job title when a person first appears in your narrative; you may simply use a last name in subsequent appearances	
	<i>Acronyms</i>	Always spell out the entire term followed by letters in parentheses—Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—when first introducing an acronym	
	<i>Quotations</i>	Introduce in such a way that the reader understands who is being quoted and why; “Historian John Smith, who at the time was fighting in France, observed that ‘the situation was dire.’”	
	<i>Contractions</i>	As an example, use “did not” rather than “didn’t”; “it’s” is a contraction for “it is”	
	<i>Numbers and Dates</i>	Spell out any number equal to or less than twenty; use numerical designations for any number higher than twenty Use dates in this format—May 26, 2008; Write out “nineteenth century” [not 19 th century] and hyphenate its adjective form “nineteenth-century warfare”	
	<i>British Spellings</i>	Avoid words like unbeknownst, amongst, whilst, and whence; simply use unknown, among, while, and when	
	<i>Prepositions</i>	Do not end a sentence with a preposition. “It was France they were going to.” is incorrect; the proper syntax would be “They were going to France.” or “It was France to which they were going.”	
	<i>First Person</i>	Avoid using phrases like “I believe...” “I will prove...”	
	<i>Parallel structure</i>	If you start plural (or singular), stay plural (or singular); for example, “The German Army was well trained and it [not they] pushed quickly through France.”	
	<i>Pronouns</i>	Pronouns must refer to something specific (called an antecedent); if there is any doubt, restate the noun; sentences (and especially topic sentences) should never start with an ambiguous “it.”	
	<i>Generalizations</i>	Avoid words like “never” or “always” or phrases like “throughout all of history”	
	<i>Documentation</i>	Use the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> format for footnotes. Examples of citation: For a book, the basic footnote format is: John Smith, <i>Title: Subtitle</i> (Place: Publisher, Date), 7. For an article: Jane Smith, “Article Title,” <i>Journal Title</i> Vol. __, No. __ (Date): 5. After you have used a source in a footnote once, use an abbreviated footnote for that same source in subsequent citations—Smith, <i>Title</i> , 49. <i>Ibid.</i> is an abbreviation for <i>ibidem</i> , a Latin word meaning “in the same place;” use to cite the same source for the second consecutive footnote—Ibid., 50.	
Common Paper Correction Symbols			
WC	Poor word choice	SP	spelling
AWK	Awkward, usually in terms of sentence structure	Frag	Sentence fragment
¶	New paragraph	Fluff / vague	