

How to Proof/Peer Review

Peer vs. Pre-Press Reviews

Every piece we produce must pass through a series of quality control checks before going to the printer (print pieces) or going live (digital creations). NO EXCEPTIONS!

Our quality control process includes an initial peer review, a pre-press review and a printer proof review (if applicable). Here's what to review, when to review and why it is so important to review.

	Initial Peer Review	Pre-Press Review	Printer Proof Review
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Style ■ Spelling ■ Sentence structure ■ Grammar ■ Clarity ■ Consistency ■ Word choices ■ Photo selections ■ Layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spelling ■ Consistency ■ Style (AP and client style) ■ Grammar ■ Phone numbers and web addresses ■ Calculations ■ Browser capability (for digital pieces) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word flow ■ Photos ■ Glaring typos ■ Piece is backed up properly ■ Proof matches what we sent to press
When	Before a piece goes to the client (Word draft or design)	Before a piece is sent to the printer or a website is pushed live	Before a piece is printed
Why	Now is the time to make substantive changes to the piece — before the client ever sees it.	This is not the time to rewrite; if you have questions, make a global comment and check with consultant.	Only major errors should be corrected at this stage.

How to Proof Different Types of Pieces

If a project manager can't make heads or tails of your edits, we've got a problem. Here's how to proofread correctly:

- Utilize standard editing marks for hard-copy edits.
- Use track changes in Word documents.
- First make Text Edits, and then add Sticky Notes for comments on Adobe.
- Change PowerPoint presentations to PDF and follow the Adobe steps for mark ups.
- For a web page, check with the project manager. You might be asked to:
 - Convert a Web page to a PDF, and then annotate edits as normal.
 - Take screenshots of a Web page (command, shift, 4, then convert to PDF), and then annotate edits as normal.
 - Fill out a log sheet, especially for WordPress sites.

Use the Tools

Proofing is much more than simply reading for clarity and accuracy. When reviewing a piece, be sure to use these resources.

- 1.** Each client we work with will have formatting preferences, including everything from capitalization to dates to job titles. We have a style guide for each of our clients. Style Guides can be found at [data/misc/1Style Guides](#).
- 2.** When there is no client style guide or if an existing guide does not address some aspect of the content, PartnerComm defers to the AP Stylebook.
 - AP Stylebook Online:
 - <https://www.apstylebook.com>
 - Username: partnercomm
 - Password: pcommmap
 - Ask the Editor is a great search tool for answers to proofreading questions. This tool also allows you to submit questions of your own to the AP editor.
 - AP Style Guide (generic template, updated annually)
 - [data/misc/1StyleGuides](#)
 - AP Style folder
- 3.** To double check things such as spelling or capitalization, use the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.
- 4.** To verify spelling for associate names and job titles, use LinkedIn.

Proofreading Tips

The importance of closely proofreading and peer reviewing cannot be understated. When we skim, our brains fill in blanks and correct small errors. That's why we can read sentences like this one and still understand the meaning. Slowing down and taking time to proofread is necessary to make sure every piece is perfect.

How to Proofread

- 1.** Read it through. Check for typos, grammar and sentence structure.
- 2.** Review for style. Compare against the client style guide.
- 3.** Go back and check the details. Look at headlines, callouts, dates, spacing, etc.

Places Typos Like to Live

- **Proper names** — Double-check proper names for trademarks, copyrights, and correct spelling and capitalization.
- **Dates** — Don't assume dates are correct. For example, you will need to confirm that the day of the week is accurate (e.g., Thursday, Feb. 9; NOT Friday, Feb. 9).
- **Spacing** — Check that ellipses only have three periods, and the spacing around them is consistent. Check for proper spaces (or lack thereof) around em dashes and en dashes.
- **Footnotes** — Make sure footnotes are consistent (asterisk vs. numbers, formatting) and refer back to the correct subject.
- **Links and numbers** — Follow every link, checking not only that it works, but also that it takes you to the right location. Call phone numbers and make sure they go to the right place as well.
- **HEADERS, FOOTERS, AND DISCLAIMERS** — Proofreading is more than just reading body text. Review EVERYTHING you see, EVERY TIME you see it.
- **Headlines** — When we see a big important header, we automatically assume that it's correct. And it can be harder to spot typos when headlines are written in all capital letters.
- **Capitalization** — Review the piece for proper style when it comes to headlines, callouts, names and terms. Be sure to check against the client's style guide.
- **Incorrect Usage** — Spell check won't catch homophones, so you always have to be on the lookout for instances where words sound the same but aren't spelled the same (e.g., compliment vs. complement).
- **Consistency** — Make sure items are always treated the same way within a piece. This applies to:
 - Layout
 - Bullets
 - Headlines/subheads/callouts
 - Punctuation
 - Capitalization
 - Bolding/emphasis (phone numbers, URLs, etc.)

Finally, If You Don't Know, Ask

- 1. Resources** — Can't find the current client style guide? Check with the project manager to see if he/she has what you need on hand.
- 2. Comments** — If something doesn't read correctly or seems confusing, make a note for the consultant. When you get really close to a project, you sometimes stop seeing things after a while, so that's where a fresh set of eyes comes in. It's better to question something and have it corrected than to let it slip by.
- 3. Client edits** — Even if the client made an edit and rewrote some copy, don't just assume it's correct. Be sure it still reads correctly, and point it out to the consultant if it doesn't.