

Editing or proofreading?

So you have just finished a year's hard work and completed your first novel. But is it ready to be submitted to a publisher? Perhaps you have spent your weekend writing and rewriting an application form for your dream job. But is it good enough to be taken seriously by employers? Or maybe you have produced the latest policy for your company which will be made available to public. But is it error free? The creation of any type of written document could always benefit from input from an unbiased second opinion. But could your work benefit from the services of a proof reader or an editor? And what exactly would each of these people do?

Proofreading:

Proofreading is essentially equivalent to a final "read through" of a document, to make sure it is as polished and correct as possible before it is released for its intended use. This would include ensuring that the spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence construction are all correct and consistent throughout the text. Proofreading may also ensure that and references or bibliography is presented in a correct and consistent format.

Proof reader do's and don'ts:

- Spelling, grammar and punctuation – A proof reader will check that all spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct throughout the document.
- Referencing – Proofreading will ensure that references occur in a legitimate and consistent format.
- Layout – Ensure that the text is laid out in a logical way; I.e. text is arranged appropriately and consistently throughout the document.
- Structure – A proof reader will not rearrange the structure of the document.
- Content – Proofreading will not comment on the content of the text in terms of appropriateness for application.

Editing:

Editing a document involves much greater input to the content of text, compared to proof reading. Although an editor may comment on spelling and grammar as a proof reader would, the editor would be much more concerned with ensuring that content was factually correct, is appropriate for the intended application and is structured consistently and sensibly. Editing may also check that a document isn't too long or too short for its use.

Editor do's and don'ts:

- Suitability – An editor will check that language is correct for the intended audience, and content is correct for application.
- Facts – Editing will ensure that and comments presented as fact, are actually factual.
- Structure – The text is analysed to make sure the structure is as efficient and logical as possible.
- Research – An editor will not research a document as a ghost writer may do.
- Copyright – Editing does not involve obtaining required permissions for any copyright material.

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