By David Cot | October 2023

Prompt book for editing and proofreading

Both processes involve refining written content, and it could be argued that proofreading is the final stage of editing. Editing encompasses an in-depth revision of content to enhance the overall quality, clarity, coherence, flow, and structure of a written document. Proofreading is the process of detecting and rectifying surface-level errors in a final draft.

These are some aspects editors and proofreaders pay attention to:

- **Grammar**
- **Typos and spelling mistakes**
- **Punctuation**
- **Sentence structure**
- **Readability**
- **Logical progression and flow**
- **Clarity**
- **Tone**
- **Formatting**
- **Redundancies**
- **Fact-checking**

To assist in editing and proofreading documents, you can utilize AI tools like **Trinka**, **Grammarly**, **Quillbot**, or **ChatGPT**. Below, I provide a selection of sample prompts that might prove useful or inspirational.

Prompts for editing and proofreading

Act as an editor and proofreader

1. Act as an editor. I will provide you with texts and you will give me feedback in bullet points about the language, grammar, and content itself. Don't change the text, only provide feedback to improve it. Thank you.

2. Act as an editor working on a short fictional story, providing feedback to enhance pacing and tension in the plot.

3. A magazine has sent you an article about making healthy lifestyle choices. Your task is to edit the article for language and style, ensuring it maintains a friendly and informative tone.

4. I'm seeking a peer review for my psychology research paper on cognitive development in adolescents. Could you critically evaluate the methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of results? Your insights on the paper's scientific rigor would be greatly appreciated.

5. Can you assist me by proofreading my economics paper investigating income inequality? Please focus on correcting grammatical errors, improving sentence structure, and ensuring consistent formatting according to the specified citation style.

6. I'd like to receive constructive feedback on my biology manuscript about genetic mutations. In your review, please highlight areas where the explanation of complex concepts can be enhanced for a wider audience while maintaining scientific accuracy.

7. Could you act as an editor for my history paper on the causes of the Industrial Revolution? I'd appreciate your input on refining the introduction and conclusion to provide a strong narrative that engages readers and underscores the historical significance of the topic.

8. You're reviewing an academic research paper on climate change. The paper's arguments seem well-presented, but there are areas where the logic is unclear. Offer guidance on how the author can strengthen the logical flow and connections between their points.

9. An aspiring poet has submitted a collection of poems for review. While the imagery is evocative, some of the poems lack clear structure. Offer suggestions on how the poet can improve the structure and rhythm of the poems.

10. An article on urban planning has been submitted to a journal. The author presents a strong argument, but there are instances of wordiness that hinder the article's readability. Edit the article to improve conciseness without sacrificing content.

11. An educational psychology article has been submitted for publication. Edit the content for grammar and punctuation errors and ensure that the information is presented in a clear and logical sequence.

12. Review a press release announcing a company's new product launch. Edit the release for grammar, punctuation, and tone, and verify the accuracy of the product details.

13. Edit a travel guidebook chapter about a popular tourist destination. Pay attention to sentence structure and grammar, and fact-check the information about attractions, accommodations, and transportation options.

14. I will provide you with texts, and I would like you to review them for any spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors, as a proofreader. Provide me with necessary corrections or suggestions to enhance the readability of the texts.

15. I want you to act as an expert in the English language, with advanced experience in proofreading, editing, spelling, grammar, proper sentence structure, and punctuation. I will provide you with professional business documents to proofread. Make appropriate changes to correct mistakes and improve readability, while retaining the same ideas and maintaining a professional tone.

16. Let me know if there are any mistakes I should see as a proofreader.

Fact-checking

1. Could you assist me in fact-checking historical events mentioned in my paper about the American Revolutionary War? I want to ensure that the dates, key figures, and sequences of events are accurate. Highlight any conflicting perspectives within the scholarly discourse.

2. I need assistance in fact-checking sociological theories on the impact of social media on mental health. Verify the validity of the research studies and highlight any conflicting findings or interpretations within the field.

3. Verify the accuracy of this claim by cross-referencing it with reputable sources.

4. Fact-check the data mentioned in this report.

5. Validate the accuracy of this claim and ensure that it's backed by reliable evidence.

6. Check the methodology used to make the following claim and the limitations of said methodology.

7. Cross-reference this data with credible and up-to-date academic sources.

8. Verify the credibility of this source based on the author's qualifications and the publication's reputation.

9. Ensure that all quotes and citations are properly attributed and cross-check them against the referenced sources for accuracy.

10. Verify a statement in a sociology article about "Social Media Usage." Fact-check the claim that "Over 80% of teenagers have experienced cyberbullying on social media platforms." Refer to recent surveys, studies, and reputable social sciences research to confirm the accuracy of the reported cyberbullying prevalence among teenagers.

11. Fact-check a physics claim in a quantum mechanics article that "Heisenberg's uncertainty principle states that we can never know both the position and velocity of a particle simultaneously." Validate this assertion using the original formulation of the uncertainty principle and its mathematical implications.

12. Fact-check a statistic mentioned in an article about "Renewable Energy Adoption" that claims solar power installations have increased by 300% in the past five years. Verify the accuracy of this statistic using reputable energy industry reports and official government data, ensuring the timeframe and percentage increase align with credible sources.

13. Verify a historical event mentioned in a research paper on "Ancient Civilizations." Fact-check the claim that the Library of Alexandria was destroyed by Julius Caesar in 48 BC. Cross-reference historical records, scholarly articles, and primary sources to confirm the accuracy of this widely held belief.

14. Fact-check a medical claim in a journal article about "Nutritional Supplements." Verify the statement that consuming excessive amounts of vitamin C can lead to kidney stones. Consult authoritative medical literature, clinical studies, and health organizations' recommendations to assess the accuracy of this claim.

15. Fact-check a statement in an economics research paper about "Income Inequality." Verify the claim that the top 1% of earners hold 80% of the wealth in the United States. Validate this assertion using data from reputable economic research institutions and government reports, ensuring the figures are up-to-date and accurately reflect wealth distribution.

16. Fact-check a quote attributed to a famous scientist in an article about "Quantum Physics." Verify the quote's authenticity and context by comparing it to the scientist's original writings or interviews. Ensure that the quote accurately represents the scientist's views and is not taken out of context.

17. Verify a statement in an astronomy paper that "Pluto is the largest object in the Kuiper Belt." Confirm this claim with recent astronomical observations and planetary measurements, ensuring the accuracy of Pluto's classification and its size relative to other Kuiper Belt objects.

18. Fact-check a claim in a climatology paper that "The ozone hole is shrinking by 1% annually." Verify this assertion using satellite data and atmospheric measurements, ensuring the accuracy of the rate of change in the ozone hole's size.

Readability

1. Assess the article's readability and suggest ways to enhance its appeal to readers.

2. Utilize the SMOG index to analyze the text's comprehensibility and propose improvements.

3. Apply the Flesch-Kincaid readability test to gauge accessibility and recommend adjustments.

4. Evaluate the article's readability using the Automated Readability Index and pinpoint areas requiring simplification and rephrasing.

5. Review the article's readability and offer insights for tailoring it appropriately to an academic audience.

6. Assess paragraph lengths in the article for improved readability in accordance with SEO best practices.

7. Analyze the readability of a legal contract for a business partnership, considering language usage, and ascertain its comprehensibility for individuals without a legal background. Provide suggestions for simplifying complex terms.

8. To enhance readability, I'm considering adding visual aids like diagrams or charts. Can you recommend places where these visual elements could be beneficial?

9. I'm concerned about using jargon that might be difficult for a general audience to understand. Please identify any instances of technical language and suggest simpler alternatives.

10. I want to make this text more reader friendly. Can you help simplify the sentence structure while retaining the original meaning and ideas?
11. I want to keep my audience engaged throughout the text. Can you review the content and suggest ways to maintain their interest and ensure they find it compelling?
12. I'm concerned about reader comprehension. Could you evaluate the text and suggest ways to improve clarity and ensure that the audience can easily understand the message?

Adequacy for the targeted audience

1. Assess the suitability of an academic white paper on artificial intelligence for a technical audience of researchers and engineers. Analyze whether the content delves deep enough into technical details and provides the necessary insights for the target audience's level of expertise.
2. Evaluate the attractiveness of a website promoting eco-friendly household products to environmentally conscious consumers. Analyze whether the content effectively highlights the benefits of the products and aligns with the values of the target audience and suggest ways to enhance its appeal.
3. Examine a marketing brochure for a luxury travel package targeted at affluent individuals. Assess whether the content effectively communicates the exclusivity and unique experiences offered and provide recommendations for making the brochure more enticing.
4. Review a children's storybook intended for preschoolers. Analyze whether the illustrations, language, and storytelling style are captivating and appropriate for the age group and suggest ways to maintain their interest.
5. Examine a fundraising appeal email from a nonprofit organization targeting potential donors. Analyze whether the language, storytelling, and emotional appeal effectively convey the organization's mission and encourage recipients to contribute.
6. Evaluate a podcast episode description for a show targeting entrepreneurs and business professionals. Analyze whether the description captures the episode's key insights and benefits and suggest ways to make it more compelling for the intended audience.
7. Evaluate a website's landing page for a new line of fitness equipment targeted at individuals looking to start their fitness journey. Analyze whether the visuals, messaging, and calls-to-action resonate with beginners and encourage them to explore the product offerings.

8. Review a restaurant menu aimed at families with young children. Assess whether the menu items are presented in an appealing and understandable way for both parents and kids and offer suggestions to enhance the menu's family-friendly vibe.
9. Consider the interests and needs of the target audience. Is the text engaging enough to capture their attention?
10. Adjust the tone of the text to attract the target audience.
11. Act as if you were a historian. Make sure the terminology of the article is accurate and technical enough.
12. Imagine you are a 16-year-old girl with a keen interest in art. Is the language appropriate to your level of expertise and expectations?
13. Put yourself in the shoes of an average person and evaluate if the article is easy to understand.
14. I want to ensure that the content is culturally sensitive and appropriate for the target audience. Could you review it for any cultural references or nuances that might need adjustment?
15. I'm concerned about the relevance of certain sections for my audience. Can you help identify any parts that might not be as relevant and suggest whether they should be retained or modified?
16. My goal is to inspire action or thought from my readers. Can you review the content and suggest ways to ensure that the audience finds it actionable and thought-provoking?

Opening and closure

1. Can you create an opening sentence that sets a powerful and engaging tone for my article, immediately capturing the reader's attention?
2. I'm aiming to start my article with a thought-provoking question that hooks the reader. Could you help me formulate a question that sparks curiosity and draws them in?
3. I'd like to begin my article with a real-life anecdote that relates to the topic. Can you help me craft an impactful sentence that introduces the story and intrigues the reader?
4. To grab readers' attention, I want to kick off with a surprising fact or statistic. Can you help me draft a compelling opening sentence that presents this information?

5. I'm looking for an opening sentence that is quotable and encapsulates the essence of my article. Could you help me create a concise yet impactful statement that captures the main idea?

6. Could you suggest a closing sentence that leaves the readers with a strong emotional resonance, encapsulating the essence of the article's message?

7. I want the closing sentence to emphasize the journey the article has taken the readers on. Could you help me craft a sentence that reflects the growth or transformation experienced throughout?

8. I'd like to wrap up the article with an inspiring call to action. Can you help me create a closing sentence that motivates readers to take a positive step related to the topic?

9. Edit the introduction of a short story set in a futuristic world. Review the language used to create an engaging atmosphere and set the tone for the narrative. Ensure that the introduction captivates readers' attention and offers a glimpse into the story's unique setting.

10. Edit the conclusion of an essay about the societal impact of technology. Check for coherence and relevance in summarizing the main points discussed. Additionally, ensure that the conclusion provides a thoughtful reflection on the broader implications of the topic.

11. Edit the conclusion of an opinion piece on renewable energy policies. Verify that the concluding statements effectively emphasize the author's stance while avoiding the introduction of new information. Ensure that the conclusion leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

12. Proofread the introduction of a historical analysis essay on the Industrial Revolution. Focus on correcting any spelling errors and ensuring the accurate use of historical terms and names. Confirm that the introduction provides a clear context for the time period.

13. Proofread the conclusion of a business proposal for a new product launch. Double-check the formatting of bullet points or numbered lists. Ensure that the conclusion reinforces the benefits of the proposed product effectively and encourages action.

14. Proofread the conclusion of a marketing report discussing consumer preferences. Review punctuation and ensure proper sentence structure. Additionally, check for consistency in verb tenses throughout the conclusion.

15. Review the closing remarks in the conclusion to leave a lasting impression on the reader.

16. Evaluate the hook in the introduction to make it captivating and relevant to the topics discussed.

17. Examine the transitions between paragraphs in the conclusion and improve coherence and progression where necessary.
18. Ensure the conclusion effectively captures the reader's attention while summarizing the key takeaways.
19. Check the relevance of the information presented in the introduction and suggest improvements.
20. Ensure the opening remarks align with the intended tone and style.

Redundancies and conciseness

1. Review a corporate report on quarterly financial performance, identifying repetitive statistical data presented in both tables and text. Condense the presentation of figures to eliminate redundancy.
2. Edit an instructional manual for assembling furniture, removing repetitive steps that apply to multiple pieces in the set. Maintain concise instructions while ensuring clarity in the assembly process.
3. Edit an academic psychology paper, eliminating redundant explanations of research methods previously discussed. Maintain clarity while avoiding unnecessary repetition.
4. Review a business proposal and identify instances where the same information appears in both the main body and the appendices. Streamline the content by referencing the appendices when necessary.
5. Edit a customer feedback survey to eliminate redundant questions. Combine questions with similar themes and rephrase for conciseness and clarity.
6. I want to ensure that my text is free from redundant language. Can you assist me in identifying repeated words or expressions that I can remove to improve the flow?
7. I'm looking to diversify my word choices and eliminate redundancy. Would you be able to suggest synonyms or alternative terms to replace repeated words in my text?
8. Identify and suggest ways to remove redundancies in the text.
9. Remove unnecessary adjectives and adverbs in this text to improve conciseness.
10. Revise the paragraph to maintain the core idea while making it more concise.
11. Shorten the paragraph while retaining all relevant information.
12. Edit the copy to convey the same message with fewer words.

13. Condense the information in this article for greater conciseness.
14. I'm looking to summarize and rephrase this lengthy passage. Can you provide a concise yet accurate rephrased version?
15. Simplify the sentence by removing unnecessary words, repetitions, and redundancies to enhance conciseness.
16. Check for repetitive words and suggest alternatives.
17. Look for repeated words or phrases in close proximity and consider rephrasing to avoid redundancy.
18. Identify words repeated more than four times, excluding keywords like 'Disney' and 'movie,' and replace them with suitable alternatives.

Paraphrasing and sentence clarification

1. Paraphrase this sentence while retaining its core meaning.
2. Rephrase this paragraph with a more cheerful tone.
3. Generate a restated version of the text that conveys the ideas in a more serious manner.
4. Rewrite this text in simpler terms for a general audience.
5. Review this paragraph and suggest ways to improve sentence clarity.
6. Review each paragraph to ensure they support the main idea.
7. Establish stronger connections between the sections of this article.
8. How can I enhance the clarity of the text?
9. Evaluate the heading titles and enhance their engagement.
10. Suggest improved word choices for this text.
11. Provide synonyms for the word 'enormous'.
12. Help me find an alternative word for 'abscissa' that is more comprehensive.
13. Replace technical jargon with simpler words or colloquial expressions.
14. Ensure that the word choices are suitable for an experienced professional audience.
15. The text is a bit informal, and I'd like it to be more formal. Could you paraphrase it to give it a more professional tone?
16. I'd like to maintain the tone and context of this paragraph but rephrase it in a more engaging way. Could you help me with that?
17. Identify all sentences in passive voice and rewrite them in the active voice.
18. Change passive voice verbs to their active forms to enhance readability.
19. Transform active voice verbs into their passive equivalents.
20. Search for all passive voice sentences in the document and convert them to active voice for clarity and impact.

Sentence variety

1. Can you help me introduce more sentence variety in this paragraph by using different sentence structures?
2. I'd like to create a better flow by incorporating a mix of short and long sentences. Could you assist me in achieving that?
3. The subject placement in the sentences is becoming predictable. Can you provide some sentences with altered subject positions?
4. I'd like to mix up the sentence purposes, such as stating facts, asking questions, and providing examples. Can you help diversify the content?
5. Could you assist in creating more sentence variety by utilizing different grammatical structures in this paragraph?
6. I'd like to showcase both active and passive voice constructions in this section. Can you help me achieve that balance?
7. Rearrange the sentence order to make the opening sentence more impactful and memorable.
8. Organize the provided sentences in a sequence that builds suspense and leads to a climactic conclusion.
9. Add front-loaded sentences to craft an engaging narrative.
10. Combine these short sentences into a composite sentence to enhance readability.
11. Experiment with rhetorical devices, such as analogies and antithesis, to render the argument more compelling.
12. Enrich the text by incorporating rhetorical devices like parallelism, antithesis, and repetition to add emphasis and stylistic variety.
13. To make the content relatable, I've included examples and analogies. Can you review them and provide feedback on whether they effectively connect with the audience?
14. Improve the text's overall style by interspersing shorter sentences with longer, more elaborative ones to create a balanced rhythm and sustain reader interest.
15. Enhance the text's flow by alternating between active and passive voice constructions, ensuring a dynamic mix that maintains reader engagement.
16. Elevate the text by interchanging sentence structures — encompass both subject-verb-object constructions and more intricate sentence patterns, like subordination and coordination.
17. Create a new sentence order that highlights the cause-and-effect relationships between the presented ideas.

Transitions

1. I'm looking to make the text flow more smoothly. Could you include transition words to achieve this?

2. Could you help me enhance the flow between paragraphs by suggesting effective transition words or phrases?

3. I'd like to make the progression of ideas clearer. Can you suggest transitional phrases that indicate sequence or steps?

4. Can you help me introduce contrast and comparison in my writing by suggesting appropriate transition words or phrases?

5. I'd like to emphasize key points and add emphasis. Could you recommend transition phrases that help achieve this effect?

6. Can you help me create a stronger link between related ideas? Please suggest transition words that convey similarity or likeness.

7. I want to transition smoothly between sections of my writing. Could you suggest effective transition words that connect different parts?

8. Substitute repetitive transitional words with synonyms.

9. Incorporate transition words to craft a dynamic narrative.

10. Check if the transitions between paragraphs are smooth.

11. Improve the progression of ideas to enhance logical and comprehensive flow.

12. Suggest suitable transitional phrases or words to enhance the flow between sentences in this paragraph.

13. Review the use of transitions in this text and suggest improvements.

14. Provide appropriate transitional words or phrases to contrast ideas.

15. Revise the text to include transition sentences summarizing the main points of the preceding paragraph and setting up the content of the next one.

16. Enhance the text's flow by using pronouns like "this", "these", and "those" to reference previously mentioned concepts and maintain a logical thread of thought.

17. Edit the text to ensure that the connection between cause and effect is evident in the transitions, allowing readers to understand the causal relationship between different parts of the content.

18. Enhance the text's cohesion by incorporating transitional words and phrases like "however", "moreover", "in contrast", or "consequently" to connect ideas and guide the reader through the content seamlessly.

General proofreading, grammar, and typos

1. Can you help me perform a basic proofread of my text, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and overall readability?
2. Could you please review my text for any grammar and punctuation errors to ensure accuracy?
3. I'd like to make sure there are no spelling mistakes or typos in my content. Can you help me with that?
4. I want to ensure my sentences are clear and well-structured. Would you mind checking the sentence structure for me?
5. I'm looking to improve the flow of my sentences. Can you assist in refining the sentence structure and coherence?
6. I'd like to avoid sentence fragments. Can you review my text for any incomplete sentences?
7. Review this sentence for any grammatical errors.
8. Correct any typos and spelling mistakes in the text.
9. Check the grammar and punctuation of the text.
10. Proofread this paragraph and correct any errors.
11. Review the grammar of the article and recommend improvements.
12. Are there any spelling or grammatical errors in the blog post?
13. Verify if there are any typos in the report.
14. Improve the sentence structure of the social copy to enhance readability.
15. Identify and correct all instances of incorrect subject-verb agreement.
16. Thoroughly examine the punctuation usage in the text, ensuring that commas, periods, and other punctuation marks are correctly placed.
17. Scan the document for any missing words or incomplete sentences that could disrupt the flow of the text.

Punctuation

1. I'd like to make sure my punctuation is correct. Can you check and correct any punctuation errors in my text?
2. Could you review my text for proper usage of periods, exclamation marks, and question marks?
3. I want to ensure my parentheses and brackets are used accurately. Can you check if they're properly placed in my text?
4. I'd like to avoid run-on sentences. Could you review my text for any instances of this?

5. I want to ensure proper apostrophe usage. Can you help me identify any errors in this regard?

6. I'm looking to ensure correct usage of hyphens and dashes. Could you review my text for any errors?

7. Could you please check my text for correct usage of commas and semicolons to ensure proper punctuation?

8. Revise the comma usage in this paragraph to enhance readability.

9. Check if the use of colons and semicolons is appropriate in this report.

10. Add the correct punctuation marks to this sentence.

11. Correct all instances of run-on sentences in the article.

12. Review the text's flow and, if necessary, shorten the sentences using full stops.

13. Check for proper capitalization in the paragraph to adhere to standard writing guidelines.

14. Ensure consistent and appropriate capitalization, especially in titles, headings, and proper nouns.

15. Make sure that the punctuation and capitalization are correct in this article.

16. Revise the use of question and exclamation marks to make the article more engaging and livelier.

17. Examine the document for proper apostrophe usage, ensuring they are used for possessives and contractions accurately.

18. Verify that all acronyms and abbreviations are introduced and defined before being consistently used throughout the document.

19. Scan the document for quotation marks, ensuring they are correctly used to enclose direct speech or quotes from sources, and that any punctuation follows the appropriate placement rules.

Consistency and formatting

1. Could you please review my text for consistency in terms of tone, style, and terminology?

2. I want to make sure that the voice (active/passive) remains consistent in my text. Could you review it for any changes?

3. Could you review my text to ensure that numbers and units are used consistently and accurately?

4. I want to make sure that pronouns are used consistently and accurately in my text. Could you review them for any inconsistencies?

5. I'd like to verify that dates and times are consistently formatted and used correctly in my text. Can you check for any inconsistencies?

6. Can you review my text to ensure that abbreviations and acronyms are used consistently and appropriately?

7. Check the article for consistent verb tense usage.

8. Ensure consistency in formatting and style throughout the article.

9. Maintain a consistent tone and style across this article.

10. Check for any inadequate tense shifts within this article and edit to maintain a consistent writing style.

11. Given the timeline of events, examine if the narrative maintains a consistent tense.

12. Review the verbs and verb phrases used in the document and adjust them to present/past/future tense for consistency.

13. Evaluate the document for consistent formatting of fonts, styles, headings and bullet points, and make necessary adjustments.

14. Check in-text citations to ensure they adhere to APA/MLA/Chicago/IEEE style guidelines.

15. Examine the article for consistent use of bolding and italics, and provide guidance on adding or removing them.

16. Review spacing in this report and adjust it according to the formatting guidelines.

17. Check consistency in the use of font style and size for headings and subheadings throughout the article.

18. Verify that the article uses the same font type consistently throughout the document.

19. Ensure footnotes meet formatting requirements.

20. Check the page layout and adjust it to meet the specified formatting.

21. Examine line and paragraph spacing in this document, and correct any inconsistencies following formatting guidelines.

22. Can you review my text to ensure that hyperlinks are correctly formatted and functional?

23. Ensure images in this document are aligned in compliance with the intended formatting.

24. To ensure successful publication, I'd appreciate advice on meticulously following the submission guidelines of selected journals. Please help me understand the specific formatting, citation, and reference requirements that can enhance my paper's acceptance chances.