

Proofreading and Editing

Activity 1

It is important to be able to proofread and edit your own writing, even when written on computer.

1 Which of the following are reasons not to completely rely on spelling and grammar checkers?

- Spellcheck cannot help you with some proper names, such as 'Vivaan'.
- Spellcheck will not detect the improper use of homophones, such as 'their' and 'there'.
- It may flag words as errors that are indeed correct, especially if your checker is set to US spelling.
- Spellcheck does not always offer useful spelling suggestions for severely misspelt words.
- Spellcheck does not always detect the misused words, e.g. 'advise' / 'advice'.

Homophones are two or more words with the same pronunciation, but different meanings, origins, or spelling, e.g. 'to', 'too' and 'two'.

2 Read the three sentences below. Underline the correct homophone.

- Blue / blew is my favourite colour.
- If you want to go on holiday, you'll have to catch a plane / plain.
- I brush my hare / hair every day.

3 Complete the homophone pairs, the first has been completed for you.

sell	cell	root	
meat		cereal	
coarse		pray	
peace		compliment	
prophet		stationary	

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It can be very easy to make grammar, punctuation and spelling errors as you write. There are some key points at which it is worth proofreading what you have written, these include:

- As you write a sentence.
- At the end of a paragraph or section of writing.
- As a final check of the entire piece.

Reading what you have written aloud is a good way to spot grammar and punctuation errors in particular. Paying close attention to words you often misspell, or don't use very often, helps to catch spelling errors. Let's practise by identifying errors in the work of others.

4 Read the sentence below, it contains three errors. Rewrite it, correcting the three errors.

The icy-cold wind whiped across the field, freezing the crop's and sending them intoo hibernation.

Another common error people make is missing words out, which can be difficult to spot, even when you proofread.

5 There are words missing in the text below. Underline the two words either side of where the missing word should be. Then rewrite the text to include the words that are missing, so that it makes sense.

Rory groaned his mum shouted up the stairs: "Rory, I hope you've started your homework!" Rory reluctantly down on his desk chair and opened his homework jotter. "I hate maths home- work!" he mumbled himself.

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There are lots of common spelling errors people make. See if you can find the correct spellings.

Circle the correct spelling of the word, based on the context given.

- 6
- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Which word means 'covered'? | rapped | wrapped | raped |
| Which word means 'way down'? | descent | decent | dissent |
| Which word is a sandy region? | dessert | desert | dessirt |
| Which word shows belonging? | their | there | they're |
| Which word directs you somewhere? | two | two | two |

Knowing what type of error is made is just as important as spotting it, as this helps you to fix it. Try to identify the type of errors made in a piece of writing.

- 7 There are three errors in the text that have already been identified by being underlined. Imagine you are helping a friend to understand why these are errors.

Yesterday we went to the zoo but it is raining. Unfortunately this meant that the animals were a little more reluctant to come out of their shelters so that we could view them in more detail. My favourite experiense was observing the birds of pray as they flew around their aviaries.

Error	Explanation of why this is an error
is	
experiense	
pray	

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- 8 We have laid our hands on a first draft of *The Railway Children* by E. Nesbit.
Read the extract, identify the five errors and then rewrite it below, underlining or highlighting the corrections you've made.

They were not railway children to begin with. I dont suppose they had ever thought about railways except as a means of getting to Maskelyne and Cook's, the Pantomime, Zoological Gardens, and madame Tussauds. They were just ordinary, suburban chidlren, and they lives with their father and mother in an ordinary red-brick-fronted villa, with coloured glass in the front door, a tiled passage that was called a hall, a bathroom with hot and cold water, electric bells, French windows, and a good deal of white paint, and 'every modern convenience', as the house-agents say
