Digital Tip in Action: Proofreading for Format Consistency

[00:00] Employees and students are often required to format documents according to a style guide to ensure that all documents use the same standards for elements like typefaces, margins, white space, and headings. Whether or not your teacher or employer requires that you follow an official style guide, at minimum each of your documents should be internally consistent. For example, if you format a caption using italics on page 2,

[00:30] the caption for the figure on page 7 should also be italicized. Two different approaches can help you achieve greater consistency in your documents: macro-level proofreading and micro-level proofreading. Let's start with macro-level. As you review your work for consistency, it may be helpful to get a "birds eye" view of the entire document, especially if your document is several pages long,

[01:00] or uses a variety of styles. Most programs will have a Print Preview view that allows you to see thumbnails of several pages at once. Scan the document for any irregularities in layout, margin, spacing, and heading style. Macro-level proofreading can help you spot visual inconsistencies in your documents,

[01:30] but you should also use a microscopic approach to proofreading, which will help you identify spelling and punctuation errors, as well as formatting problems too small to stand out in a typical macro-level review. Take advantage of the Spelling and Grammar features in your word-processing software. Green lines suggest a possible grammatical error, and red lines suggest a possible spelling error. Right-click on the word to see possible alternatives. You shouldn't rely on Spell-check to catch every potential problem. Some errors

[02:00] may only appear in print. Carefully reviewing a printed copy of your work is always a good idea, especially if your document will be read by its intended audience in print form.