

## **Why Proofreading Matters**

*Geoffrey Philp*

When we're talking about things like subject-verb agreement or problems with grammar, is... it's like going on a date. First impressions count. Now you may be dressed in your best, best tuxedo. Shoes shined, hair combed, you're wearing Paco Rabanne. And you're going off on the date. But if you pull up to the front door and you go BUPBUPBUPBUP on the horn and you walk in and you pull out a cigarette and you're there talking with dad and you know, 'Hey Dad, any more whiskey?' Right? You've now ruined the whole situation. Yes...you know, you're prepared for it and you're probably a nice guy. But all off these gaffs that you are making is really turning off Dad and you're not going to take out his daughter, OK? So in the same way...yes, you may have the most wonderful things to say in your paper, but if you say, you know, 'I is a college student', and that's a first sentence...what I'm looking for now is how many more mistakes are you going to make? And I'm now turned off your writing because I don't think this is important. I'm now correcting for mistakes.

*Sue Grafton*

I just did the page proofs for *M is for Malice*. I used the word 'probably' 70 times. And I had to go through the manuscript every time I used the word 'probably,' I had to decide whether I wanted to keep it, or what I wanted to substitute for that. I think without realizing it, we have our pet phrases. I used the word 'anyway,' I use the word 'actually,' I use the phrase 'at any rate,' so I am forever tucking these little fillers into my sentences. And some of that becomes my voice. Particularly with detective fiction. I think that much of what a detective does is speculative thinking. So to some extent, the word 'probably' is probably OK. But I had to be careful, because without even meaning to I have repeated myself incessantly.

*Teresa Redd*

A lot of writers, a lot of students are now aware because of the process approach in comp methodology that they need to essentially pre-write, plan, draft, re-write, although we know that's a recursive process too, but it's not quite that linear. But sometimes they don't divide that rewriting section, they don't review a piece for content, for organization separately from what they consider to be proofreading. And they end up failing in their proofreading because they're not focusing enough attention on the proofreading aspect and they, in order to do that, they have to shift gears. They can't just read for meaning in the normal way. I'm not saying that when you proofread you don't pay any attention to reading, but you have to read a little differently. Now how do you do that?

*Betsy Klimasmith*

I think you do want to know what your problems and tendencies are, and I think you want to be thinking about when you turn in a paper getting it as clean as you can possibly get it. Hopefully, you know, it would be nice and you would hope that you would come out of the course having learned something about writing, about the technicalities of grammar, about how to make your presentation work, because after all, when you think about taking your writing out of your writing classroom and into any other context your readers will notice surface errors, they will notice if your sentences aren't working, they will, you know, unfortunately judge you by the way that that grammar works, so you want to hope for... the best possible outcome would be to learn how, what kinds of errors you're prone to making and how to fix those errors.