A key to successful proofreading is to see your paper the way a reader will see it. Try to imagine you have never seen your paper before. Take a break before proofreading, and try proofreading for one element at a time, such as diction, punctuation, or grammar. More tips:

• Print out your paper before proofreading. (Many writers find it easier to detect errors on paper than on a computer screen.)

• Read your paper aloud. This strategy will help you if you tend to leave words out.

• Put a piece of paper under the line that you are reading.
• Proofread your paper backward, one word or sentence at a time.

• Try using Natural Reader, a computer program available in the FCC Writing Center that will read your work back to you.

• Cut a “window” in an index card that is about the size of a long word (such as misunderstanding), and place it over your writing to help you focus on one word at a time.

• Exchange papers with a partner and proofread each other’s papers, only identifying possible errors. The writer of the paper should be responsible for correcting the errors.

• Print out a version of your paper that looks noticeably different: Make the words larger, make the margins larger, triple-space the lines, or do all of these.