15.1: Outcome: Proofreading

Skills to Develop

- Analyze lower order concerns for revision
- Analyze strategies for improving sentence clarity
- Analyze strategies for recognizing potential grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues in a draft

Analyze proofreading activities

You know that mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and spelling will negatively impact your grade on school assignments. They have larger-world implications, as well. To see more of this in action, read the following blog post from Melissa Culbertson:

“Why Poor Grammar and Spelling Are Bad for Your Blog”

I know you’ve been told this before but I’ll say it again: proper grammar and spelling matter, even in the blogging world. If that’s a little short on the dramatics, then pretend that statement is in neon-flashing lights for extra emphasis.

Just to be clear, bad grammar and spelling is WAY different than using conversational style or slang. For example, while you may have gotten in trouble in school for starting a sentence with “and” or “but,” it’s NOT grammatically incorrect. It’s just informal. So while your teacher may have scoffed at this in school, I’m all about breaking the rules you learned in English class regarding formalized writing.

When I’m talking about poor grammar and spelling what I mean is the clear-cut, no-way-this-is-right type of errors that
crop up in blogs all over the web. Things like saying “their” when you mean “they’re” or spelling receive with the “i” before the “e.” Or my least favorite: using a random apostrophe in a word (like “Dog’s run.”)

So how can poor grammar and spelling hurt your blog’s likeability? Like this:

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**YOU SLOW DOWN YOUR READER**

Think of each mistake like a speed bump. Each time a reader notices a grammar or spelling error in your post, it slows them down. It may be a small bump that makes them say – “oh she meant this” – and then move on. Or it may be a larger one and your reader has to re-read it just for your words to make sense. Either way, lots of errors means lots of speed bumps and your reader probably won’t take that “route” again.

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**YOU MUDDLE THE MEANING OF YOUR POST**

Picture the most beautiful story you could tell. Now add in some bad grammar or misspelled words. Kinda loses its luster, right? Sure some stories are hard to ruin but a polished post sure sounds a heck of a lot better. With a post free of mistakes, you keep the reader’s focus on your overall story, not individual words that are incorrect.

Same goes for blog posts that aren’t based on a story. Say you’re writing a tutorial. Well, if it’s full of extra-long, run-on sentences, it may be harder to understand your tutorial.

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**YOU COULD MISS OUT ON BRAND OPPORTUNITIES**

Most people who are looking to work with bloggers are in PR or Marketing. As a marketer myself, we’re picky when it comes to writing. PR and marketing people want the brand they represent to have top-notch bloggers writing about them. This means you could get picked over if your blog posts are riddled with errors.

So, treat your blog like your resume. It IS your resume. (The only difference I’d argue is that an occasional mistake shouldn’t dissuade a brand from working with you whereas a single mistake on a resume could get yours tossed into a “not interested” pile.)

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**SO WHAT’S THE FIX?**

People on the Internet have short attention spans so the fewer grammar or misspellings you have, the more likely someone will enjoy that phenomenal blog post of yours.

The fix is simply to proofread your posts. If you’re someone who knows grammar and spelling isn’t your strong suit, then make it a point to work on improving those skills bit by bit. Yes, we all make mistakes but we can always improve too. And yes, I proofread this post like a gazillion times so I wouldn’t endure the irony if I indeed made a mistake.
The Learning Activities for This Outcome Include

- Video: Proof Reading
- Text: Why and How to Proofread
- Text: Approaching Precision
- Self Check: Proofreading
- Try It: Proofreading

PROOFREAD
- GRAMMAR
- SENTENCE STRUCTURE
- FORMATTING
- PUNCTUATION
- SPELLING
- CAPITALIZATION