



18-point checklist for proofreaders

By Mike Duerksen

Source: [PR Daily](#) Jan 30, 2012

When I started my first PR job at a local nonprofit, I inherited a pile of work from my predecessor. Most of it was to be done on deadline—and most of the deadlines had passed days earlier.

In sorting through mounds of archived information and old files, I found an editing checklist at the bottom of a drawer.

I pinned it to my wall, where it's still hanging today.

I don't know who wrote it, but it remains a great reminder when it comes to writing and editing copy.

Before finalizing any copy, ask yourself the following questions:

Did I ...

- Consider my reader's perspective?
- State clearly the purpose of my document/article?
- Write an interesting opening?
- Write with a "you" focus where appropriate? [This is especially important for nonprofit copywriting.]
- Write concisely?
- Avoid bureaucratic jargon?
- Use transitions within and between paragraphs?
- Use interesting headings that explain the section to follow?
- Use parallel sentence structure in sentences and lists?
- Write in active voice?
- Use action verbs?
- Make verbs agree with their subjects?
- Make pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Check for tricky singulars (neither, either, everyone, etc.)?
- Use gender-free construction?
- Check for typographical errors?
- Double-check the opening?
- Make it visually appealing through layout and white space?

Mike Duerksen is a communicator and copywriter. He also blogs at [NonprofitPR](#), where a version of this story first appeared.