

Self-Proofing Sheet

Introduction

It is always good to train your children from a young age to do their best to perfect their papers as much as possible before you give your input (or grade them). Below are two suggested methods for regular self-proofing.

Making Self-Proofing Sheets

Simple lists can suffice as guides for self-proofing at all levels. Below are two examples (one for a Level 3 student and one for a Level 9) of self-proofing sheets. Each sheet should be tailored to fit your requirements for a particular student based only on what you have already taught and are now requiring the student to remember as he writes. In most cases, you'll want younger students to focus on the mechanics of good writing such as using correct punctuation, capitalization, complete sentences, and good word choice. In addition, older students can be taught to check for "content" and "structure" items, including a good thesis, paragraph structure, and strong supporting facts.

Because each teacher's coverage of key aspects of composition varies widely, teacher-generated self-proofing lists are often best. You can customize them to include the elements you are most concerned that your child check. We have made our examples "level-friendly" by using font sizes suitable for different ages. Once you've typed a simple list using your word processor, have your students attach such sheets to each writing assignment they submit to you.

Examples:

Level 3 Proofing Sheet

- Capital letters start each sentence.
- Proper punctuation ends each sentence.
- Capitalize all proper nouns.

Level 9 Proofing Sheet for Non-fiction Work

- Capitalization of sentences
- Strong, concrete words used throughout
- Comma, semicolon, colon, quotation mark, and apostrophe placement correct
- End punctuation correct on each sentence
- Spelling check
- Strong thesis?
- Three strong supportive categories
- Fact check—check mark over each fact (use pencil)
- Paragraphs each contain information that supports the topic sentence.
- Summary paragraph
- Summary statement at end of piece

Using Grading Rubrics

In most of the genres and levels found in *Writing Aids*, there is a "Grading Strategy," which includes some type of rubric. You may wish to use this rubric as a ready-made self-proofing chart. As the directions at the start of each of these rubric grading schemes indicate, hand your student the chart, show him the far right column and explain what makes an excellent assignment. It is up to you whether or not to require him to actually check off his assessment on the rubric or not.