

## **A Five Step Approach to Proofreading Your Email**

### **1. Gain a Fresh Perspective**

When writers proofread their own work, it's not unusual for them to misread their own material. Your mind knows how the text *should* read, and it will insert missing words, adjust misspellings, and gloss over punctuation errors. Try setting your writing project aside for a few days before you proofread, and you will be able to read it with a fresh perspective. That means you'll be able to catch more of those annoying little mistakes.

### **2. Spell Check**

I keep spell check on as I'm writing, so I don't run it when a piece is complete. However, many writers turn off spell check so their inner editor won't be tempted into taking over the project during the writing phase. If you do keep spell check off, make sure you run it manually before you start proofreading.

### **3. Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation**

Spell check won't catch all of your mistakes and typos. For example, it won't call out homophones. The grammar check on word processing software (such as Microsoft Word) might falsely identify grammar mistakes. Read through your piece slowly, and fix all those mistakes.

### **4. Do Not Read Too Fast**

If you are the type of person who reads too fast, develop the habit of reading more slowly when reviewing your work for errors. This will help you pick out details that you would not have noticed if you read fast.

### **5. Review Until It's Error-Free**

Once you've finished proofreading, read the piece again (preferably aloud). Chances are, you'll catch one or two more mistakes, or you might find areas that you want to clean up or spots where you want to change the wording. Keep reviewing the piece in this manner until you get through it a couple of times without needing to make any changes.