PROOFREADING IS LIKE

Checking Your Teeth

OBJECTIVE:

I can independently proofread and edit the most noticeable errors in my writing.

There's nothing worse than getting food stuck in your teeth… except maybe finding out about it WAY too late. It's embarrassing when you see it in a photo of yourself, or when you look in the mirror hours later and FINALLY notice the lettuce, front and center…

Even when you finally fix it, you still wonder: who else saw it? How long was it there? Did they judge you?

The reality is, grammar and spelling mistakes also stick out and look bad. And the problem is, people WILL judge you, and it can matter. These errors make you seem like you don't pay attention to detail, don't care, or worse, that you don't even know.

It's embarrassing to have your intelligence questioned by other people.

So today, we're going to discuss some of the TOP mistakes that you should watch for and strategies to deal with them.

Check out this example paragraph.

Can you find all the errors below?

Personal expression and creativity are important but those qualities should come from somewhere other than you're outfit. If the purpose of school is to learn, then anything that detracts from learning should be examined, particularly something as emotionally damaging as the competition that comes from clothing. If you have ever walked down a hallway without uniforms, u know that some brands, like Nike, Addiddas, and Under Armour, are popular; since they're so expensive, they separate the cool people from the students who can't afford them, which is unfair. Unaforms allow all students to be seen as equals, since no one has to be left behind by expensive brand names or styles that are trending. The only things that uniforms limit is negative anyway: distractions between genders, competition among peers, and clique or gang apparel. Any school district committed to its purpose should implement a uniform policy to put students, not popularity, first.

There are six errors in this paragraph. However, some stand out more than others. The worst, most noticeable errors tend to be:

· Spelling proper nouns (names), like when "Adidas" was misspelled

· Spelling significant keywords: we noticed when "Unaforms" was misspelled in line 6

· Run-ons: these seriously bother grammar-minded adults! (Read line #1 again)

· Texting language: should this writer really be using "u" in a persuasive essay for school?

· Misused homonyms: did you catch the your vs. you're error in column 2? Society is starting to notice this more, just like its/it's, their/there, etc

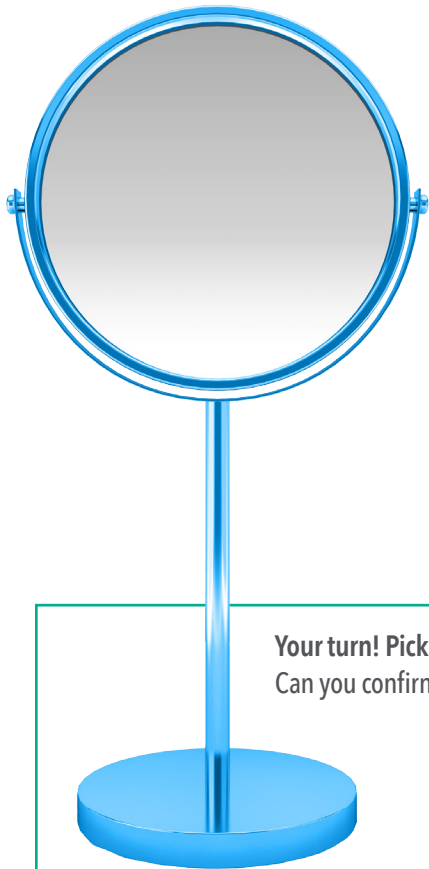**However, YOU can get better at fixing these without having to learn EVERY grammar rule!**

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...JUST CHECK YOUR TEETH!

1. **Look in the mirror!** Read your work over, preferably more than once, before turning it in. If you typed your draft, you might have to PRINT it and proofread THAT, since some people struggle to notice errors when they're on a screen.

2. **"Do I have stuff in my teeth?"** Ask someone else to read your work! Adults very commonly ask coworkers to proof important docs (such as reading over an email before they send it to their bosses).

3. **Do a tongue-check.** Some people just run their tongue over their teeth to see if they "feel" anything. Similarly, good writers read their work OUT LOUD to see if anything doesn't "sound right" or feels awkward.

4. **Go to the dentist.** Just like a dentist helps to get your teeth super-clean, talking to a teacher (and learning more grammar) is a really good idea. If you really don't know how to spot a run-on, get help and learn the rules!

5. **Floss daily.** Make editing a habit, and you shouldn't have a reason to ever get embarrassed.

Imagine how confident you'll feel when you turn in an essay that you KNOW is perfect...

Your turn! Pick ONE paragraph from your current draft and write it below. Can you confirm that there are NO errors at all in it?

Have you tried...
- ☐ Reading the entire thing more than once?
- ☐ Reading it out loud?
- ☐ Showing it to a peer?
- ☐ Showing it to an adult or expert?
- ☐ Consulting a teacher and/or a reference book, like a dictionary?

EXIT TICKET:

Why is proofreading important in the real world? Answer in your own words, and then list ONE strategy you can use to proofread more accurately.