

A proofreading checklist to help you avoid expensive errors

The proof is your last chance to make sure your job will print as you expect before going to press. It pays to be methodical and thorough.

Your approval of a proof indicates your acceptance of the job as it is, and that you accept responsibility for any errors that you may find later. For this reason, you will want to review your proofs very carefully. Don't hesitate to question any detail that does not seem correct – it is best to be absolutely sure before giving the go ahead.

This checklist will help you focus on each aspect of your job and in turn, reduce the possibility of any small detail going unchecked.

1 Copy and content, images and color

- Proofread carefully for grammatical and spelling errors, particularly those that a spell checker would miss.
- Compare the final proof against your last set of proofs to be sure that previous changes were made correctly.
- Check for missing type which may have overflowed its bounding frame.
- Are company names, phone numbers, addresses, email addresses and URLs correct?
- Are page numbers on the contents page correct to the story pages?
- Are page numbers for story jumps indicated correctly?
- Is type on the spine positioned correctly?
- Are all of the fonts correct?
- Are all images positioned, sized, cropped and oriented correctly?
- Are captions next to the correct images?
- Has all the background been removed from silhouetted images?

- Are the edges of silhouettes smooth, and shadows correct?
- Have any “for position only” images been replaced correctly?
- Is all text set in the correct color?
- Does any paper show where two colors should touch? For example, where an image or colored type appears against a background color.
- Are all color builds in the correct color and position?
- Do all elements that are intended to bleed from the edge of the sheet bleed correctly?
- Do all elements that are intended to reverse from the background color appear correctly?
- Circle any marks and specks that appear where they should not.

2 Size, format and layout

- Are the flat and folded sizes correct? Folds positioned correctly?
- Are all the pages in the correct order, and numbered correctly?
- Do pages back each other up correctly, and page numbers appear in the correct position from page to page?
- Do all the cross-overs line up?
- Check that crop marks, trim guides and registration marks are correct.

3 Binding and finishing

- Is the spine the correct thickness for the specified binding?
- Is the gutter wide enough to accommodate the space lost in binding?
- Are any separate items that will be bound into the publication included?
- Are holes drilled or marked and in the correct size and position?
- Are all elements that require special finishing indicated, such as perforations, embossing, die cuts and so on?
- Is the location of any spot coating indicated correctly?