

**Proofreading Workshop**

**Exercise: Proofreading Printed Copy "Cold"**

Excerpted from *Mark My Words*, 3rd ed., by Peggy Smith (EEI Press, 2006)

*Instructions: Proofread this typeset column in a "free" or "cold" read. Use standard proofreading marks to correct spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors. Remember to check word division, line breaks, hyphen stacks, and widows. If you make a mistake, underline the text in question, then write "stet" in the margin and circle it.*

# The Continuing Need for Proofreading

indent to 5 mm

In printed materials, words in type are everywhere, not only in books, pamphlets, magazines, catalogues, and newspapers, but in the products of job printing—handbills, calendars, greeting cards, checkbooks, office forms, and business stationery; on display at the roadside—posters, billboards, road signs; on our pantry shelves—boxes, tin cans, and bottles; in decorative and novelty printing on paper, cloth, and plastic—napkins, playing cards, baseball cards, game boards, yard goods, shower curtains, shopping bags, tee shirts; and in music, maps, and stamps. Type and printing are everywhere, from our birth certificates to our death notices. And every word is subject to the gaucheries of misspellings, typographic errors, and careless printing.

Even the best writers suffer a loss of word sense now and then; even the best help that technology offers fails to "prove" a work's quality in all typographic and linguistic respects. As a scholar-proofreader wrote in 1889, "So long as the most accomplished authors are liable to err, so long as the most careful compositors make occasional mistakes, so long must there be individuals trained to detect errors, . . . proofreaders."

Failure to catch problems can ruin a well-written, well edited, well-designed job. But good proofreading can preserve quality and can even turn a bad job into an acceptable one, and a good job into an excellent one. Proofreading is true quality control.

American Spelling #

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