

Proofreading Affidavit
Introduction

Before you turn in a draft (or a final version) of your paper, you must perform each task that I have listed in the table below, placing your initials next to the task after you have completed it and returning the signed oath to me. When you turn in this checklist, you are affirming that you have completed each of these tasks—hence, the name of this document (“Proofreading Affidavit”).

Special thanks are due to the following people who helped with this version of the affidavit or with earlier versions: United States Bankruptcy Judges Timothy Barnes and Robert Gerber (Ret.) and Professors Jack Ayer, Mary Beth Beazley, and Linda Edwards. Professor Beazley also suggested a hat tip to Professors Anne Enquist & Laurel Currie Oates, co-authors of *JUST WRITING: STYLE AND GRAMMAR FOR THE LEGAL WRITER* (4th ed. 2013), especially with respect to Pet Peeve Task #2.

If you do not understand how to do one or more of these tasks, I can help you. You may email me at nancy.rapoport@unlv.edu to set up a time to meet before you turn in your paper. In the alternative, you can always consult the [Purdue OWL \(Online Writing Lab\) Website](#) for guidance, or you can consult WILLIAM S. STRUNK, JR. & E.B. WHITE, *THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE* (4th edition 2019).

When a lawyer affirms that he or she has performed a task, that constitutes an enforceable representation. If you place your initials next to a task that you did not perform and then execute the oath at the bottom of this Affidavit, you have violated the UNLV Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and I will take all appropriate action.

Here are the tasks that you must perform:

Grammar

Task No.	Initials	Task Description
1.	_____	I spelled Professor Rapoport’s name correctly throughout the paper.
2.	_____	Every time I used the words <i>this</i> , <i>that</i> , or <i>these</i> as a pronoun, I followed it with a noun or noun phrase. [Wrong: “Courts have rejected this in almost every relevant decision.” Right: “Courts have rejected this reasoning in almost every relevant decision.”]
3.	_____	I used the word <i>it</i> to refer to singular, non-animal entities, except when Task #4 applies.
4.	_____	I used the word <i>they</i> to refer to plural people and entities or to singular people who use <i>they</i> / <i>theirs</i> / <i>their</i> / <i>them</i> as their preferred pronouns. When I referred to a generic singular human being, I converted the use to plural when possible. When not possible, I used <i>he or she</i> , <i>him or her</i> , or <i>his or her</i> as appropriate.

5. _____ I used precise language and clear, subject-verb-object sentence structures, and I chose simple words like *use* instead of complex words like *utilize*.
6. _____ I made sure that each subject and verb agreed in number, even when the subject and verb were separated by a prepositional phrase.
7. _____ I used conjunctions to start a sentence only on the rare occasions when it was appropriate.
8. _____ I avoided the phrase *different than* and used *different from* instead.
9. _____ I preferred active voice to passive voice, using passive voice only when I wanted to hide the actor, when the subject was unusually long, or when using passive voice allowed me to begin a sentence with familiar information.
10. _____ I checked my spelling and grammar by reading through the final draft and by using spell-check and grammar check.
11. _____ I used *its* as the possessive of *it*, and *it's* as a contraction for *it is* or *it has*. [Correct: "It's time to see if the monster has broken out of its cage."] I also never, ever used the plural possessive of "its," which is not ever a real thing.
12. _____ I did not use the word *hopefully*, because I know that the professor who is grading my paper hates almost every use of that word.
13. _____ I checked each use of *their*, *they're*, *there*, *you're*, *yours*, and *your*, using Ctrl F to help me find each one. [Correct: "They're certain that the dogs over there are theirs." Also correct: "Oh really? You're sure that these are your dogs? Then the fleas are also yours."]
14. _____ I used correctly the words *between* [indicating a comparison of two items or people] and *among* [indicating a comparison of three or more items or people.]
15. _____ I did not have any sentence fragments in my final paper. If sentence fragments are a problem for me, I consulted the Purdue OWL website to learn about dependent clauses and sentence fragments.
16. _____ Whenever possible, I replaced *there is*, *it is*, and *there are* with more substantive subject-verb combinations. [Weaker: "There are four students who know how to write effectively." Stronger: "Four students know how to write effectively."]
17. _____ I did not use *however* to begin a sentence.
18. _____ I avoided adjectives and adverbs so that Professor Rapoport can form her own opinion about what I wanted to modify.

19. _____ If I used the word *unique*, I did not try to modify it, recognizing that something either is or is not *unique*; it cannot be *sort of unique*.

Punctuation

Task No.	Initials	Task Description
1.	_____	To make singular nouns plural, I added <i>s</i> or <i>es</i> , and I did not use an apostrophe.
2.	_____	I used the Oxford comma. [Wrong: “After graduation, she had dinner with her parents, the Dalai Lama and Professor Rapoport.” Correct: “After graduation, she had dinner with her parents, the Dalai Lama, and Professor Rapoport.”]
3.	_____	I reviewed the rules about commas, colons, semi-colons, and dashes so that I could use each one correctly.

Pet Peeves

Task No.	Initials	Task Description
1.	_____	If I wanted to imply that someone was doing two or more things at the same time, I used <i>while</i> , but if I wanted to imply something other than simultaneity, I used <i>though</i> or <i>although</i> .
2.	_____	I used <i>that</i> and <i>which</i> correctly with restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. [Correct way to signal that all law firms are unethical: “Law firms, which fail to cite controlling adverse authority, are unethical.” I doubt that you mean to argue such a proposition, though, so here’s the correct way to signal that those law firms that behave in a certain way are unethical: “Law firms that fail to cite controlling adverse authority are unethical.”]
3.	_____	When I wanted to say that something has crashed into, or fallen upon, something else, I used the word <i>impact</i> . If I did not want to say that, I used <i>affect</i> or <i>effect</i> (depending on the context) instead.
4.	_____	I used the word <i>since</i> to refer to time. When I wanted to signal a causal relationship, I used <i>because</i> (not <i>since</i> , and not <i>as</i>).
5.	_____	To make a singular word possessive, I added <i>apostrophe s</i> to the word, even if the word already ended in <i>s</i> . [Correct: “Congress’s decisions have an impact on the whole nation, while Burns’s poems and Roget’s works have the most impact on literary types.” The only exceptions to this rule are the singular possessives for Moses and Jesus.]
6.	_____	To make a plural noun possessive, I added merely an apostrophe if it ended in <i>s</i> already, or <i>apostrophe s</i> if it did not. [Correct “The children’s rooms are a mess, although the boys’ room is slightly neater than the girls’ room.”]

References

Task	Initials	Task Description
1.	_____	I cited everything in correct Bluebook or ALWD form.
2.	_____	To avoid plagiarism, I read through everything on Perdue's website called <i>Avoiding Plagiarism</i> , and I made any changes that the website said I needed to6
3.	_____	I read through the rules in UNLV's Student Academic Misconduct Policy and the section in Boyd's own Student Handbook that discusses Boyd's Honor Code, and I have made sure that I have complied with the rules in both policies.

Oath

I, [name of student], _____, affirm that I performed every task listed above before executing this document. I understand that lying about having performed any of these tasks violates both the UNLV Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Boyd's own Honor Code.

Date: _____

Please sign and print your name here

Please sign your name here