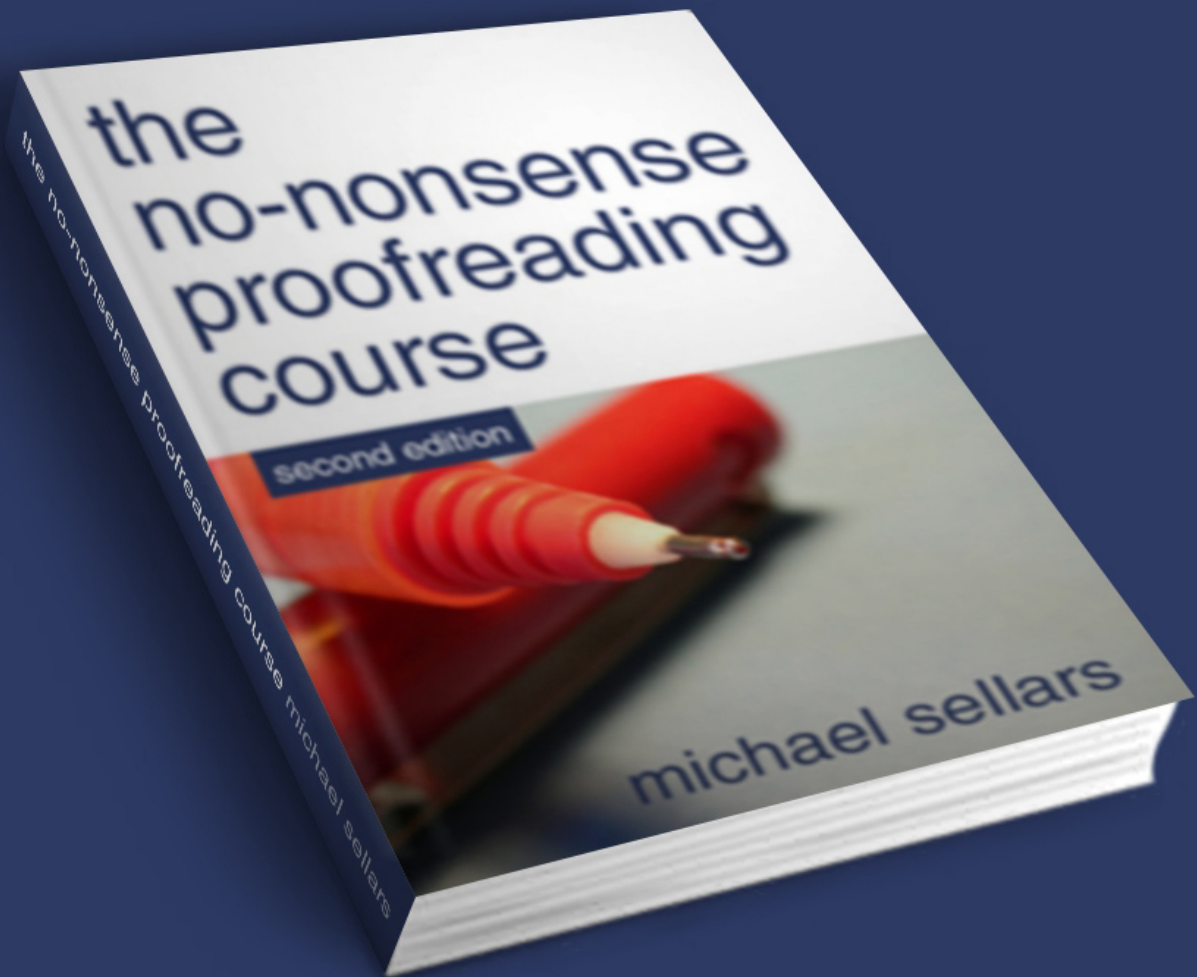


# Proofreading exercise 10

From 'Etiquette' by Emily Post



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## PROOFREADING EXERCISE 10

From 'Etiquette' by Emily Post

NEARLY all the faults or mistakes in conversation are caused by not thinking. For instance, a first rule for behavior in society is: "Try to do and say those things only which will be agreeable to others." Yet how many people, who really know better, people who are perfectly capable of intelligent understanding if they didn't let their brains remain asleep or locked tight, go night after night to dinner parties, day after day to other social gatherings, and absent-mindedly prate about this or that without ever taking the trouble to *think* what they are saying and to whom they are saying it! Would a young mother describe twenty or thirty cunning tricks and sayings of the baby to a bachelor who has been helplessly put beside her at dinner if she *thought*? She would know very well, alas! that not even a very dear friend would really care for more than a *hors d'oeuvre* of the subject, at the board of general conversation.

The older woman is even worse, unless something occurs (often when it is too late) to make her wake up and realize that she not only bores her hearers but prejudices everyone against her children by the unrestraint of her own praise. The daughter who is continually lauded as the most captivating and beautiful girl in the world, seems to the wearied perceptions of enforced listeners annoying and plain. In the same way the "magnificent" son is handicapped by his mother's—or his father's—overweening pride and love in exact proportion to its displayed intensity. On the other hand, the neglected wife, the unappreciated husband, the misunderstood child, takes on a glamor in the eyes of others equally out of proportion. That great love has seldom perfect wisdom is one of the great tragedies in the drama of life. In the case of the overloving wife or mother, some one should love *her* enough to make her *stop and think* that her loving praise is not merely a question of boring her hearers but of handicapping unfairly those for whom she would gladly lay down her life—and yet few would have the courage to point out to her that she would far better lay down her tongue.

The cynics say that those who take part in social conversation are bound to be either the bores or the board; and that which you choose to be, is a mere matter of selection. And there must be occasions in the life of everyone when the cynics seem to be right; the man of affairs who, sitting next to an attractive looking young woman, is regaled throughout dinner with the detailed accomplishments of the young woman's husband; the woman of intellect who must listen with interest to the droolings of an especially prosy man who holds forth on the super-everything of his

own possessions, can not very well consider that the evening was worth dressing, sitting up, and going out for.

People who talk too easily are apt to talk too much, and at times imprudently, and those with vivid imagination are often unreliable in their statements. On the other hand the "man of silence" who never speaks except when he has something "worth while" to say, is apt to wear well among his intimates, but is not likely to add much to the gaiety of a party.

Try not to repeat yourself; either by telling the same story again and again or by going back over details of your narrative that seemed especially to interest or amuse your hearer. Many things are of interest when briefly told and for the first time; *nothing* interests when too long dwelt upon; little interests that is told a second time. The exception is something very pleasant that you have heard about A. or more especially A.'s child, which having already told A. you can then tell B., and later C. in A.'s presence. Never do this as a habit, however, and never drag the incident into the conversation merely to flatter A., since if A. is a person of taste, he will be far more apt to resent than be pleased by flattery that borders on the fulsome.

Be careful not to let amiable discussion turn into contradiction and argument. The tactful person keeps his prejudices to himself himself and even when involved in a discussion says quietly "No. I don't think I agree with you" or "It seems to me thus and so." One who is well-bred never says "You are wrong!" or "Nothing of the kind!" If he finds another's opinion utterly opposed to his own, he switches to another subject for a pleasanter channel of conversation.

When someone is talking to you, it is inconsiderate to keep repeating "What did you say." Those who are deaf are often, obliged to ask that a sentence be repeated. Otherwise their irrelevant answers would make them appear halfwitted. But countless persons with perfectly good hearing say "What?" from force of habit and careless inattention.

## PROOFREADING EXERCISE 10, ANSWERS.

NEARLY all the faults or mistakes in conversation are caused by not thinking. For instance, a first rule for behavior in society is: "Try to do and say those things only which will be agreeable to others." Yet how many people, who really know better, people who are perfectly capable of intelligent understanding if they didn't let their brains remain asleep or locked tight, go night after night to dinner parties, day after day to other social gatherings, and absent-mindedly prate about this or that without ever taking the trouble to *think* what they are saying and to whom they are saying it! Would a young mother describe twenty or thirty cunning tricks and sayings of the baby to a bachelor who has been helplessly put beside her at dinner if she *thought*? She would know very well, alas! that not even a very dear friend would really care for more than a *hors d'oeuvre* of the subject, at the board of general conversation.

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The cynics say that those who take part in social conversation are bound to be either the bores or the **board[1]**; and that which you choose to be, is a mere matter of selection. And there must be occasions in the life of everyone when the cynics seem to be right; the man of affairs who, sitting next to an attractive looking young woman, is regaled throughout **diner[2]** with the detailed accomplishments of the young woman's husband; the woman of intellect who must listen with interest to the droolings of an especially prosy man who holds forth on the super-everything of his own possessions, can not very well consider that the evening was worth dressing, sitting up, and going out for.

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When **someone**[5] is talking to you, it is inconsiderate to keep repeating "What did you say."**[6]** Those who are deaf are often, obliged to ask that a sentence be repeated. Otherwise their irrelevant answers would make them appear **halfwitted**[7]. But countless persons with perfectly good hearing say "What?" from force of habit and careless inattention.

[1] Should be 'board'

[2] Should be 'dinner'

[3] The word 'himself' is duplicated

[4] Should be 'another's'

[5] Should be 'some one'\*

[6] Full point should be a question mark

[7] Should be 'half-witted'

\*Note. There are a few spellings here that are 'of their time'. For example 'glamor', 'some one', 'worth while' and 'can not'. It could be argued that these should be 'corrected'. However, it depends on the purpose of the text. If it is being modernized for a contemporary audience, then yes, put your red pen to work. If you are attempting to recreate and preserve the original, then leave it be. Whatever the case, consistency is essential – both 'some one' and 'someone' can't be right.