

A PROOFREADING JOKE

If you are trying to console a friend you might pat him on the shoulder and say

'There, there, there...'

It doesn't really mean anything. It's just a form of words that everyone knows is aimed at making the friend feel better.

The proofreading joke is in the form of a play on words, each of which means something different but which all sound exactly the same as the phrase above.

The proofreader might console another proofreader by saying

'They're, there, their...'

In this case, the use of the apostrophe ' in the word *they're* allows a shortened version of the words *they are* as in *'they are all in the house'*.

The word *'there'* is an adverb referring to in, at, or to that place or position as in "we went there for our holidays". It can also be used to attract someone's as in *'hello there!'* Finally, it can be used to indicate the existence of something as in *'there is a good restaurant in the village'*.

In the case of *'their'* it is a possessive pronoun which we use to denote that something belongs to someone as in *'It is their car'*.

So there you are, a proofreading joke. Not particularly funny, but illustrative!