

Copyediting and Proofreading

(Source: *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publication*, 2nd ed. by Joseph Gibaldi. NY: MLA, 1998.

Authors commonly submit the final version of their manuscript, both in hard copy and on disk, to the journal editor or the book acquisitions editor, who reviews the manuscript and transmits it to editorial staff members for copyediting, design, and production. Book publishers normally ask authors to review both a copyedited and a typeset version of the manuscript and to supply an index for the book; journals usually require authors to review the article in at least one of the versions produced before publication

1.6.1 Copyediting

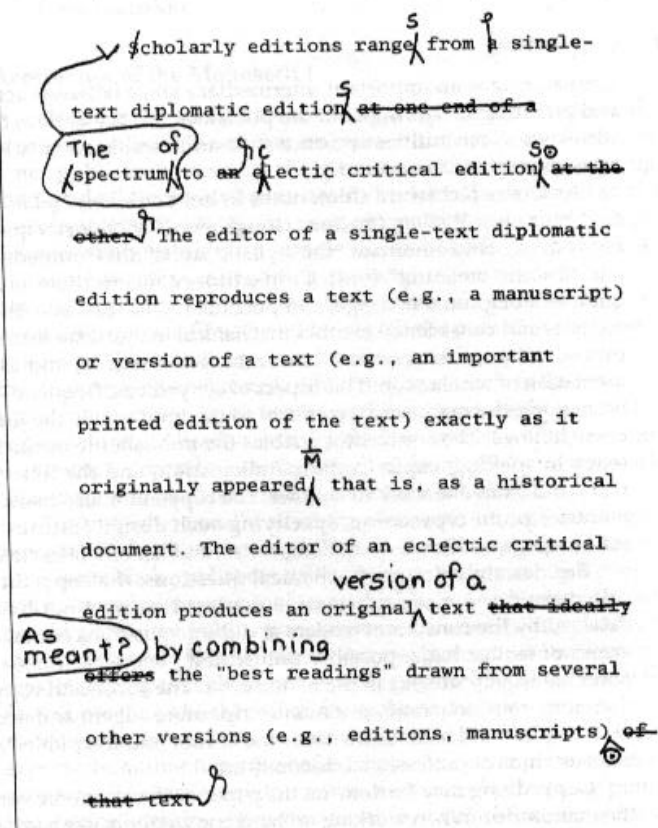
Copyediting is an important intermediary stage between acceptance and publication. Serving both the publisher and the author, the copyeditor's responsibilities embrace style and mechanics in addition to other aspects of the manuscript.

As Claire Kehrwald Cook notes in her book *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing* (Boston: Houghton, 1985), a principal task of copyediting is to eliminate "the stylistic faults" that "impede reading and obscure meaning" (viii). Copyeditors concern themselves with questions of grammar, usage, and punctuation as well as with the correctness and consistency of other mechanical matters, such as spelling, capitalization, the treatment of numbers and names, and the documentation of scholarship. This aspect of copyediting frequently centers on making the manuscript conform to the house style the journal or press follows. The copyeditor enables the publisher to ensure consistency in spelling, capitalization, italicization, and the like within a work and from one work to another. The copyeditor also marks up the manuscript for typesetting, specifying such design features as title, subheadings, set-down quotations, notes, and list of works cited.

Besides stylistic and mechanical questions, the copyeditor may call attention to more-substantive matters that may not have been detected by the consultant readers and the acquisitions editor, such as errors of fact or logic, possibly unjustified generalizations, or even potential legal problems in the manuscript. The successful copyeditor, therefore, routinely renders a manuscript more cogent and accessible to its readers and sometimes saves the author and the publisher from various kinds of professional discomfiture.

Copyediting may be done on the paper or the electronic version of the manuscript. When working on hard copy, editors use a set of symbols to indicate changes-deletions, insertions, transpositions, and so forth-in the manuscript. Frequently the symbols are supplemented by explanations or clarifications in the margins or on slips attached to the page. Copyeditors also commonly use margins or slips to address queries to the author, requesting information or explication, for example, or suggesting alternative choices of wording. (See fig. 1.) A copyeditor who works on computer usually produces at the end a new printout incorporating the editorial changes, which are often highlighted to allow the author to compare the original and copyedited versions more easily. Queries to the author are likely to appear not in the margins but elsewhere-for instance, all queries may be collected in a list keyed to numbers embedded in the text.

In returning the copyedited manuscript to the author for review, the editor usually sends a cover letter that, among other things, may call attention to special problems or give instructions about responding to changes and queries. The letter also normally specifies a deadline for the return of the manuscript. If you cannot meet the deadline, notify the editor immediately. Otherwise, the publisher will expect to receive the reviewed manuscript within the time requested, so that production can proceed on schedule. If no schedule is set, return the manuscript as quickly as possible.



Sample Page Proof

When you receive a copyedited manuscript from your publisher, read the cover letter first, especially noting the deadline for return. Evaluate each suggested change and either accept the change or explain what is wrong with it and, if the copyeditor has identified a problem, substitute a different revision. If you do not understand a change, ask for clarification. If the copyediting was done on paper, do not erase or otherwise obliterate any change or query. Try to respond unambiguously and as near as possible on the page to the query; if space is insufficient, place replies on a separate sheet, making evident the pages and lines involved.

For works destined for print publication, the review of the copyedited manuscript is normally the author's last chance to make revisions, such as correcting or updating references, for from this time forward, changes become costly (and are often charged to the author or not even made). If your revisions are brief, insert them within the manuscript; when lengthy or likely to

lead to confusion if placed directly on the manuscript, revisions should be written on separate pages with clear indications of *where they* belong in the text.

Before returning the copyedited manuscript to the publisher, make sure you have answered all questions, supplied all requested information, and made all needed changes. Besides meeting the deadline, follow any special instructions the publisher gives for the return of the manuscript. Include a cover letter explaining what you have carried out and noting any specific problems or questions of which the copyeditor should be aware.

If problems remain unresolved, the copyeditor may return to you with further queries. For a text copyedited on computer, the editor normally transfers all final changes to the disk or disks containing the work. (Less frequently, some publishers ask authors to make the changes and to submit the final version on disk for composition.)

1.6.2 Proofreading





After your article or book is typeset—either directly from the final disk version of the manuscript or manually from the paper manuscript—the publisher will send you for correction a set of page proofs (your text converted into printed pages that will eventually constitute the actual publication), usually along with the final version of the manuscript.

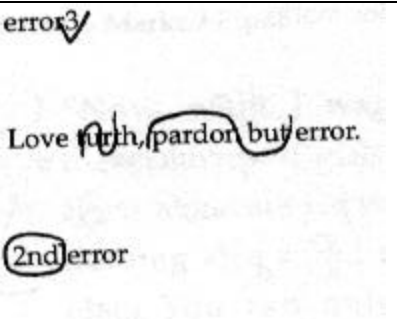
Read proofs carefully, word for word against the manuscript. Do not assume that the manuscript was translated into type without omissions or other errors. If you are not an experienced proofreader, it may help to ask someone to read the manuscript aloud while you follow on the proofs. Make corrections on the proofs, using proofreading symbols (see 8.8), and respond to any queries from the editor or typesetter. To reduce production costs, many presses assign authors primary responsibility for proofreading and sometimes suggest they seek the services of a professional proofreader.

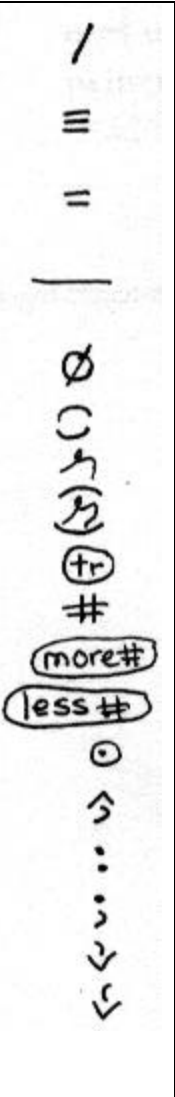
Because changes at this stage can prove costly (usually to the author if they are not the typesetter's errors) and also seriously delay the publication schedule, publishers will usually make changes only to remove factual errors and will not permit stylistic refinements. If you want to make alterations, explain their rationale and relative importance in a cover letter when returning the proofs, so that the publisher can make informed decisions about allowing the changes. Be sure to return the corrected proofs within the time agreed on or as quickly as possible if no schedule was set. Often the book publisher sends two sets of page proofs: one to correct and return, the other for preparing an index.

8.8 Proofreading Symbols

Proofreading symbols with marginal corrections are used to correct proof. A list of proofreading symbols and a sample of their application follow. The symbols are divided into two sections: those used in the text and those used in the margin. Every symbol used in the text requires a corresponding symbol or notation in the margin.

	<p>Delete a character. The delete symbol is written in the margin.</p>
	<p>Replace a character. The correct character is written in the margin.</p>
	<p>Close up a space. The symbol is repeated in the margin.</p>
	<p>Delete a character and close up. The delete-and-close-up symbol is written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, but but pardon error.</p>	<p>Delete or replace more than one character. The delete symbol or the replacement copy is written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, but, but pardon error.</p>	<p>Delete more than one character and close up. The delete-and-close-up symbol is written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, but pardon error.</p>	<p>Delete, replace, or correct a block of text. The delete symbol, the replacement copy, or another instruction is written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, but pardon error.</p>	<p>Move a block of text. To indicate the new location, a line is drawn on the proof, or instructions are written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, But pardon error.</p>	<p>Lowercase or capitalize text. The abbreviation <i>lc</i> or <i>cap</i>, circled, is written in the margin.</p>
<p>eror ^</p>	<p>Insert text. The material to be inserted is written in the margin.</p>
<p>Love truth, but pardon error.</p>	<p>Add a space. The space symbol is written in the margin.</p>

	<p>Set a letter or number as a superscript. The symbol is repeated in the margin.</p> <p>Transpose text. The abbreviation <i>tr</i>, circled, is written in the margin.</p> <p>Spell out a number or an abbreviation. The spelled form or the abbreviation <i>sp</i>, circled, is written in the margin.</p>
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	<p>separates corrections in the same line (,17/#); indicates that a correction is to be made more than once (~//)</p> <p>indicates that an addition is a capital letter (placed under letter)</p> <p>indicates that an addition is a small capital letter (placed under letter)</p> <p>indicates that an addition is italic (placed under characters)</p> <p>numeral 0, not capital letter O</p> <p>close up</p> <p>delete</p> <p>delete and close up</p> <p>transpose</p> <p>add a space</p> <p>add more space</p> <p>remove space</p> <p>add a period</p> <p>add a comma</p> <p>add a colon</p> <p>add a semicolon</p> <p>add an apostrophe or a single closing quotation mark</p> <p>add a single opening quotation mark</p>
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“ ”	add double quotation marks
()	add parentheses
[]	add square brackets
/	add a slash
=	add a hyphen
—	add a one-em dash
-	add a one-en dash
cap	capitalize
sc	make into small capitals
lc	lowercase
ital	italicize
rom	make roman
bf	make boldface
sp	spell out
¶	begin a new paragraph
no ¶	remove a paragraph break, running sentences together
⌊	move to the left
⌋	move to the right
⌈	move up
⌋	move down
	align vertically
stet	let stand as printed
wf	wrong font
⊗	broken letter or dirty proof

(tr) "Now, what I want is Facts. Teach
 (less #) these boys and girls nothing but Facts.
 (c) Facts alone are ~~not~~ wanted in life. Platant (s)
 (s) nothing else, and root out everything u
 else. You can only form the minds (c)
 (tr) reasoning of animals upon (facts) (nothing) (cap) (rom)
 (rom) else will ever be of any service to them. This r
 is the principle on which I bring ~~up my~~ (s) / (s)
 (s) own up my own children, and this is the
 principle on which I bring up these (less #)
 children. Stick to ~~the~~ Facts, sir! (s) / (s)

Sample Copyedited Paragraph