



EDITING & PROOFREADING GUIDE

Good writing requires careful revision. In the first draft, you are just getting your thoughts on paper. But it is when you rewrite that you make your words clearer, tighter, and more evocative. Here are a few guidelines for improving the copy in your manuscript.

Editing Checklist

- ✓ Have I scrutinized the manuscript for spelling, punctuation, and grammar?
- ✓ Can repetitive words and phrases be eliminated? (e.g., “8 p.m.” instead of “8 p.m. at night”) Whenever possible, replace a redundancy with a synonym or a different phrase. Also try to eliminate unnecessary words.
- ✓ Is the writer using active voice and positive form? (e.g., active voice – “The safety tackled the quarterback” instead of passive voice – “The quarterback was tackled by the safety”; positive form – “Kathy was absent” instead of negative form – “Kathy was not present”)
- ✓ Can a simpler word be used? (e.g., “Tom could walk” instead of “Tom was ambulatory”) As much as possible, try to be specific, concrete, and descriptive (“I had a charcoal-broiled hamburger and a juicy apple for lunch” instead of “I had fruit with my lunch”)
- ✓ Is the message being obscured by confusing jargon? If the manuscript is being directed to a broader audience, explain technical or scientific terms. (e.g., “the patient experienced a rapid heartbeat” instead of “the patient had tachycardia”)
- ✓ Have any clichés snuck into the manuscript? If so, replace them with something original. (e.g., “kicked aside each obstacle” instead of “triumphed over adversity”)
- ✓ Is care being taken to avoid nonsexist writing? Whenever possible, make a singular pronoun plural so that you can use “their” rather than “he” or “she,” or “him” or “her.” (e.g., “workers are responsible for their own time cards” instead of “a worker is responsible for his or her own time card”)
- ✓ Is the writer using a variety of sentence lengths? Change the pace when appropriate.
- ✓ Is the correct syllabication being used? If you are unsure how to divide a word at the end of a line, consult a dictionary.




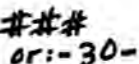
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- ✓ Can a "punch line" be added? Try to put emphatic words at the end of sentences and paragraphs. (e.g., "Friday's conference will feature keynote speaker Colin Powell" instead of "The conference, featuring keynote speaker Colin Powell, will be held on Friday")
- ✓ Have I double-checked the manuscript to ensure that all facts and spellings are accurate? Are all quotes attributed to the proper sources? Never assume anything!

Proofreaders' Symbols

Generally, editing and proofreading corrections are made directly above or below a line. However, if you want to comment about how a passage was written, notate your remarks in the margin and draw a line to the questionable element.

Symbol	Meaning	Example
¶	Start a new paragraph	The flight arrived. [¶] Meanwhile,
↔	Transpose	the load <u>heavy</u>
0	Use figures	The general deployed <u>(forty)</u> troops
0	Spell out	<u>(9)</u> prescriptions were filled
0	Abbreviate	send it to Columbus, <u>(Ohio)</u>
0	Don't abbreviate	Mike is a state <u>(rep)</u>
≡	Uppercase	We are hiking in the grand Canyon [≡]
/	Lowercase	He is a Man of his word
()	Close up space	practice ma <u>()</u> kes perfect
#	Add a space	To <u>#</u> sum up
STET	Ignore proofreading marks — let it stand	Click here for more ^{STET} information
^	Insert a letter or word	Find the best in town ^{deal}
— [^]	Replace a letter/word with another letter/word	It was a great experience ^{experience}
— ^	Delete a letter or word	According to his first source,
(^)	Delete and close up	First, we know that ^{at}
	Replace	He has less ^{fewer} resources

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
	Insert comma	Despite the rumors you can expect
	Insert apostrophe	Galileo's theory was revolutionary
	Insert semi-colon	was fine however, we must
	Insert colon	three options red, blue, and green
	Insert quotation marks	"I'm doing fine."
	Insert period	I'm still here. What about you?
	Insert hyphen	They are offering full time jobs
	Insert question mark	Is that a yes or no?
	Insert parentheses	Brenda (Tom's mother) said
	Set in bold face (wavy underline)	We have a new look!
	Set in italics (straight underline)	as reported in the <u>New York Times</u> ,
	Center] Now on sale! [
	Move this to the right] Move this to the right
	Move this to the left	[Move this to the left
	Run in with previous line	You have to give her credit
	Align vertically	60 tomatoes 35 green peppers
	End of article	And that sums everything up. # # #

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