

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

18MHI43C (UNIT II)

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II M A HISTORY - IV SEMESTER

Editing

Editing is the process of selecting and preparing [written](#), [photographic](#), [visual](#), [audible](#), or [cinematic](#) material used by a person or an entity to convey a message or information. The editing process can involve correction, condensation, organisation, and many other modifications performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate and complete piece of work.^[1]

The editing process often begins with the author's idea for the work itself, continuing as a collaboration between the author and the editor as the work is created. Editing can involve creative skills, human relations and a precise set of methods.^{[2][3]}

There are various editorial positions in publishing. Typically, one finds editorial assistants reporting to the senior-level editorial staff and directors who report to senior executive editors. Senior executive editors are responsible for developing a product for its final release. The smaller the publication, the more these roles overlap.

The top editor at many publications may be known as the [chief editor](#), [executive editor](#), or simply the editor. A frequent and highly regarded contributor to a [magazine](#) may acquire the title of editor-at-large or [contributing editor](#). Mid-level newspaper editors often manage or help to

manage sections, such as business, sports and features. In U.S. newspapers, the level below the top editor is usually the managing editor.

In the book publishing industry, editors may organize anthologies and other compilations, produce definitive editions of a classic author's works (scholarly editor), and organize and manage contributions to a multi-author book (symposium editor or volume editor). Obtaining manuscripts or recruiting authors is the role of an *acquisitions editor* or a commissioning editor in a publishing house.^[4] Finding marketable ideas and presenting them to appropriate authors are the responsibilities of a sponsoring editor.

Copy editors correct spelling, grammar and align writings to house style. Changes to the publishing industry since the 1980s have resulted in nearly all copy editing of book manuscripts being outsourced to freelance copy editors.^[4]

At newspapers and wire services, press or copy editors write headlines and work on more substantive issues, such as ensuring accuracy, fairness, and taste. In some positions, they design pages and select news stories for inclusion. At U.K. and Australian newspapers, the term is *sub-editor*. They may choose the layout of the publication and communicate with the printer. These editors may have the title of layout or design editor or (more so in the past) *makeup editor*.

Within the publishing environment, editors of scholarly books are of three main types, each with particular responsibilities:

- *Acquisitions editor* (or *commissioning editor* in Britain), who contracts with the author to produce the copy
- *Project editor* or *production editor*, who sees the copy through its stages from manuscript to bound book and usually assumes most of the budget and schedule responsibilities

- *Copy editor or manuscript editor*, who prepares the copy for conversion into printed form.

In the case of multi-author [edited volumes](#), before the manuscript is delivered to the publisher it has undergone substantive and linguistic editing by the volume's editor, who works independently of the publisher.

As for [scholarly journals](#), where spontaneous submissions are more common than commissioned works, the position of *journal editor* or [editor-in-chief](#) replaces the acquisitions editor of the book publishing environment, while the roles of production editor and copy editor remain. However, another editor is sometimes involved in the creation of scholarly research articles. Called the [authors' editor](#), this editor works with authors to get a manuscript fit for purpose before it is submitted to a scholarly journal for publication.

The primary difference between copy editing scholarly books and journals and other sorts of copy editing lies in applying the standards of the publisher to the copy. Most scholarly publishers have a preferred style that usually specifies a particular dictionary and style manual—for example, *the Chicago Manual of Style*, the [MLA Style Manual](#) or the [APA Publication Manual](#) in the U.S., or the [New Hart's Rules](#) in the U.K.

Technical editing

Technical editing involves reviewing text written on a technical topic, identifying usage errors and ensuring adherence to a style guide.

Technical editing may include the correction of grammatical mistakes, misspellings, mistyping, incorrect punctuation, inconsistencies in usage, poorly structured sentences, wrong scientific terms, wrong units and dimensions, inconsistency in significant figures, technical ambivalence, technical disambiguation, statements conflicting with general scientific knowledge, correction of

synopsis, content, index, headings and subheadings, correcting data and chart presentation in a research paper or report, and correcting errors in citations.

Large companies dedicate experienced writers to the technical editing function. Organizations that cannot afford dedicated editors typically have experienced writers peer-edit text produced by less experienced colleagues.

It helps if the technical editor is familiar with the subject being edited. The "technical" knowledge that an editor gains over time while working on a particular product or technology does give the editor an edge over another who has just started editing content related to that product or technology. But essential general skills are attention to detail, the ability to sustain focus while working through lengthy pieces of text on complex topics, tact in dealing with writers, and excellent communication skills.

Editing service.

Editing is a growing field of work in the [service industry](#). **Paid editing services** may be provided by specialized editing firms or by self-employed ([freelance](#)) editors.

Editing firms may employ a team of in-house editors, rely on a network of individual contractors or both.^[5] Such firms are able to handle editing in a wide range of topics and genres, depending on the skills of individual editors. The services provided by these editors may be varied and can include [proofreading](#), [copy editing](#), [online editing](#), [developmental editing](#), editing for [search engine optimization](#) (SEO), etc.

Self-employed editors work directly for clients (e.g., authors, publishers) or offer their services through editing firms, or both. They may specialize in a type of editing (e.g., copy editing) and in

a particular subject area. Those who work directly for authors and develop professional relationships with them are called [authors' editors](#).

A **reporter** is a type of journalist who [researches](#), writes and reports on information in order to present using [sources](#). This may entail conducting [interviews](#), information-gathering and/or writing articles. Reporters may split their time between working in a [newsroom](#), or from home, and going out to witness events or interviewing people. Reporters may be assigned a specific [beat](#) or area of coverage.

Depending on context, the term *journalist* may include various types of [editors](#), editorial-writers, [columnists](#), and visual journalists, such as [photojournalists](#) (journalists who use the medium of [photography](#)).

Matthew C. Nisbet, who has written on [science communication](#),^[1] has defined a "knowledge journalist" as a [public intellectual](#) who, like [Walter Lippmann](#), [David Brooks](#), [Fareed Zakaria](#), [Naomi Klein](#), [Michael Pollan](#), [Thomas Friedman](#), and [Andrew Revkin](#), sees their role as researching complicated issues of fact or science which most laymen would not have the time or access to [information](#) to research themselves, then communicating an accurate and understandable version to the public as a teacher and policy advisor.

In his best-known books, *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925), Lippmann argued that most individuals lacked the capacity, time, and motivation to follow and analyze news of the many complex policy questions that troubled society. Nor did they often directly experience most social problems, or have direct access to expert insights. These limitations were made worse by a news media that tended to over-simplify issues and to reinforce [stereotypes](#), partisan viewpoints, and [prejudices](#). As a consequence, Lippmann believed that the public

needed journalists like himself who could serve as expert analysts, guiding “citizens to a deeper understanding of what was really important”.^[2]

In 2018, the [United States Department of Labor's](#) Occupational Outlook Handbook reported that employment for the category, "reporters, correspondents and broadcast news analysts," will decline 9 percent between 2016 and 2026.^[3]

Journalists today

A worldwide sample of 27,500 journalists in 67 countries in 2012-2016 produced the following profile:^[4]

57 percent male;

mean age of 38

mean years of experience, 13

college degree, 56 percent; graduate degree, 29 percent

61 percent specialized in journalism/communications at college

62 percent identified as generalists and 23 percent as hard-news beat journalists

47 percent were members of a professional association

80 percent worked full-time

50 percent worked in print, 23 percent in television, 17 percent in radio, and 16 percent online.

Journalistic freedom^[edit]

Journalists sometimes expose themselves to danger, particularly when reporting in areas of [armed conflict](#) or in states that do not respect the [freedom of the press](#). [Organizations](#) such

as the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) and [Reporters Without Borders](#) publish reports on press freedom and advocate for journalistic freedom. As of November 2011, the Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 887 journalists have been killed worldwide since 1992 by [murder](#) (71%), [crossfire](#) or [combat](#) (17%), or on dangerous assignment (11%). The "ten deadliest countries" for journalists since 1992 have been [Iraq](#) (230 deaths), [Philippines](#) (109), [Russia](#) (77), [Colombia](#) (76), [Mexico](#) (69), [Algeria](#) (61), [Pakistan](#) (59), [India](#) (49), [Somalia](#) (45), [Brazil](#) (31) and [Sri Lanka](#) (30).^[5]

The Committee to Protect Journalists also reports that as of December 1, 2010, 145 journalists were jailed worldwide for journalistic activities. Current numbers are even higher. The ten countries with the largest number of currently-imprisoned journalists are [Turkey](#) (95),^[6] [China](#) (34), [Iran](#) (34), [Eritrea](#) (17), [Burma](#) (13), [Uzbekistan](#) (6), [Vietnam](#) (5), [Cuba](#) (4), [Ethiopia](#) (4), and [Sudan](#) (3).^[7]

Apart from physical harm, journalists are harmed psychologically. This applies especially to war reporters, but their editorial offices at home often do not know how to deal appropriately with the reporters they expose to danger. Hence, a systematic and sustainable way of psychological support for traumatized journalists is strongly needed. However, only little and fragmented support programs exist so far.^[8]

Journalist and source relationship[[edit](#)]

The relationship between a professional journalist and a source can be rather complex, and a source can sometimes have an effect on an article written by the journalist. The article 'A Compromised Fourth Estate' uses Herbert Gans' metaphor to capture their relationship. He uses a dance metaphor, "The Tango," to illustrate the co-operative nature of their interactions

inasmuch as "It takes two to tango". Herbert suggests that the source often leads, but journalists commonly object to this notion for two reasons:

1. It signals source supremacy in news making.
2. It offends journalists' professional culture, which emphasizes independence and editorial autonomy.

The dance metaphor goes on to state:

A relationship with sources that is *too cozy* is potentially compromising of journalists' integrity and risks becoming collusive. Journalists have typically favored a more robust, conflict model, based on a crucial assumption that if the media are to function as watchdogs of powerful economic and political interests, journalists must establish their independence of sources or risk the fourth estate being driven by the fifth estate of public relations.^[9]

News style

News style, journalistic style, or news-writing style is the [prose](#) style used for [news](#) reporting in media such as [newspapers](#), [radio](#) and [television](#).

News writing attempts to answer all the basic questions about any particular event—who, what, when, where and why (the [Five Ws](#)) and also often how—at the opening of the [article](#). This form of structure is sometimes called the "[inverted pyramid](#)", to refer to the decreasing importance of information in subsequent paragraphs.

News stories also contain at least one of the following important characteristics relative to the intended audience: proximity, prominence, timeliness, human interest, oddity, or consequence.

The related term [journalese](#) is sometimes used, usually pejoratively,^[1] to refer to news-style writing. Another is [headline](#).

□ Newspapers generally adhere to an [expository writing](#) style. Over time and place, [journalism ethics](#) and standards have varied in the degree of [objectivity](#) or [sensationalism](#) they incorporate. It is considered unethical not to attribute a [scoop](#) to the journalist(s) who broke a story, even if they are employed by a rival organization. Definitions of [professionalism](#) differ among [news agencies](#); their reputations, according to both professional standards and reader expectations, are often tied to the appearance of objectivity. In its most ideal form, news writing strives to be intelligible to the majority of readers, engaging, and succinct. Within these limits, news stories also aim to be comprehensive. However, other factors are involved, some stylistic and some derived from the media form.

Among the larger and more respected newspapers, fairness and balance is a major factor in presenting information. Commentary is usually confined to a separate section, though each paper may have a different overall slant. Editorial policies dictate the use of adjectives, euphemisms, and idioms. Newspapers with an international audience, for example, tend to use a more formal style of writing.

The specific choices made by a news outlet's editor or editorial board are often collected in a [style guide](#); common style guides include the [AP Stylebook](#) and the *US News Style Book*. The main goals of news writing can be summarized by the ABCs of journalism: accuracy, brevity, and clarity.^[2]

Terms and structure[[edit](#)]

Journalistic prose is explicit and precise and tries not to rely on jargon. As a rule, journalists will not use a long word when a short one will do. They use subject-verb-object construction and vivid, active prose (see [Grammar](#)). They offer [anecdotes](#), examples and [metaphors](#), and they rarely depend on [generalizations](#) or [abstract](#) ideas. News writers try to avoid using the same word more than once in a paragraph (sometimes called an "echo" or "word mirror").

Headline[\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Headline](#)

The *headline* (also *heading*, *head* or *title*, or *hed* in journalism jargon^[3]) of a story is typically a complete sentence (e.g., "Pilot Flies Below Bridges to Save Divers"), often with auxiliary verbs and articles removed (e.g., "Remains at Colorado camp linked to missing Chicago man"). However, headlines sometimes omit the subject (e.g., "Jumps From Boat, Catches in Wheel") or verb (e.g., "Cat woman lucky").^[4]

Subhead[\[edit\]](#)

A *subhead* (also *sub-headline*, *subheading*, *subtitle* or *deck*) can be either a subordinate title under the main headline, or the heading of a subsection of the article.^[5][\[full citation needed\]](#) It is a heading that precedes the main text, or a group of paragraphs of the main text. It helps encapsulate the entire piece, or informs the reader of the topic of part of it. Long or complex articles often have more than one subheading. Subheads are thus one type of entry point that help readers make choices, such as where to begin (or stop) reading.

Billboard[\[edit\]](#)

An article *billboard* is capsule summary text, often just one sentence or fragment, which is put into a sidebar or text box (reminiscent of an outdoor [billboard](#)) on the same page to grab the

reader's attention as they are flipping through the pages to encourage them to stop and read that article. When it consists of a (sometimes compressed) sample of the text of the article, it is known as a *call-out* or *callout*, and when it consists of a quotation (e.g. of an article subject, informant, or interviewee), it is referred to as a *pulled quotation* or *pull quote*. Additional billboards of any of these types may appear later in the article (especially on subsequent pages) to entice further reading. Journalistic websites sometimes use animation techniques to swap one billboard for another (e.g. a slide of a call-out may be replaced by a photo with pull quote after some short time has elapsed). Such billboards are also used as pointers to the article in other sections of the publication or site, or as advertisements for the piece in other publication or sites.

Lead[\[edit\]](#).

The most important structural element of a story is the *lead* (also *intro* or *lede* in journalism jargon), including the story's first, or leading, sentence or two, which almost always form its own paragraph. The spelling *lede* (/ˈliːd/, from [Early Modern English](#)) is also used in [American English](#), originally to avoid confusion with the [printing press](#) type formerly made from the metal [lead](#) or the related typographical term "[leading](#)".^[6]

Charney states that "an effective lead is a 'brief, sharp statement of the story's essential facts.'"^[7][\[full citation needed\]](#)[\[clarification needed\]](#) The lead is usually the first sentence, or in some cases the first two sentences, and is ideally 20–25 words in length. A lead must balance the ideal of maximum information conveyed with the constraint of the unreadability of a long sentence. This makes writing a lead an optimization problem, in which the goal is to articulate the most encompassing and interesting statement that a writer can make in one sentence, given the material with which he or she has to work. While a rule of thumb says the lead should answer most or all of the [five Ws](#), few leads can fit all of these.

Article leads are sometimes categorized into hard leads and soft leads. A *hard lead* aims to provide a comprehensive thesis which tells the reader what the article will cover. A *soft lead* introduces the topic in a more creative, [attention-seeking](#) fashion, and is usually followed by a [nutshell paragraph \(or nut graf\)](#), a brief summary of facts.^[8]

Example of a hard-lead paragraph

NASA is proposing another space project. The agency's budget request, announced today, included a plan to send another mission to the moon. This time the agency hopes to establish a long-term facility as a jumping-off point for other space adventures. The budget requests approximately \$10 billion for the project.

Example of a soft-lead sentence

Humans will be going to the moon again. The NASA announcement came as the agency requested \$10 billion of appropriations for the project.

An "**off-lead**" is the second most important front page news of the day. The off-lead appears either in the top left corner, or directly below the lead on the right.^[9]

To "**bury the lead**" is to begin the article with background information or details of secondary importance to the readers,^[10] forcing them to read more deeply into an article than they should have to in order to discover the essential point(s). It is a common mistake in [press releases](#),^[11] but a characteristic of an [academic writing](#) style.^[12]

Nutshell paragraph[\[edit\]](#)

A *nutshell paragraph* (also simply *nutshell*, or *nut 'graph*, *nut graf*, *nutgraf*, etc., in journalism jargon) is a brief paragraph (occasionally there can be more than one) that

summarizes the news value of the story, sometimes [bullet-pointed](#) and/or set off in a box. Nut-shell paragraphs are used particularly in feature stories (*see "[Feature style](#)" below*).

Paragraphs[\[edit\]](#)

[Paragraphs](#) (shortened as '*graphs, graphs, graf*s or *pars* in journalistic jargon) form the bulk of an article. Common usage is that one or two sentences each form their own paragraph.

Inverted pyramid structure[\[edit\]](#)

Journalists usually describe the organization or structure of a news story as an inverted pyramid. The essential and most interesting elements of a story are put at the beginning, with supporting information following in order of diminishing importance.

This structure enables readers to stop reading at any point and still come away with the essence of a story. It allows people to explore a topic to only the depth that their curiosity takes them, and without the imposition of details or nuances that they could consider irrelevant, but still making that information available to more interested readers.

The inverted pyramid structure also enables articles to be trimmed to any arbitrary length during layout, to fit in the space available.

Writers are often admonished "[Don't bury the lead!](#)" to ensure that they present the most important facts first, rather than requiring the reader to go through several paragraphs to find them.

Some writers start their stories with the "1-2-3 lead", yet there are many kinds of lead available. This format invariably starts with a "Five Ws" opening paragraph (as

described above), followed by an indirect quote that serves to support a major element of the first paragraph, and then a direct quote to support the indirect quote.^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Kicker^{[[edit](#)]}

A kicker can refer to multiple things:

- The last story in the news broadcast; a "happy" story to end the show.^{[[13](#)][[14](#)][[15](#)]}
- A short, catchy word or phrase accompanying a major headline, "intended to provoke interest in, editorialize about, or provide orientation"^{[[16](#)]}

Feature style

News stories are not the only type of material that appear in newspapers and magazines. Longer articles, such as magazine cover articles and the pieces that lead the inside sections of a newspaper, are known as *features*. Feature stories differ from *straight* news in several ways. Foremost is the absence of a straight-news lead, most of the time. Instead of offering the essence of a story up front, feature writers may attempt to lure readers in.

While straight news stories always stay in third person point of view, it is common for a feature article to slip into first person. The journalist often details interactions with interview subjects, making the piece more personal.

A feature's first paragraphs often relate an intriguing moment or event, as in an "anecdotal lead". From the particulars of a person or episode, its view quickly broadens to generalities about the story's subject.

The section that signals what a feature is about is called the *nut graph* or *billboard*. Billboards appear as the third or fourth paragraph from the top, and may be up to two paragraphs long. Unlike a lead, a billboard rarely gives everything away. It reflects the fact that feature writers aim to hold their readers' attention to the end, which requires engendering curiosity and offering a "payoff." Feature paragraphs tend to be longer than those of news stories, with smoother transitions between them. Feature writers use the active-verb construction and concrete explanations of straight news but often put more personality in their prose.

Feature stories often close with a "kicker" rather than simply petering out.

Types Of Headlines

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Different types of headlines are used in journalism; the specific type used is based on the structure of the news story. Print media is geared toward informing the public on various topics. An important aspect in getting and holding the attention of the public is through the use of attractive headlines, no longer than one, two or in some cases three lines. Headlines should summarize in a few striking words the news story featured under it. The point is to get the attention of the reader and draw him into the story.

EXPLORE THIS ARTICLE

1 Flush Left Headline

This is one of the more modern headline forms in use. It consists of two or three lines of headline, each one set flush left to the left side of the space. The design is simple and allows freedom in writing the headline. No rules govern the writing of the flush left headline; however a uniform style for better results is generally adopted. This type of headline is popular because it is easy to write, allows flexibility in unit count and provides a feeling of airiness to the page with the white space.

2 Banner Headline

The journalism industry is highly competitive, and attracting the attention of the readers, viewers or listeners is the most important thing. The audience should have a reason for choosing a particular newspaper, television channel or radio station. Headlines play an important role in attracting attention, especially in print media. Banner headlines are words printed in extra large letters across the top of the front page of the newspaper on extremely important stories; they are not used frequently, but when they are used, they have significant impact.

3 Inverted Pyramid Headline

There are distinct advantages to using the inverted pyramid headline style for news writing. People often are in a rush and seldom have time to read every word of a story. The advantage of the inverted pyramid headline is that it concentrates on presenting pertinent facts first. With inverted pyramid stories, the most important information goes in the first paragraph, and the less

important information follows to the very end of the story. The inverted pyramid headline generally consists of three lines -- the first runs across the column and the other two lines are shorter than the first line. The headline is created from the informative facts presented at the start of the story, giving the reader the most important points quickly.

4Cross-Line Headline

The cross-line headline is quite similar to a banner headline. While it is a large headline, it does not span the entire width of the page, but it does run across all the columns of the story it pertains to. The cross-line headline is one of the simplest types of headlines, consisting of a single line and one or most often more columns in width. It can run flush on both sides of the paper or it can have the words centered over the columns. This type of headline is generally used when there is more than one column for a story and to produce a formal look.

Proofreading is the [reading](#) of a [galley proof](#) or an electronic copy of a publication to find and correct production errors of [text](#) or [art](#).^[1] Proofreading is the final step in the editorial cycle before publication.



Traditional method[\[edit\]](#)

A proof is a [typeset](#) version of [copy](#) or a [manuscript page](#). They often contain [typos](#) as a result of human error. Traditionally, a proofreader looks at an increment of text on the copy and then compares it to the corresponding typeset increment, and then marks any errors (sometimes called 'line edits') using [standard proofreaders' marks](#).^[2] Unlike [copy editing](#), the defining procedure of a proofreading service is to work directly with two sets of information at the same time. Proofs

are then returned to the [typesetter](#) for correction. Correction-cycle proofs will typically have one descriptive term, such as 'bounce', 'bump', or 'revise' unique to the department or organization and used for clarity to the strict exclusion of any other. It is a common practice for 'all' such corrections, no matter how slight, to be sent again to a proofreader to be checked and initialed, thus establishing the principle of higher responsibility for proofreaders as compared to their typesetters or artists.

Alternative methods[\[edit\]](#)

'Copy holding' or 'copy reading' employs two readers per proof. The first reads the text aloud literally as it appears, usually at a comparatively fast but uniform rate. The second reader follows along and marks any pertinent differences between what is read and what was typeset. This method is appropriate for large quantities of [boilerplate text](#) where it is assumed that there will be comparatively few mistakes.

Experienced copy holders employ various [codes](#) and verbal short-cuts that accompany their reading. The spoken word 'digits', for example, means that the numbers about to be read are not words spelled out; and 'in a hole' can mean that the upcoming segment of text is within [parentheses](#). 'Bang' means an [exclamation point](#). A 'thump' or 'screamer' made with a finger on the table represents the [initial cap](#), [comma](#), [period](#), or similar obvious attribute being read simultaneously. Thus the line of text (*He said the address was 1234 Central Blvd., and to hurry!*) would be read aloud as "*in a hole* [thump] *he said the address was digits 1 2 3 4* [thump] *central* [thump] *buluhvuhd* [thump] *comma and to hurry bang*". Mutual understanding is the only guiding principle, so codes evolve as opportunity permits. In the above example, two thumps after 'buluhvuhd' might be acceptable to proofreaders familiar with the text.

'Double reading' is when a single proofreader checks a proof in the traditional manner and then another reader repeats the process. Both initial the proof. Note that with both copy holding and double reading, responsibility for a given proof is necessarily shared by the two proofreaders.

'Scanning' is used to check a proof without reading it word for word, has become common with computerization of typesetting and the popularization of [word processing](#). Many publishers have their own proprietary typesetting systems,^[3] while their customers use commercial programs such as [Word](#). Before the data in a Word file can be published, it must be converted into a format used by the publisher. The end product is usually called a *conversion*. If a customer has already proofread the contents of a file before submitting it to a publisher, there will be no reason for another proofreader to re-read it from the copy (although this additional service may be requested and paid for). Instead, the publisher is held responsible only for formatting errors, such as typeface, page width, and alignment of [columns](#) in [tables](#); and production errors such as text inadvertently deleted. To simplify matters further, a given conversion will usually be assigned a specific [template](#). Given typesetters of sufficient skill, experienced proofreaders familiar with their typesetters' work can accurately scan their pages without reading the text for errors that neither they nor their typesetters are responsible for.

Style guides and checklists[\[edit\]](#)

Proofreaders are expected to be consistently accurate by default because they occupy the last stage of typographic production before [publication](#).

Before it is typeset, copy is often marked up by an editor or customer with various instructions as to typefaces, art, and layout. Often these individuals will consult a [style guide](#) of varying degrees of complexity and completeness. Such guides are usually produced in-house by the staff or supplied by the customer, and it should be distinguished from professional references such

as [*The Chicago Manual of Style*](#), the [*AP Stylebook*](#), [*The Elements of Style*](#), and [*Gregg Reference Manual*](#). When appropriate, proofreaders may mark errors in accordance with their house guide instead of the copy when the two conflict. Where this is the case, the proofreader may justifiably be considered a *copy editor*.

Checklists are common in proof-rooms where there is sufficient uniformity of product to distill some or all of its components to a list. They may also act as a training tool for new hires. Checklists are never comprehensive, however: proofreaders still have to find all mistakes that are *not* mentioned or described, thus limiting their usefulness.

Qualifications[\[edit\]](#)

The educational level of proofreaders, in general, is on par with that of their co-workers. Typesetters, graphic artists, and word processors rarely need to have a [college degree](#), and a perusal of online job listings for proofreaders will show that although listings may specify a degree for proofreaders, many do not.^{[\[original research?\]](#)} Those same listings will also show a tendency for degree-only positions to be in [firms](#) in [commercial](#) fields such as [retail](#), [medicine](#), or [insurance](#), where the data to be read is internal documentation not intended for public consumption per se.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)} Such listings, specifying a single proofreader to fill a single position, are more likely to require a degree as a method of reducing the candidate pool but also because the degree is perceived^{[\[by whom?\]](#)} as a requirement for any potentially promotable [white-collar](#) applicant. Experience is discounted at the outset in preference to a credential, indicating a relatively low starting [wage](#) appropriate for younger applicants. In these kinds of [multitasking desktop-publishing](#) environments, [human resources](#) departments may even classify proofreading as a clerical skill generic to literacy itself. Where this occurs, it is not

unusual for proofreaders to find themselves guaranteeing the accuracy of higher-paid co-workers.

In contrast, [printers](#), [publishers](#), [advertising agencies](#) and [law firms](#) tend not to require a degree specifically. In these professionally demanding single-tasking environments, the educational divide surrounds the production department instead of the company itself. Promotion is rare for these proofreaders because they tend to be valued more for their present skill set than for any potential [leadership](#) ability. They are often supervised by a typesetter also without a degree, or by an administrative manager with little or no production experience who delegates day-to-day responsibilities to a typesetter.^{[[citation needed](#)]} It follows that listings for these positions tend to emphasize experience, offer commensurately higher pay rates, and require a proofreading test.

Proofreader testing^{[[edit](#)]}

Applicants. Although many commercial and college-level proofreading courses of varying quality can be found online, practical job training for proofreaders has declined along with its status as a [craft](#). Many books also teach the basics of proofreader to readers. Such tools of self-preparation have by and large replaced formal workplace instruction.

Proofreader applicants are tested on their [spelling](#), speed, and skill in finding mistakes in a sample text. Toward that end, they may be given a list of ten or twenty classically difficult words and a proofreading test, both tightly timed. The proofreading test will often have a maximum number of errors per quantity of text and a minimum amount of time to find them. The goal of this approach is to identify those with the best skill set.

A contrasting approach is to identify and reward persistence more than an arbitrarily high level of expertise. For the spelling portion of the test, that can be accomplished by providing a

dictionary, lengthening the wordlist conspicuously, and making clear that the test is not timed. For the proofreading portion, a suitable language-usage reference book (e.g., *The Chicago Manual of Style*) can be provided. (Note that knowing where to find needed information in such specialized books is itself an effective component of the test.) Removing the pressure of what is essentially an ASAP deadline will identify those applicants with slightly greater reservoirs of persistence, stamina, and commitment. At the same time, by mooted the need for applicants to make use of a memorized list of difficult words and a studied knowledge of the more common grammatical traps (*affect, effect, lay, lie*), applicants learn that their success depends on a quality at least theoretically available to anyone at any time without preparation.

Formal employee testing is usually planned and announced well in advance, and may have titles, such as *Levels Testing, Skills Evaluation*, etc. They are found in corporate or governmental environments with enough HR staff to prepare and administer a test.

Informal employee testing takes place whenever a manager feels the need to take a random sampling of a proofreader's work by double-reading selected pages. Usually, this is done without warning, and sometimes it will be done secretly. It can be highly effective, and there will certainly be times when such re-reading is justified, but care must be taken.

There are two basic approaches. The first is to re-read a proof within its deadline and in the department itself. Thus the manager will read from the same copy that the first reader saw, and be aware of any volume and deadline pressures the first reader was under, and can directly observe the individual in real time. This approach can also be followed as a matter of routine. The goal then is not to confirm a specific suspicion of poor job performance by a particular reader, but rather to confirm a general assumption that the proofreading staff needs ongoing monitoring.

The second approach to informal testing is to wait for some days or weeks and then, as time allows, randomly select proofs to re-read while outside the department. Such proofs may or may not be accompanied by the copy pages that the proofreader saw. Here the re-reader is examining the proof from the perspective of typographical and formatting accuracy alone, ignoring how many other pages the first reader had read that day, and had yet to read, and how many pages were successfully read and how many deadlines were met under a given day's specific conditions.

Economics[\[edit\]](#)

Proofreading cannot be fully cost-effective where volume or unpredictable workflow prevents proofreaders from managing their own time. Examples are [newspapers](#), [thermographic](#) trade printing of [business cards](#), and network hubs. The problem in each of these environments is that jobs cannot be put aside to be re-read as needed. In the first two cases, volumes and deadlines dictate that all jobs be finished as soon as possible; in the third case, jobs presently on-site at the hub are hurried, regardless of their formal deadline, in favor of possible future work that may arrive unpredictably. Where proofs can programmatically [\[clarification needed\]](#) be read only once, the quality will randomly but persistently fall below expectations. Even the best and most experienced readers will not be able to be consistently accurate enough to justify premium pay.

Production technology can also moot the need to pay a premium for proofreading. In the example of thermographic business-card printing, even when there are no reprints, there is considerable wastage of paper and ink in preparing each of the press runs, which are separated by color. When (as often happens) there is unused space available on the [plate](#), there is no increase in production cost for reprints that use that space. Only when reprints are so numerous that they push production staff into significant [overtime](#) would they increase costs. But

significant overtime is usually the result of a high volume in new orders using up the [eight-hour day](#). In such industries proofreading need only – and can only – make a marginal difference to be cost-effective. As for the customers, many will never return even when their jobs are perfect, and enough of those who do need a reprint will find the retailer's cost-saving price to be satisfactory enough to tolerate a late delivery.

Only where workload volume does not compress all deadlines to ASAP and the workflow is reasonably steady can proofreading be worth a premium [wage](#). Strict deadlines mandate a delivery time, but in doing so they necessarily do not mandate delivery *before* that time. If deadlines are consistently maintained instead of arbitrarily moved up, proofreaders can manage their own time by putting proofs aside at their own discretion for re-reading later. Whether the interval is a few seconds or overnight, it enables proofs to be viewed as both familiar and new. Where this procedure is followed, managers can expect consistently superior performance. However, unlike double-reading and copy holding, re-reading concentrates responsibility instead of sharing it, requiring more effort from proofreaders and a measure of freedom from management. Instead of managers controlling deadlines, deadlines control managers, and leeway is passed to the proofreaders as well as commensurate pay.

Proofreading and copy-editing[\[edit\]](#)

The term *proofreading* is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to [copy editing](#), and vice versa. Although there is necessarily some overlap, proofreaders typically lack any real editorial or managerial authority. What they *can* do is mark queries for typesetters, editors, or authors. To clarify matters at the outset, some advertised vacancies come with a notice that the job advertised is not a writing or editing position and will not become one. Creativity and critical thinking by their very nature conflict with the strict *copy-following* discipline

that [commercial](#) and [governmental](#) proofreading requires. Thus, proofreading and editing are fundamentally separate responsibilities. In contrast, *copy editors* focus on a sentence-by-sentence analysis of the text to "clean it up" by improving grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and structure. The copy editor is usually the last editor that an author will work with. Copy editing focuses intensely on style, content, punctuation, [grammar](#), and consistency of usage.^[4]

Self[[edit](#)]

Primary examples include job seekers' own [résumés](#) and student term papers. Proofreading such material presents a special challenge, first because the proofreader/editor is usually the author; second because such authors are usually unaware of the inevitability of mistakes and the effort required to find them; and third, as final mistakes are often found when stress levels are highest and time shortest, readers fail to identify them as mistakes. Under these conditions, proofreaders tend to see only what they want to see.

Digital[[edit](#)]

Spell checkers have been common since the advent of digital documents.

[Grammar checking](#) has been available in [Microsoft Word](#) since 1992.

Proofreading software is not commonplace as of 2020 but can assist with finding and correcting errors.

- [hemingway](#)
- [ginger](#)
- [plagiarismsearch](#)

Document comparison in [Libreoffice](#), branching in [git](#), and 4 window merging in [vimdiff](#) can assist with merging multiple asynchronous versions.

Concurrent editing such as [Google docs](#) avoid version conflicts and allow for live remote review.

In fiction[\[edit\]](#)

Examples of proofreaders in fiction include *The History of the Siege of Lisbon* (*Historia do Cerco de Lisboa*), a 1989 novel by Nobel laureate [Jose Saramago](#), the short story "Proofs" in [George Steiner's](#) *Proofs and Three Parables* (1992), and the short story "Evermore" in *Cross Channel* (1996) by Julian Barnes, in which the protagonist Miss Moss is a proofreader for a dictionary. Under the headline "Orthographical" in [James Joyce's](#) novel *Ulysses*, [Leopold Bloom](#), watching the typesetter foreman Mr. Nannetti read over a "limp galley page", thinks "Proof fever".^[5]

Demand for proof-editing[\[edit\]](#)

For documents that do not require a formal [typesetting](#) process, such as reports, journal articles and e-publications, the costs involved with making changes at the proofreading stage are no longer as relevant. This, along with the time and cost pressures felt by businesses, self-publishers and academics, has led to a demand for one-stage proofreading and copy-editing services where a professional proofreader/copy-editor – often a freelancer, sometimes now called an [author editor](#) – will be contracted to provide an agreed level of service to an agreed deadline and cost.

Proof-editing tends to exist outside of the traditional publishing realm, and it usually involves a single stage of editing. It is considered preferable to have separate copy-editing and proofreading stages, so proof-editing is, by definition, a compromise but one that modern professional on-

screen proofreaders and copy-editors are increasingly offering in order to meet the demand for flexible proofreading and editing services.

An example table of distinctions between different services: editing, copy-editing, proof-editing and proofreading[\[edit\]](#)

As this is such a new term (discussed in a guest blog^[6] on the [Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading](#) website) and tends to be offered by freelancers to individuals and companies rather than being a formal, industry-defined service, exactly what is included can vary. Below is an example of the distinctions between services for work on non-fiction.