



Editor's Checklist

General procedures required on all jobs

- When editing electronically, use Microsoft Word's Track Changes feature to record your changes; use the Comments feature to write queries.
- When editing on paper, write legibly, using standard editing marks.
- Select the editorial style to be used when editing: Chicago? AP? GPO? An in-house style guide?
- As you edit, develop a stylesheet that records all of the choices you make regarding spelling, number usage, and consistency in hyphenation, capitalization, and so forth.

Copyediting Tasks

These tasks should be done when the file is still in Microsoft Word, before it has been through design.

- Correct typos and errors in spelling.
- Correct errors in grammar and punctuation.
- Correct inconsistencies in style, including treatment of capitalization, hyphenation, and numbers.
- Correct errors in usage.
- Spell out acronyms at first use.
- Make sure that all referenced matter (e.g., tables, figures) follows its first callout.
- Check any mathematical equations for accuracy.
- Correct basic formatting errors, such as replacing hyphens with en or em dashes, as appropriate; replacing two spaces with one; replacing "straight" quotes with "curly" quotes; and so forth.
- Finally, if it is in the scope of your project, enhance readability by—
 - Rewriting awkward or confusing sections
 - Improving poor word choice
 - Checking organization and reorganizing text as necessary; this can include writing or rewriting summaries, transitions, heads, subheads, and conclusions, as needed
 - Eliminating excessive passive voice, smothered verbs, and noun strings.

Proofreading Tasks

These steps should be done after a document has been through design. Remember that the file should already have been copyedited; at this stage, keep editorial changes to the minimum.

- Ensure that all the text from the source file was correctly placed in the layout file.
- Read through the text and correct any errors that may have been missed during copyediting.
- Review and correct formatting errors, such as incorrect font style or size, incorrect bullet style, uneven margins, too-loose or too-tight kerning (letter spacing), lakes or rivers in the text, widows and orphans, excessive end-of-line hyphenation, and too-uneven rag.
- Do a final check on these areas, where errors tend to lurk:
 - Page numbers
 - Table of contents
 - Running heads and footers
 - Heads and subheads, and the first few lines after each head
 - Endnotes, footnotes, captions, and mastheads
 - Anything in pairs (like parentheses or quotation marks)
 - Web, e-mail, and snail mail addresses
 - Leftover placeholders, such as "XXX" or "TK" or highlighted text
 - Anything in alphabetical or numerical lists (ensure that items in alphabetical or numerical order are indeed in proper order; ensure that numbered heads track through the document; and ensure that if five steps are mentioned in the text, for example, five steps are included).