

# Unit 12 : Copy editing

<u>Contents</u>	<u>page</u>
Introduction	153
1. Devising a house style	154
2. Copy editing and marking up.	156
3. Finishing a text	159
4. How to brief a course typist	161
5. How to brief an artist or designer	162
Summary	162
Assignment K	162

## Introduction

After you have agreed on a format, you have to explain it to typist, designer and printer. Normally, you write instructions on the manuscript or typescript. In order to make such communication easier, a number of signs and conventions have been developed, used by printers and editors everywhere. In this unit you will learn how to use them.

At the end of the unit you will be able to:

- \* start developing a house style for your courses;
- \* copy edit and mark up a text following a house style;
- \* check that a text is complete and make the finishing touches;
- \* brief a course typist;
- \* brief an illustrator.

This unit explains how to prepare a text for production. If the material in it is quite new to you, you are advised to devise additional exercises yourself, and to practise marking up the text. As in the previous unit, there are quite a lot of technical terms. Make sure you understand them.

This unit could take you up to 3 hours, especially if you do additional exercises. The assignment will take one or two hours. If the work takes longer, do not worry. You will find that after some practice you will be able to mark up texts accurately and quickly.

## 1. Devising a house style

A house style is not a kind of architecture; it is a term used by printers for the format they use and conventions they follow. The word 'house' is used because in old-fashioned English, we talk about 'publishing and printing houses' rather than 'publishers' and 'printers'. The publisher will make up a list of standard instructions, which everyone will follow. This list can contain all kinds of things: punctuation ("Oh" not 'Oh'); spelling (s not z in words like 'organisation'); format for headings (underlined, not capital letters) and so on. The list may be several pages long. Here is an extract from a list which explains how to use numerals.

### Numerals

Of the optional symbols, decimal point or decimal comma, we have chosen to use the decimal point.

No symbol is used between, for example, the thousand and hundreds digits in a numeral. But a space is left after every three digits counting from the decimal point in both directions.

For example: 9 672 431

7.256 37

You can see that a list of agreed rules like this is extremely useful. If everyone tries to follow it, then the editor will not have too hard a job arranging the final text. The editor does not have to make decisions about detail.

It is up to each institution to decide its own house style. Here is a checklist of headings and questions you might use to develop your own list.

### General layout

- . Do you start each unit with a new page? A right-hand page or any page?
- . Do you start a new page or not with each section?
- . How do you lay out exercises? In a frame? Indented?
- . How do you lay out special features like objectives or summaries?
- . Do you leave space for students to write answers or not? Do you print lines for them to write on? Solid lines or dots?
- . Where are the answers to exercises to be placed? How are they presented?
- . How are paragraphs arranged? A space between them or indented on the first line?

### Headings

- . What hierarchy of headings do you use?

- . What type do you use for main headings and subheadings?
- . Are headings central or at the side?
- . Are headings numbered? How?

#### Pictures, tables, diagrams, etc.

- . Are there standard sizes?
- . Are they framed or not?
- . Are they titled or not? Where are captions placed?
- . Are they numbered or not?

#### Capitalisation

- . When do you use capitals?

#### Spelling

- . Where there is a choice, which spelling do you use?

#### Numbers, dates and time

- . Do you use figures or words?
- . Do you use spaces or commas to indicate thousands?
- . How do you express dates (eg 15 May or May 15th)?
- . How do you express time (eg 13.00 h or 1 pm)?

#### Abbreviations

- . When do you use them? Which ones do you use?
- . Where do you explain them?

#### Punctuation

- . When there is a choice, which do you use?

#### Typefaces

- . When do you use italics? When do you use bold? For technical terms? Foreign words? Emphasis? Headings?

If you start with a list covering some of these points, you will quickly add more items until it is sufficiently comprehensive. For those producing texts in English, there is a useful reference book called Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers. If you do much copy editing, try to get it.

## EXERCISE 1

Find one or two books published in your own country. School text books would be ideal. Using the headings in the list above, look through the books carefully to find out what conventions are most usual in your country.

(20 minutes)

### Comment

It is only when you are working closely on a text that the need to make choices becomes apparent. Here are some guidelines for English texts which may help you learn what to look for.

- . We usually start each new lesson on a right-hand page, but only occasionally start a new page for each section.
- . We usually provide dotted lines for writing answers, widely spaced for large writing. Solid lines are too heavy.
- . We usually use capital letters only for main headings. Unit titles are usually placed centrally, and other headings are to the left.
- . Captions to pictures are usually placed underneath the picture.
- . The main spelling choices in English are between 's' and 'z' in words like 'organisation', 'recognise', 'realise'. There is also a choice between American spelling (center, I practice) and British spelling (centre, I practise).
- . We usually give words for numbers up to ten appearing in the text, and then figures for numbers over ten. You may find it useful to refer to the international standard rules for expressing quantities and the like. These state, for example, that 3 metres is always abbreviated to 3 m and that ten thousand should always be written 10 000.

## EXERCISE 2

If you have no house rules in your institution, try to make a list. You will find it useful to look at a sample of your own texts to help you.

(30 minutes)

### Comment

Discuss what you have done with a colleague. (You may prefer to wait until you have finished other work in the unit before you do this.)

#### 2. Copy editing and marking up

We start with two technical terms. The 'copy' is the material that is going to be printed, and 'copy editing' is therefore editing this agreed draft so that it is ready to print. You also have to write instructions

for the course typist on the copy. This is called marking up.

It may be helpful at this point to list the events between writing and typesetting. We start when the writer and editor have both worked extensively on the text, the writer has submitted his final draft, and this has been approved. At this stage it may be necessary to type or retype the draft. The typist will type it as a draft, plain typing with a double space between the lines. The editor must then check the typing carefully to make sure it follows the original. Errors can be corrected by hand.

You now have an accurate text, clearly typed. This is your 'copy'. What editing does it need? If you have worked on the text carefully during its earlier development, it will need little. You must, however, read the whole text through carefully, and check it as follows:

- Is the language clear?
- Are all the technical terms explained?
- Are headings arranged consistently?
- Are paragraphs correctly divided?
- Are the instructions clear?

This should not take as long as the first edit. You will probably have to make numerous minor changes to the text. Refer to your house style, and correct punctuation, spelling and other expressions wherever necessary. Make sure that all the material is consistent. When you are satisfied with the text, you can mark it up. To do this, and to mark corrections and amendments on the copy, you use standard signs. The most common signs are given in the table. These are used for marking up and proof reading (see Unit 13).

<u>Mark in left margin</u>	<u>Mark in text</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
e/	Be care <del>f</del> ul	insert missing matter
o/	Be carefu <del>l</del>	leave out extra matter
o/	Be carefu <del>l</del>	leave out matter and close up space
stet	Be carefu <del>l</del>	leave as typed (if you correct something wrongly)
CAPS	be careful	change to capital letter
l.c.	Be Careful	change to lower case letter (small letter)
#	Be <del>careful</del>	insert space
trs	Be carefu <del>l</del>	transpose or change order of letters or words
NP	Be careful	begin a new paragraph
run on	<del>...never...</del> Be careful	Continue text on same line No new paragraph
⌋	⌋ Be careful	Move to right



spell out

← Be careful  
or Be careful

Move to left

e.g. 2

Write out abbreviation or figure in full

TABLE OF SIGNS FOR CORRECTING TEXT

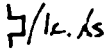
Look carefully at the signs and at the examples below them. You need to learn these signs. You will find them quite easy to use with practice.

CAPS

Marking up



When you are preparing a text for typesetting, ~~you~~ go through it carefully, correcting all the errors.



← Follow all the Rules that your organization has adopted. Mark the text clearly so that the typist knows your intentions.

run on

Use the signs given in the table.

EXERCISE 3

Cover up the example you have just looked at. Here is a correct version of the passage.

MARKING UP

When you are preparing a text for typesetting, go through it carefully, correcting all the errors.

Follow all the rules that your organisation has adopted. Mark the text clearly so that the typist knows your intentions. Use the signs given in the table.

Now try to mark up the typescript without looking at my version. When you have finished, check against the example.

Marking up

When you are preparing a text for typesetting, you go through it carefully, correcting all the errors.

Follow all the Rules that your organization has adopted. Mark the text clearly so that the typist knows your intentions.

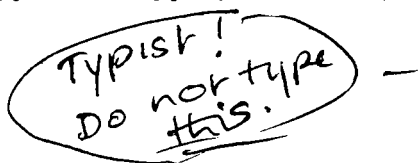
Use the signs given in the table.

(10 minutes)

Comment

The purpose of marking up is to give instructions to a typist. If in

doubt, you can write messages to the typist. As you do not want the typist to type your messages by mistake, use this convention:



Write TYPIST! and then the message in the left margin. Then draw a circle round the message.

### 3. Finishing a text

As you arrange the course units into books, there will be some finishing touches. We have already mentioned commissioning the cover design. You will also need to arrange the beginning and end of each book.

#### 3.1 At the beginning

a. Title page. We use this name for the first printed page of a book. The title page contains the title of the book. It also usually gives similar information to the cover: name of institution; name of series or course; course reference number; course author.

b. Reverse of title page. The back of the title page should contain reference data about the book, as follows:

Name and address of publisher (i.e. your institution)

Name and address of printer (if different)

ISBN (International Standard Book Number), if used

Bibliographical data on author (included if the book is likely to be put in libraries)

Date the book was published (reprint dates and new edition dates are also given, where relevant)

Number of copies printed (sometimes)

Acknowledgements: a list of those who gave permission to use copyright material or otherwise helped

Copyright symbol and name of copyright holder (usually the publisher)

You may also have special national requirements, for example you may need to state that a course has been approved by the Ministry of Education.

It is usual to print matter on this page in small print. It is not of major interest to students.

c. Contents page. This covers the contents of the whole book. If several units are bound together in one book, you will need to give the page where each unit starts.

d. Course introduction. This would occur only in the first volume of a course. It is often the last part of the course to be written, and often the editor drafts it.

#### EXERCISE 4

The course introduction normally contains a statement of the objectives of the whole course. Can you think of other features it might contain? Note down as many as you can.

(5 minutes)

#### Comment

The answer you give depends to a certain extent on what other sources of information the student has. Most distance-teaching organisations have general handbooks for students which contain advice on studying, and explain how their teaching system works. Some of the topics listed below could be covered in a general handbook instead of a course introduction. You would need to tell students:

About the course content. You would list objectives, describe the contents of the course and the arrangement of the subject, perhaps introduce the subject, and where relevant print the exam syllabus.

Who the course is for. Describe the sort of student you expect to do the course (for example, mention any qualification they are expected to have). Describe the extent of knowledge of the subject they are expected to have. If no previous knowledge is expected, say so.

About the course materials. What exactly should the students receive, in what sequence, and when? How many course books are there, for example?

How the course works. Explain how they are supposed to work through the material, at what pace. Explain when and how to send work to their tutor for marking.

What they need to do the course. If they need equipment or books, list them in the introduction. Mention, too, any recommended background reading, but distinguish clearly between essential books, which every student must have, and recommended books, which are desirable but not essential.

How they should study. Give advice on organising time, making a study timetable and other practical matters. Give some hints on study skills, like keeping notes and revising regularly. Give advice on approaching the subject and studying it effectively. For example, in an agricultural course you would stress the importance of doing practical work.

How to get help. Explain how to get help from a tutor or student advisor when difficulties occur. Make sure you describe the facilities available from your institution, such as local study centres or postal library loans.

Many items from this list could be in a general handbook. Some could usefully be repeated in a course introduction, along with information relating only to the course.

### 3.2 At the end

a. Answers. Make sure all the answers are included at the end of the book (if that is where you have decided to place them).

b. Glossary. Check any glossary of technical terms, make sure it is complete, and check all the definitions given.

c. Index: A course may need an index. This will be used only for reference. When you are revising, you may for example want to check every reference to a particular topic. An index is only necessary for long and complex courses. Usually, the unit contents lists are adequate for reference.

d. Course comments page. A comments page or evaluation questionnaire may need to be placed at the end of the book (see Unit 14).

Do not forget to list these features in the contents list of the volume.

### 4. How to brief a course typist

A course typist is neither a copy typist nor a secretary. Usually, a well-trained typist is selected to learn to type courses. She may continue with ordinary secretarial duties as well, or become exclusively a course typist. To operate a word processor or a composer, she will need a short specialist training. You can yourself train the typist to lay out the pages correctly.

As a skilled worker, the course typist ought to be given some responsibility. If you train a good typist carefully, you will soon find that she notices and corrects mistakes. You can train a typist as follows:

- \* Give her a copy of the house style document. Go through it with her, explaining each point.
- \* Teach her the printer's marks you use for marking up the text. Teach her a few at a time. Provide her with a list of them for reference.
- \* Supervise a new typist carefully. Ask her to type a small amount and to show you what she has done. Let her work like this, very slowly, for a day or two, until she is quite at home with the work.

- \* Encourage the typist to consult you over problems at any time. Always be ready to answer a question. Most questions will only take a moment.
- \* Encourage the typist to work to a high standard, even if this means going slowly. Accuracy and quality are most important.
- \* Encourage the typist to read through her own work and correct it before handing it to you.

If you yourself do not supervise course typists, an efficient and sympathetic person must do so. It is most important that course typists work in a good, encouraging environment. They must at all costs be protected from interruptions by senior staff who want, for example, letters typed urgently.

#### 5. How to brief an artist or designer

A briefing on layout will involve a discussion on house style. Pay particular attention to instructions for illustrations. When a picture or diagram is needed, give instructions as follows:

- \* State the size and dimensions of the picture.
- \* State the style of drawing wanted (line drawing, cartoon, etc.).
- \* Describe the subject matter in detail.
- \* Sketch the subject (perhaps).

If necessary, you should ask the artist to produce a draft before a final version. It is best to brief him both orally and in writing. You will find an example of a written briefing in Unit 11. You can discuss the requirements together to make sure it is clear. The written version then gives an unambiguous record.

While detailed briefing is important, you should also allow the artist or designer freedom to suggest his own ideas. Designers are trained to think visually and may sometimes see possibilities that editors miss.

#### Summary

This unit has explained how to develop a house style and discussed what to include in it. It has also shown you how to mark up a manuscript or typescript, how to make the final preparations before typesetting, and how to brief the course typist and artist or designer.

Most people find copy editing and marking up rather difficult at first. You will find it gets easier when you have had some practice.

#### ASSIGNMENT K

Take a sample typescript and copy edit it and mark it up, following the house style proposals you devised in exercise 1. Get two or three pages typed, helping the typist as suggested in section 4. When you have done this, you will have a sample of text ready in your proposed house style. You could now circulate the proposal and the sample amongst your colleagues, and seek reactions.