

20.

Copy Editing and Proofreading

How to follow through
on a piece of writing

IN MAKING FLOUR INTO BREAD, the dough must be kneaded and turned, pulled and punched, set aside, then kneaded again before it can be shaped into loaves for baking.

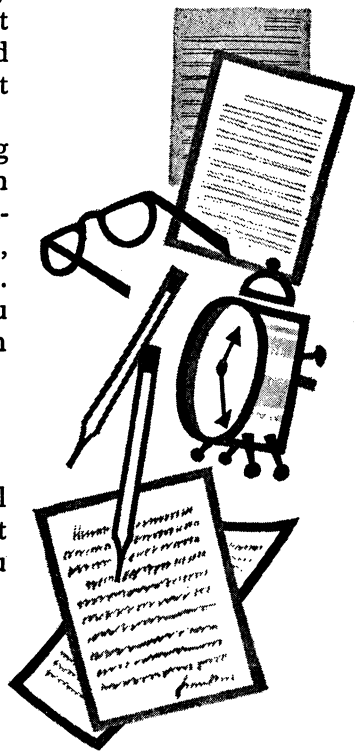
The same is true of writing. After the copy has been put into what seems finished form, it must be worked and reworked before it is shaped into final form for the printer. In other words, it must be edited.

Too many persons think of editing as putting in commas, changing words here and there. Such correction of punctuation, spelling, and construction is merely checking. It is important, of course, but true editing goes far beyond such routines. Whether you are editing something that you yourself have written, or going over copy written by someone else, approach the job in this way.

Analyze the Copy as a Whole

Read the copy through. But leave your pencil on the desk during the first reading. You don't need one yet. That first reading is to give you

*Copy editing is like the
final pressing you give
a garment when you have
finished it.*



WHEN TABULATING FIGURES

In setting up tables of figures, remember: If there are only two columns of figures, no vertical dividing lines are necessary. If there are three or more columns, use perpendicular lines to separate the figures.

ECONOMY NOTE

All errors discovered in reading proof must, of course, be corrected even though the copy is ready to go to press. It should be remembered, however, that typographical changes cost money. If you prepare your copy thoughtfully, and if you read the galley proofs with care, such changes will not ordinarily be necessary.

an over-all picture of what the copy is about. As you read, keep asking yourself these questions: What is this copy trying to say? Does the information come through? Does the copy answer all of the questions that the reader is likely to ask of it? Are there any important facts omitted?

At this point pick up your pencil and, in the margin of the copy, make note of any details that should be included to round out that information.

Visualize Readers, Visualize Format

Ask, "Who is to read this? Will those readers understand it, be interested in it?" An article on some phase of nutrition research written for publication in a scientific journal, entirely understandable to the professional women reading it, would probably be just so much Greek to nonprofessional homemakers. Know how and where a piece of copy is to be used. Visualize that audience of readers, then go through the copy and ring every word that might not be clear to that particular group.

Visualize, too, the space that probably will be allowed for the copy. If the writer has turned in a 3,500 word story for a magazine which uses no articles longer than 1,200 words, the material will ordinarily have to be rewritten rather than merely edited or cut.

Organize and Scrutinize

Having analyzed and visualized, you are ready to examine the copy from the standpoint of organization. In doing this, consider these points:

1. Are these directions — or this information — given in orderly progression?
2. Does the material keep to one point of view? When allowable shifts in point of view occur, are

they handled well by beginning a new paragraph or using parentheses? If not, correct them.

3. If subheads are used, are they parallel in construction?

4. Is the wording consistent throughout? (Not "teaspoons" in one paragraph, "tsps." in another.) If copy is not consistent, make it so.

5. Is the copy loose and wordy, stilted and old-fashioned sounding? Ruthlessly weed out all meaningless phrases, sentences, and paragraphs which add neither information nor interest.

Step Up Dramatization

Look for all possible ways to give the copy more life. Begin with the title. Can you think of a better one? Does the lead carry the reader right into the copy or off in a different direction? Is it short and to the point? One magazine editor says: "The lead paragraph of a magazine article should rarely be longer than 40 words."

Study the sentences. Shorten the over-long ones. Sentences should not be all the same length, but the average length should be kept to 18 words, if possible. Much depends, of course, on how and where the copy is to be used. Sentences in books can be longer than sentences in newspapers. Sentences in a magazine article directed to professional people can be more involved than sentences written for the general public.

Break down over-long paragraphs, too. A few magazine editors insist on keeping paragraphs to not more than 100 words. All such shortening and tightening is definitely a part of good editing.

Check copy for weak words. Substitute more precise ones, more colorful ones, wherever empty words occur. Weed out practically all of those *very's* and as many *the's* and *a's* as you can spare. Scrutinize each adjective. Is it needed? (Remem-

DESK EQUIPMENT

The well-equipped desk for a home economist includes not only standard reference books in her particular field, but a standard dictionary, a desk style book, and a book or booklet showing type faces and sizes. A desk dictionary devotes several pages to Preparation of Copy for the Press.

OLD RULE

Write spontaneously;
revise impersonally.

MARK THAT COPY

Before releasing a piece of copy to a printer be sure that it is marked to show what face and size of type are to be used; what width the copy is to be set.

ber that journalistic saying, "The adjective is the enemy of the noun!")

This phase of your editing is a combination of cutting out and putting in. It is the final touch that puts the punch into what you have written. After you have done all of this, the copy will need to be retyped, then checked again for misspelled words and slip-ups in punctuation. Before releasing the copy give it a final look-over to see that you have improved it, not merely made changes. Make sure you have not altered the meaning, but, instead, have made it more clear. Above all, make certain that you have not killed the yeast of spontaneity and enthusiasm.

Yes, editing a piece of copy, like kneading bread, takes energy as well as know-how. It is hard work. But when the copy, like the bread, comes out fresh and light yet full of substance, you feel a deep sense of satisfaction that comes of useful work well done.

Read Proof Pages with Utmost Care

Once a piece of writing is undertaken, there seems to be no end to the work that must be done on it. Even after it has been set in type, it must be proofread — not once but several times and by several persons.

When galleys or page proofs come to your desk, check them carefully against the originals to see that no ingredients have been dropped from those recipes and that there are no omissions or errors. If the copy involves figures, make sure they are absolutely correct. Your job is to see that the copy is right from the standpoint of sense and that no typographical errors have been overlooked by the printer's proofreaders.

In order to catch all inaccuracies, it's a good idea to read the proofs through silently, concen-

TYPOGRAPHICAL WIDOWS

"Widow" is an old-time printing term for a word or part-word that dangles in a separate line at the end of a paragraph. Such fringes are unattractive, especially when they occur at the bottom of a caption or a page. It is usually advisable to cut back a word or two within the last sentence in order to eliminate this over-hang.

PAGE PROOFS

In reading page proofs, note balance of type with white space. If a paragraph of copy looks crowded, while there is much white space at top or bottom of the paragraph, ask the printer to put a 1- or 2-point lead between the lines. (Better yet, ask his advice about doing so — he may have a better suggestion.)

trating on what the copy says, how the individual words look. Then check them again while another person reads aloud from the original manuscript. Take special note of headings and captions; it's doubly easy, it seems, to let an error slip past in these obvious spots. Read syllable by syllable. Don't anticipate how a word will be spelled. Make sure it *is* that way.

Watch for the printer's notations. Often the printer will question a statement or a word. Check it, he's probably right! In marking corrections on proofs, use standard proofreader's marks. (See pages 174 to 176 for editing and copyreading symbols, and proofreading symbols.)

Write all corrections in margins — never between lines. When you have read and marked a galley or a page proof, initial it. If there are no corrections to be made, mark the page "O.K." with your initials following, or "O.K. as corrected," if there are only one or two minor corrections to be made. If you initial copy without marking it O.K. it indicates to the printer or compositor that another proof is expected.

When proofs are delivered to you for correction, the original manuscript will probably be enclosed with them. Be sure to send this manuscript back when you send the corrected proofs. Read and return proofs promptly, but take whatever time is needed to do the job thoroughly and accurately. Don't let yourself be hurried.

Make sure the copy is absolutely right before you finally O.K. it, but keep in mind that revisions cost money. Don't permit yourself to get "finicky" after the copy has all been set. Above all else, remember that once that copy comes off the press, there is no recalling it, no chance for further correction or explanation!

(See next pages for copyreading and proofreading symbols.)

REMEMBER

When proofreading, it's a good idea to use a sheet of unruled paper. Lay it over the copy so that it comes just below the line you are reading. This keeps your eyes on the line that you are reading, makes it easier to see errors.

If in spite of all your carefulness your copy comes out with an error in it, be disturbed. Yes. But don't be upset. Just be more careful another time. "Look out, not in; ahead, not back," is an old standby rule for all who write.

COPYREADING SYMBOLS

	HOW THEY ARE USED	WHAT THEY MEAN	HOW TYPE IS SET
TYPE SIZE and STYLE	<p><u>Lansing</u>, <u>Mich.</u>--</p> <p><u>College Herald</u></p> <p>the <u>senator</u> from Ohio</p> <p><u>By Alvin Jones</u></p> <p><u>Saturday Evening Post</u></p>	<p>Capitalize.</p> <p>Small caps.</p> <p>Change to lower case.</p> <p>Bold face.</p> <p>Italicize.</p>	<p>LANSING, Mich.--</p> <p>COLLEGE HERALD</p> <p>the senator from Ohio</p> <p>By Alvin Jones</p> <p><i>Saturday Evening Post</i></p>
PUNCTUATION and SPELLING	<p>"The Spy"</p> <p>Northwestern U^④</p> <p>said, "I must . . .</p> <p>Johnsons³</p> <p>picnicking¹</p> <p>theatre²</p> <p>Henry Cook, principal¹</p> <p>days²</p> <p>judgment¹</p> <p>all right</p> <p>those</p> <p>Geo. Brown</p> <p>100 or more</p> <p>Doctor S. E. Smith</p> <p>Six North Street</p> <p>Marion Smythe</p>	<p>Emphasize quotes.</p> <p>Emphasize periods.</p> <p>Emphasize comma.</p> <p>Emphasize apostrophe.</p> <p>Insert letter or word.</p> <p>Transpose letters.</p> <p>Transpose words.</p> <p>Delete letter.</p> <p>Delete letter and bridge over.</p> <p>Insert space.</p> <p>Close up space.</p> <p>Spell out.</p> <p>Spell out.</p> <p>Abbreviate.</p> <p>Use numerals.</p> <p>Spell as written.</p>	<p>"The Spy"</p> <p>Northwestern U.</p> <p>said, "I must . . .</p> <p>Johnsons'</p> <p>picnicking</p> <p>theater</p> <p>Principal Henry Cook</p> <p>day</p> <p>judgment</p> <p>all right</p> <p>those</p> <p>George Brown</p> <p>one hundred or more</p> <p>Dr. S. E. Smith</p> <p>6 North Street</p> <p>Marion Smythe</p>
POSITION	<p>Madison, Wis.--</p> <p>today. Tomorrow he</p> <p>considered serious. Visitors are not</p> <p>But he called last night and said that he</p> <p>Jones To Conduct or Jones To Conduct</p>	<p>Indent for paragraph.</p> <p>New paragraph.</p> <p>No paragraph. Run in with preceding matter.</p> <p>No paragraph.</p> <p>Center subheads.</p>	<p>Madison, Wis.-- today. Tomorrow he</p> <p>considered serious. Visitors are not</p> <p>But he called last night and said that he</p> <p>Jones To Conduct</p>
MISCELLANEOUS	<p>He was not ^{was} un ^{was} mindful</p> <p>one student came at or more</p> <p>30 or #</p>	<p>Bridge over material omitted.</p> <p>Kill corrections.</p> <p>Story unfinished.</p> <p>End of story.</p>	<p>He was mindful</p> <p>one student came</p> <p>_____</p>

PROOFREADING SYMBOLS

[illegible]

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12th caps Rom

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE)

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When, in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the Political bands [← which have connected them with another, and to assume among those powers of the Earth, the separate and equal station which to the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments, are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the Right of the

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In the second method, a carat is inserted wherever a correction is necessary. Proofreading symbol is shown in the margin level with the line to be corrected.

12 1st eggs
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La/t
Lc/s
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