

Copyediting Challenge

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This set of questions will test your mettle and, we hope, tempt you to purchase a copy of *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.

1. Fill in each blank with “into” or “in to.”

- (a) She went ____ his office in order to check ____ the facts about the two men who turned themselves ____ the police.
- (b) When he wanted to stay up far ____ the night to stare ____ the sky, he got ____ an argument with his mother.
- (c) As he turned ____ the driveway, he misjudged his location and ran ____ the mailbox.
- (d) They entered ____ a pact to jump ____ the lake and mysteriously turned ____ frogs.

2. Select the preferred form.

- (a) The Department of _____ Affairs will hold hearings next week.
[Veteran, Veteran's, Veterans, Veterans']
- (b) Large corporations—the Apples, the _____, and the Intels—can achieve significant economies of scale.
[McDonalds, McDonald's, McDonald's', McDonalds'es]
- (c) In the book of Exodus, we read about _____ wrath.
[Moses's, Moses']
- (d) She is five _____ pregnant; he took three _____ vacation.
[months, month's, months']; [weeks, week's, weeks']

3. What is a resident of each of the following states called?

- (a) Connecticut.
- (b) Maine.
- (c) Massachusetts.
- (d) Wyoming.

4. In which of the following are the page ranges treated inconsistently?

- (a) See pages 22–25, 100–102, and 105–109.
- (b) See pages 22–5, 100–2, and 105–9.
- (c) See pages 22–25, 100–102, and 105–9.
- (d) See pages 22-25, 100-02, and 105-09.

5. Which of the following are trademarks?

- (a) Dumpster
- (b) Mace

- (c) Styrofoam
- (d) Tabasco
- (e) Taser

6. The asterisk-dagger system is used to

- (a) flag queries in a manuscript.
- (b) order nonnumerical footnotes.
- (c) indicate levels of confidence in statistics tables.
- (d) alphabetize nonnumerical characters in an index.

7. When a numbered list is “cleared for 10s,” the numerals that precede the items

- (a) are indented ten spaces.
- (b) align on the first digit.
- (c) align on the last digit.
- (d) are deleted and replaced by bullets or another nonnumerical character.

8. The incorrect use of *it's* is one of those errors that _____ many editors.
[exasperates/exasperate]

9. In Jefferson County one in five children _____ not covered by health insurance.
[is/are]

10. His proposals were routinely ignored by his _____ .
[co-workers, coworkers]

11. We have submitted _____ FOIA request.
[a, an]

12. _____ than one in six households in Mayberry will receive a tax rebate.
[Less, Fewer]

13. Let's give a copy of *The Copyeditor's Handbook* to _____ will be training the new editors.
[whoever, whomever]

Copyediting Challenge: Answers

1. (a) She went into his office in order to check into the facts about the two men who turned themselves in to the police.
(b) When he wanted to stay up far into the night to stare into the sky, he got into an argument with his mother.
(c) As he turned in to the driveway, he misjudged his location and ran into the mailbox.
(d) They entered into a pact to jump into the lake and mysteriously turned into frogs.
See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 372–373.

2. (a) Department of Veterans Affairs; see *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 137.
(b) McDonald's; see *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 133–134.
(c) *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition, page 354, recommends Moses's wrath. Earlier editions of *The Chicago Manual* as well as *Words into Type*, among other style manuals, recommend Moses' wrath; see *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 135.
(d) five months pregnant, three weeks' vacation; see *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 136.

3. (a) *The United States Government Printing Office Style Manual (GPO)* recommends Connecticuter. In less formal contexts, some authors and editors prefer the nickname Nutmegger.
(b) *GPO* recommends Mainer. In less formal contexts, others use the nickname Down Easter.
(c) *GPO* recommends Massachusettsan. In less formal contexts, others use the nickname Bay Stater.
(d) Wyomingite.
See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 156.

4. (d)
Example (a) is consistent in following a “repeat all digits in the range” rule. Example (b) is consistent in following a “repeat only the digits that change” rule. Example (c) is consistent in following the elision principles in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition, page 483. See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 188–89.

5. (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e)
Common generic substitutes include
 Dumpster = streetside debris container
 Mace = tear gas
 Styrofoam = plastic foam
 Tabasco = hot pepper sauce
 Taser = electrical stun gun
See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 158–159.

6. (b)

The asterisk-dagger system is often used in tables that contain numerical data, to avoid entries like 123,456¹ and 654,321². Instead, the footnotes are “numbered” in the following order:

- * (asterisk)
- † (dagger)
- ‡ (double dagger)
- § (section sign)
- || (parallels)
- # (number sign)

See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 254–255.

7. (c)

See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 321.

8. The incorrect use of *it's* is one of those errors that exasperate many editors.

The subject of the verb is “those errors” and therefore “exasperate” is correct. In practice, however, many writers take a notionalist approach to constructions of this form and deem “one” to be the subject (a subject that is modified by the phrase “of those errors”) and chose the singular verb. See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 345.

9. In Jefferson County one in five children is not covered by health insurance. OR In Jefferson County one in five children are not covered by health insurance.

Formalists insist that the subject of the verb is “one,” while the notionalists choose the plural “are” because the sentence is not about one child but many. Some editors propose rewording: In Jefferson County one child in five is not covered by health insurance. See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 344.

10. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and *The Chicago Manual*, 16th edition, page 383, prefer “coworkers.” But *The Associated Press Stylebook* recommends retaining the hyphen after “co” in nouns, adjectives, and verbs that “indicate occupation or status”: co-worker, co-star, co-host, co-pilot. See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 142–143.

11. a FOIA request

Pronunciation determines which form of the indefinite article is used before an acronym or initialism. FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) is pronounced “foy-a.” See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 230.

12. Less [or Fewer] than one in six households in Mayberry will receive a tax rebate.

Both constructions are acceptable because “one in six households” may be construed as a countable number of households (which calls for Fewer) or as a noncountable sum or quantity

(which calls for Less). See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, pages 371–372; see also the entry “less, fewer” in *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*.

13. Let's give a copy of *The Copyeditor's Handbook* to whoever will be training the new editors. The case of a pronoun in a relative clause depends on its function in that clause. Here, “whoever” is the subject of “will be training.” See *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, page 366.