

Sample Exercises

© The Regents of the University of California 2000, 2006, 2011

Chapters 4 through 13 of *The Copyeditor's Handbook* each conclude with one or two short copyediting exercises. The Answer Key at the end of the book provides a line-by-line analysis of the errors in the exercises. Here we provide the Microsoft Word files for three of the exercises (Exercises F, I, and L) for those of you who wish to practice your electronic editing skills.

Exercise F

This exercise is the text of a short handout addressed to people seeking entry-level editorial jobs. You are being asked to do a light copyedit and to complete a style sheet. (Create a simple form based on the example shown on pages 48–51 of *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.) For your queries, use one of the techniques described on pages 46–47 of *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.

If you want to break into publishing, you probably know that the center of book publishing in the United States is New York City. But you don't have to move to New York to work in book publishing. Go to the Public Library and look at the most recent edition of *Literary Market Place* (*LMP*, published annually by R.R. Bowker, New York). Use the geographical index to locate book publishers in your town. Then turn to the full entries for each publisher and take note of how many titles the company publishes. A company that produces fewer than eight or ten titles a year is most likely a two-or-three-person operation, staffed by its owners. But the names of any larger publishers should go on your job hunting list.

While you have *LMP* in hand, turn to the subject index and notice how many different kinds of book publishers there are, not just fiction and nonfiction but el-hi (elementary and high school) and college textbook publishers, legal and medical publishers, science and math publishers, foreign language publishers, and publishers of children's books, art books, scholarly books, wilderness books, computer books, gardening books, cook books, and every stripe of how-to-books.

While you're at the library, you might also look at the current edition of *Magazine Industry Market Place* (R. R. Bowker) or *Writer's Market* (Writer's Digest Books). You'll be surprised to see how large the universe of magazine publishers is. There are hundreds of small trade magazines, and hundreds of local and regional magazines. Check the directories to see which magazines have editorial offices in your town.

As you're compiling your list, don't forget the corporate sector. The obvious employers in the corporate sector are direct-mail and catalogue companies, but many firms whose primary business lies elsewhere do an enormous amount of publishing: banks, law firms, phone companies, hospitals, universities, museums, manufactures of high-tech equipment, and consulting firms in all fields. Any business that provides client manuals, documents, or reports, or that produces a newsletter for employees or for clients needs editors. Some companies do not advertise, but post their openings at the company's Personnel Office. Call that office and ask how openings are publicized.

Finally, there's the government sector. Hordes of editors are employed in almost every department of municipal, county, state, and federal governments. Some of these positions require subject-matter expertise, but others do not. Check with nearby government offices to find out whether you need to take a Civil Service Exam and how openings are posted.

In all four sectors, there is stiff competition for entry-level jobs. To improve your chances of landing a job:

1. Make sure your résumé and cover letter are easy to read, error free, and have a consistent editorial style (punctuation, treatment of dates, use of abbreviations, etc). Don't just list your previous job titles— take a sentence or two to describe what you did in those positions. Be sure to include any relevant subject-matter expertise and auxiliary skills (pasteup, graphic design,

type-setting).

2. Don't dwell on your writing skills (unless the job calls for writing)—most managing editors believe there is little or no correlation between writing skills and editing skills. And don't dwell on your academic credentials unless you're applying to a scholarly press or journal.

3 If you have work samples, bring them to an interview. Attach a Post-It to each sample describing the work you did on the project.

4. Be prepared to take proofreading and copyediting tests. Some employers will also test your word-processing skills.

Exercise I

You are being asked to do a light copyedit on the following short piece, which is to appear in a consumer newsletter. Keep a style sheet on a separate piece of paper. (Create a simple form based on the example shown on pages 48–51 of *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.) For your queries, use one of the techniques described on pages 46–47 of *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.

Every month the It's Our Money Institute in New York city publishes a list of particularly outrageous, ironic or ridiculous wastes of tax-payers taxes. Here are some of last years winners:

The Economic Development gave Bedord, Indiana \$.7 million dollars to build a model of the pyramid of Cheops and a 800-foot replica of The Great Wall of China to “attract tourists and “demonstrate the value of limestone in the building industry”.

The National Science Foundation spends \$14,4012 to test the affects of inflation on the behavior of rats and pigeons. The studies' conclusions: when given a choice animal “consumers” opt for cheaper goods, just as people do.

The Federal Highway Administration broke the record for cost over-runs on a civilian project. The Intestate Highway System now cost \$ 100,300 million or 267% of what congress originally approved, due to inflation, delay, and mismanagment.

The Department of Agriculture spent fourty-thousand dollars on a year-long study of food preferences and popular stereotypes. Results ? The public sees fast-food-addicts as patriotic, conservative, and hard workers. Vegetarians are intellectual and creative, gourmets like small families, mixed doubles in tennis, and "live in the fast lane"

The National Endowment For the Arts granted \$7,000 for a sound and light show to make Wisconsins' state capital building in Milwaukee “send forth human and planetary energies in a massage of world peace.’ The one performance was marred when half the lights failed to work and the recorded broadcast from the dome was illegible.

The U. S. Army's Material Development and Readiness Command (DARCON) spent \$38 million and 13 years to develop a new gas mask, the XM30, that usually malfunctions within 48 hours. The Army's training and Doctrine Command found the XM-30s generally inferior to the 17-year old M17AL mask it was designed to replace.

The Defense Department paid \$13,000 to test the possible side-effects of extremely-low-frequency radio waves on a hereford bull named Sylvester. After 6 years, Sylvester was autopsied and judged "essentially a normal bull though somewhat obese." A Navy Vice Admiral admitted that the experiment has no value due "to the limited size of the sample data base."

Exercise L

Suggest a way to combine tables 21, 22, and 23 into one table (to be labeled table A).

TABLE 21. Department of History, Degree Recipients, 1993–1995

	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
1993	456	87	5
1994	778	95	8
1995	892	106	12

Source. Office of the President, *Utopia University Data Profile, 1995*, p. 13.

TABLE 22. Department of English, Degree Recipients, 1993–1995

	Bachelor's Degree*	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
1993	745	47	9
1994	798	52	11
1995	695	65	9

Source. Office of the President, *Utopia University Data Profile, 1995*, p. 15.

*Does not include students in the dual-major program.

TABLE 23. Department of Psychology, Degree Recipients, 1993–1995

	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
1993	275	32	4
1994	298	29	7
1995	302	30	9

Source. Office of the President, *Utopia University Data Profile, 1995*, p. 18.