

Michigan State University Press Guidelines for Freelance Copyeditors

Please review these guidelines each time you begin work on a project. Additional comments and instructions relevant to the specific manuscript you are about to edit are included in the cover letter that accompanied the manuscript.

Your job on most projects will consist of the following steps:

- ◆ **Disk cleanup** Clean up some word-processing garbage and eliminate unnecessary formatting. Some cleanup will have been done in house.
- ◆ **Coding** Code text elements and special characters for the designer and compositor; keep comprehensive lists of both. Some coding will have been done in house, though it should not be considered necessarily complete or accurate, and a preliminary list of codes might be provided. (See “Coding” for more information on coding.)
- ◆ **Style** Impose consistent style treatment to elements such as the treatment of numbers and dates; hyphenation; capitalization; variant spellings; formatting of text elements such as lists and subheadings; and citation style. Record the major and unusual style elements in a style sheet. (See “General Style” for more information on style and style sheets.)
- ◆ **Mechanics** Correct errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and word choice; watch for logic and consistency in use of tense and person; impose parallel construction on elements in a series; improve faulty transitions.
- ◆ **Writing style** Aim for clarity and fluency in the author’s prose without rewriting. Eliminate wordiness, triteness, confusing statements, redundancy, vague generalizations, mixed metaphors, and uncited “studies.” Reduce unnecessary use of the passive voice. Where the author has a writing style, especially in the case of fiction or creative nonfiction, allow the author’s voice and style to remain. Unless you are instructed otherwise, expect to do a moderate amount of work in this aspect of editing; if you find yourself doing heavy editing, contact the in-house editor right away for guidance.
- ◆ **Structure** In some cases, you may be asked to reorganize, condense, or rewrite. Unless you are instructed otherwise, expect to only make minor changes in this aspect of editing; if you find yourself doing heavy editing, contact the in-house editor right away for guidance.
- ◆ **Sensitivity** Revise and query *new* material that is slanderous, dated, obscene, sexist, or prejudiced (source material might illustratively or incidentally contain such materials). The Press generally follows the *AAUP Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). Please be mindful, however, of historical contexts in which “he” and “man” are accurate and appropriate.
- ◆ **Callouts and cross references** Change phrases such as “in the figure above” to a number reference, and edit so that tables and figures do not follow colons in the text. Add callouts as needed (see “Illustrative Materials” below). If page-number cross references appear in the manuscript, contact the in-house editor for guidance.
- ◆ **Fact checking** Spot-check accuracy of facts easily ascertainable in desk (including *credible* on-line) references, and watch for inconsistencies and impossibilities (for example, someone who died in 1851 giving a speech in 1852). Do not check every fact mentioned or engage in deep research.
- ◆ **Explaining your work** We encourage you to send a cover letter with the edited manuscript. A

respectful cover addressed directly to the author can help her or him appreciate your professional contribution, though a brief note to the in-house is sufficient. You might want to comment on the nature and extent of the copyediting and what the author (or in-house editor) should pay special attention to—especially any problems that still need to be addressed.

- ◆ **Shipping the edited manuscript** Unless other arrangements have been made, plan to submit redlined electronic files of the edited manuscript, style sheet, and list of codes to the Press via e-mail attachments. Send multiple transmissions with approximately six files attached to each, rather than a single transmission with all files attached to it; also send a notice with no attachments alerting the in-house editor of the transmission, in case the transmissions with attachments are stopped somewhere between your server and ours. The Press aspires to a “paper-less” process; please do not print out a copy of the redlining unless specifically requested.

Communication is key to a successful working relationship. We urge you to maintain regular contact with the in-house editor during the editing process. It is especially important that you contact the Press immediately in the event of difficulties with the electronic files, serious manuscript problems not addressed in the in-house editor’s cover letter, or schedule delays. We will do our best to respond in a timely fashion to your questions and concerns and to offer feedback on your work on each project.

General Style

Reference Materials The Press generally follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th or 15th edition. (Citations in this document refer to the 14th.) Unless you are instructed otherwise, assume *CMS*. However, if an author has consistently and logically applied elements of another style, and if imposing *Chicago* style would require considerable revision, the author’s approach should be retained.

For dictionaries, we prefer *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed.

Style Sheet A well-prepared style sheet is indispensable to the author or volume editor, typesetter, proofreader, and in-house editors who will follow the project through production. Your style sheet should list unusual spellings and compounds and any style decisions that vary from *CMS*. Also include significant names and titles and examples of bibliography, note, date, number, and capitalization style.

List of Codes Indicate the first occurrence and frequency of all structural and formatting tags. Include with this a list of any special characters (nonkeyboard characters, such as ½, á, ±, or °).

Editing Marks If you are editing on disk, use a tool such as Microsoft Word’s redlining feature to track changes, and a tool other than the embedded notes feature, such as Microsoft Word’s comment feature to insert notes to the author. It is advisable to make some changes “silently,” with the editing program turned off, because the editing marks would clutter the document or obscure the nature of the change; for example, the editing program should be turned off before replacing all double spaces with single spaces (which was probably done during in-house clean up) because the number of such changes could be massive, and the editing program should be turned off when closing up a hyphenated compound because the editing mark itself would obscure the nature of the change (such changes should be noted in a note to the author or specified on the stylesheet).

If you are editing on paper, please use a colored pencil (preferably red). Make your marks as legible as possible and dark enough to photocopy.

Special Elements

Front and Back Matter Confirm that the contents page, chapter openings, subheads in the notes, and running heads agree; also check for chapter titles mentioned in a preface or introduction. (The running heads might contain shortened chapter titles.)

Chapter Openings Each element that might be given a distinct look (cn, ct, au; see also “Chapter

Epigraphs”) should appear on a separate line and be coded independently. Set the opening lines of the chapter text flush left and code `<no.in>`.

Extracts (`<ext>`, `<vext>`) Unless instructed otherwise, follow *Chicago* 10.9–11 to determine whether quoted text should be set as extract (keeping in mind that these guidelines are flexible). Generally, six or more lines of prose and two or more lines of verse within the text should be set as extract. (If verse is set within running text, use a space on either side of the solidus.) Do not set off prose quotations in the notes as extracts, regardless of length.

If letters (correspondence) appear in the manuscript, use a unique tag (for example, `<ltr>`) for the full item, plus special tags for distinct internal elements such as dates, salutations, and signatures.

Tag any special elements contained in other types of extracts—for example, headlines/titles, epigraphs, and so forth.

Ensure that source citations appear *before* final punctuation for run-in quotes but *after* it for extracts. Set parenthetical source information following a prose extract after the final punctuation and a space (not on a new line) and following a verse extract after a hard return (on a new line).

Chapter Epigraphs (`<epi>`) If chapter epigraphs are used, encourage parallel use—epigraphs on all chapters or none—with no more than one epigraph per chapter. The source should be identified in a by-line at the end of the epigraph, not in a note (see *CMS* 1.39).

Capitalization and Punctuation

Comma

Please use the serial comma.

See *CMS* 5.33 on the distinction between compound sentences and sentences with compound predicates. Many authors use commas unnecessarily or excessively in the latter type of sentence.

Ellipses

Where there are four marks (a period or other punctuation plus an ellipsis), the first mark should be closed up. Never using four marks (only ever using three) throughout a manuscript is acceptable.

Remove ellipses from the beginnings and endings of quotations.

Do not change capitalization around ellipses except to correct an inconsistency in the author’s treatment. In most cases either braced (for example, [T]he) or “silent” (changed without the braces) changes in punctuation are acceptable; braced changes are strongly preferred in rhetoric and other books where precise meaning is essential, and not making any changes is strongly preferred otherwise.

In transcriptions of dialog (actual or fictional) ellipses indicate missing text or trailing off; em dashes indicate interruptions.

Dashes

Use the special characters – and — or the codes `<n>` and `--` (two hyphens) for en and em dashes. Use en dashes in number spreads, and use the code `<hy>` (hyphen) in number series (such as the zip code 48823-5245, the newspaper page D-4, or the archive box number 94-2043) where automatic formatting programs might replace hyphens with en dashes.

Prepositions

We generally follow *CMS* 7.126–128 in lowercasing prepositions in titles and display matter. *If you choose to follow a different rule, please indicate that rule on your style sheet.*

Small Caps

Use small-caps for such time-related abbreviations as A.M. and B.C. and for all-cap text (for example, mention of a sign that reads MEMBERS ONLY!)

Spelling

Follow U.S. spelling, not British, unless otherwise directed. Do not change spelling in quoted materials

except in the case of an obvious typo. Even in the case of obvious typos, do not change spellings in quotations without showing your change.

Diacritics Verify diacritical marks when you can and list the special characters (not the full words) on the list of codes (see also “Unusual Characters and Diacritics”).

Possessives We prefer apostrophe plus *s* for the possessive of names ending in sibilants, keeping in mind the exceptions listed in *CMS* 6.26–27. If the author has used a different style consistently, however, “correcting” the style is probably not worth the effort.

Spell Check (Disk Editing) Run a spell check *after* editing, to catch preexisting typos *and* any typos in insertions.

Numbers

Numerals vs. Words Spell out numbers according to *CMS* 8.3–10, paying special attention to the consistency rule in section 8.8. Do not elide numbers in copy to be set as display type (for example, chapter titles and subheads).

Inclusive Numbers For inclusive numbers and inclusive years, we generally follow *CMS* 8.68–69 and 8.71–72. Note that if the author has followed another style consistently, “correcting” the style is probably not worth the effort.

Citations

General Chapter Notes Acknowledgments and information on earlier versions of a chapter generally should appear in an unnumbered note at the head of the notes section for that chapter; see *CMS* 15.51. In some cases, they may appear on the copyright page or in the acknowledgments section.

Note Markers Place note markers at the end of the sentence if possible (at the end of a phrase otherwise). Do not allow more than one note per sentence; when combining notes, make sure you do not lose any content. Always ensure that the number of note markers matches the number of notes.

Citation Form

Full and short cites If the manuscript contains both notes and a comprehensive, alphabetized bibliography, the notes need contain only the author’s surname, a shortened title, and the page number where relevant; do *not* repeat the full bibliographic information in the notes. If the manuscript contains only a partial bibliography, a bibliography in essay form, or no bibliography at all, a work’s first mention in each chapter should provide full bibliographic information; successive citations should use the shortened form (as above).

Publisher Publishers’ names should be included in the bibliographical information and should reflect the title of the firm at the date of the citation’s publication.

Place of publication Eliminate the state where it is obvious from the publisher’s name or where the city is well known.

Other Avoid “ff. ” and “passim,” and query uses of “cf.” where you suspect the author means “see” or “see also.”

Illustrative Materials

Camera-Ready If the project editor indicates that tables, graphs, or charts are camera-ready (which is rare), please edit as follows:

- ◆ Ensure that the information in the figure corresponds to data and discussions in the text.
- ◆ Check the caption or title for accuracy, and check against the illustrations list in the front matter if present.

- ◆ Read through for errors in spelling, calculation, and the like.

Drafts If the Press will be preparing the final versions, edit as above, and also edit the drafts for style (punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations) and content.

Because tables, graphs, and charts are relatively expensive to produce, we want to make sure that any included in our books are necessary and well constructed, and the copyeditor is often the Press's best representative in judging those qualities. *CMS* chapters 11 and 12 give useful advice on the editing of illustrations and tables. Please carefully consider such elements in relation to the book's content. Are they clear and well constructed? Do they convey information that is not otherwise communicated in the text? Do they provide the reader a necessary opportunity to see certain patterns at a glance, or does the author sufficiently synthesize trends in the text? Is the level of detail adequate and necessary? Are the details important to understanding the author's thesis? If you believe that any tables, graphs, or figures are superfluous, please discuss with the project editor. If any are poorly constructed, advise the author on how to improve them.

If you are editing on disk, strip out formatting and keep dividers as simple as possible (e.g., use single tabs between columns). We will attach to the final version a copy of the author's original so that the compositor can see the proper alignment and intended layout.

Callouts If photographs are to be scattered, ensure that placement for each is indicated by an angle-bracketed callout in the text. Callouts are not necessary if the photographs will be grouped together in a gallery, so please do not request that the author add callouts unless you are certain that the illustrations will be scattered. Tables and graphs usually are scattered, so they require callouts in almost all instances.

Other

Initials Personal initials have spaces after the periods if the last name follows; when used alone, they do not (J. R. Jones, but J.R. and Bill). State abbreviations do not have spaces after internal periods (N.Y.).

Relative pronouns We prefer *that* instead of *which* for restrictive clauses.

Lists Remove superfluous numbers from short lists, unless a step-by-step procedure is described or numbers are essential for in-text references to list items.

Edited Volumes

Edited volumes require special attention to particular elements.

Editor's Introduction or Preface If the editor's introduction mentions authors and chapters by name or quotes chapter text, check carefully for any discrepancies from what is being quoted. Flag the quotes and their sources for yourself so that any changes made to quoted text during copyediting, review, and cleanup can be made in the introduction as well.

Citations Unless instructed otherwise, impose a single citation style throughout the volume.

Coding

Assign a code name to every distinct element in the book that may be styled separately. And submit a full list of codes and their meanings with the edited manuscript.

Insert figure and table callouts in the appropriate places in the manuscript.

Unusual Characters and Diacritics

For special characters not available in your word program's special characters menu, invent a coding system and use it consistently (for example, indicate an acute accent over the letter y as y<ac>). Include

in the list of codes a list of *all* special characters used in the manuscript. Such a list allows the compositor to compare the printout and the disk to see how the characters are supposed to appear and how they might have been altered in file conversion. For any special characters for which you have had to invent a code, give the code used followed by a handwritten (or photocopied and pasted) example of the special character as it should appear in the book.

Apostrophes and Quotation Marks

Normal quotation marks need not be coded in any special way: the compositor's system will convert curly or straight-line quotes with a word space in front to open curly quotes and those with a word space behind to closed curly quotes. If an open quote is needed immediately following another character (such as an em dash: —“On the Horizon”), it will need a specific code (for example, —<opq>On the Horizon”).

Apostrophes within words or at the end of words are automatically turned in the right direction, so they need no special coding. However, in the case of an apostrophe at the beginning of a contraction (such as 'em), this automatic formatting will turn the mark the wrong way (‘em). In such cases, use the <ap> code (for example, "This was all happenin' back in <ap>65").

List of Preferred Code

The following list can be used as a guideline in coding; any codes will do, so long as they are consistently applied.

<pn>	part number
<pt>	part title
<cn>	chapter number
<ct>	chapter title
<cst>	chapter subtitle
<fbh>	front-matter and back-matter heads (correspond to cts)
<au>	author's name at the beginning of section or essay
<epi>	chapter epigraph
<epis>	chapter epigraph source
<no.in>	normal text, no paragraph indent
<normal>	normal text, with paragraph indent
<h1>	first-level subhead
<h2>	second-level subhead (etc.)
<n1>	first-level head in notes (also used for the subhead preceding chapter endnotes in an edited volume)
<b1>	first-level head in bibliography
<line#>	line break in text
<ext>	prose extract in text, no paragraph indent
<ext.in>	prose extract in text, with paragraph indent
<extline#>	line break in prose extract
<vext>	verse extract in text (set verse flush left except to indicate special alignment [which may require special codes])
<vextline#>	line (stanza) break in verse extract
<next>	prose extract in notes
<nvext>	verse extract in notes
<fn>	footnote (for example, an unnumbered note that should appear at the foot of the first page of a chapter)
<nl>	numbered list in text

<unl>	unnumbered list in text
<bul>	bulleted list
<tn>	table number
<tt>	table title
<tsh>	table straddle head
<tch>	table column head
<tb>	table body
<tfn>	table footnote
<txt>	begin chapter text (use this code only at the beginning of the chapter if you use close codes for all text elements; if you let hard returns cancel elements, please restart txt as an element by inserting that code after extracts, subheads, and so forth.) [close code is <i>unnecessary</i>]
<figure 1 around here>	figure callout
<map 2 around here>	map callout
<table 3 around here>	table callout
<ap>	initial apostrophe
<opq>	open quotation marks immediately following other punctuation
<3m>	3-em dash
<n>	en dash