

# JOURNALISM EDITING

NAYYAR SHAMSI



# **JOURNALISM: EDITING**



# **JOURNALISM: Editing**

*(For PG Diploma & Degree Courses in  
Journalism & Mass Media)*

**Nayyar Shamsi**

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**Centre for Advanced Media  
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# Preface

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In Modern world, Journalism is one discipline, which attracts people like any thing, but, it is equally challenging and drastic in cases. Particularly, under the new world order and in current global scenario, its value has increased manifold.

Apart from being a glorious profession, Journalism, today is a full-fledged subject, mastery of which leads one to a successful career and an all powerful status in society.

As a discipline, Journalism requires proper training and a comprehensive course, if possible. Although, there is no defined qualification for appointment as a journalist, in any capacity, in any media organisation, yet it is always better to be properly qualified and well-equipped with all essential knowledge.

Of course, there are books on Journalism but not in a great number. And, if one goes selective, then only a few books would rest in hand, as there is still a dearth for exclusive and exhaustive books on several streams of Journalism.

This series of books on Journalism is an effort to fill the abovesaid vaccum only. Here are books on all subjects and topics, related to Journalism. The undersigned is confident enough that this humble endeavour would prove to be worthy on the basis of its merits and receive a warm acceptance by students of journalism, scholars and the working journalists, as well.

— Editor



## Introduction

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Editing is a responsibility shared by many people on a newspaper. It begins when a reporter polishes a story before turning it in. It ends when final errors are corrected just before the edition goes to press even afterward if deadlines permit. Between these events sub-editors practice their art. How well they perform determines the difference between a highly readable, perhaps exciting, issue and a mediocre one.

On news papers everywhere an editor-in-chief sets policy and supervises the entire operation. Depending upon the size of the newspaper, one or more sub-editors—the managing editor, city editor, wire editor, news editor—decide what will and will not go into the publication. It is the copy editor, however, who makes the final checks for quality and accuracy, and it is upon his or her work that this chapter is focussed.

Basically, the editor performs the following functions:

- \* Searches for factual errors and corrects them.
- \* Guards against contradictions and edits the story to correct them.
- \* Corrects errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, figures, names and addresses.

- \* Makes the copy conform to the newspaper's style.
- \* Condenses the story, making one word do the work of three or four, making one sentence express the facts contained in a paragraph. Trim the story to the space ordered.
- \* Guards against libel, double meaning and bad taste.
- \* Dresses (decorates) the story with typographical devices, such as sub-heads, as may be indicated.
- \* Writes the heading for the story.
- \* On some newspapers writes captions for photographs and other art work related to the edited stories.
- \* After the edition has gone to press, examines the paper closely as a further protection against error and makes corrections if deadlines permit.

The copy editor owes primary obligations to the reader, the newspaper and the author of the story that is edited.

The copy editor should be aware of the common characteristics of age, educational level, standard of living and life styles of the newspaper's principal readers, and edit stories accordingly. In many Third World countries a newspaper's readers are urban, educated and middle-to upper class citizens; they can grapple readily with reasonably complex stories. Even so, the best newspaper writing is simple and direct, and the copy editor should labour to make it so. The application of modern journalism, dictum, "Make it clear, and make it interesting," will serve not only the better-educated readers but also will help expand readership to those who have shunned newspapers because they cannot read well and understand the stories they contain.

Equally important is the copy editor's obligation to the reader to improve a poorly written story or one that does not immediately draw the reader into it. A common failing is a story with a traditional, matter of fact lead (intro) that could be replaced with a narrative or anecdotal account containing a strong human interest element (impact, conflict, oddity, for example). Often such elements

are “buried” in the story. It should be the operating premise of every newsroom that editors do more than correct grammar and write headlines, that their main function is to improve stories.’ The reader will be the beneficiary of such a practice.

Coping with life conditions is a universal human problem. The copy editor should be alert to shape as many stories as possible so as to emphasize ways in which readers may benefit by reading them, other than for news or entertainment. How may I reduce taxes? How may I protect my family against disease? The copy editor often may reorganize a story to stress information that induces higher readership and helps people cope with such problems. The effort to help readers identify with the news is the first principle of good editing.

Many copy editors have discovered that they do their finest work when they keep one reader in mind rather than edit for a large, anonymous audience.

The copy editor has been aptly described as the conscience of the newspaper. He or she stands in the doorway between the reporter and the reader of the story as the final arbiter of style, taste and quality. Upon such standards rests, in large part, the credulity of the newspaper. Consistency is the goal in such matters as capitalization and abbreviation; the use of titles, punctuation, spelling and grammar, the selection of type faces for headlines, and the like. Readers lose confidence in a newspaper that lacks high standards and consistency in such matters.

The obligation that the copy editor owes to the author of a story is to improve it in every possible way without damaging the writer’s individual manner of expression. The newspaper is the product of many people and one of its chief attractions is the variety of its content. The copy editor must resist creative urges of his or her own and alter stories only when absolutely necessary. The rush of handling numerous stories and writing headlines normally negates against reworking.

Whether in a developing or developed country, the qualities that should characterize and editor remain the same. Harold Evens,

former editor of the Times of London, discusses these qualities in his book, *Newsman's English*. As adapted for a seminar for journalism educators, they are as follows.

- \* Human interest qualities of sympathy, insight, breadth of view, imagination, sense of humour.
- \* An orderly and well-balanced mind, which implies judgement, sense of perspective and proportion.
- \* A cool head, ability to work in an atmosphere of hurry and excitement without becoming flustered or incapable of accurate work.
- \* Quickness of thought, coupled with accuracy.
- \* Conscientiousness keenness and ruthlessness, rightly directed.
- \* Judgement, based on well-informed common sense.
- \* A capacity for absorbing fact and fancy and expressing them in an acceptable manner.
- \* Adaptability—the power (whatever your feelings) of seeing things from the reader's point of view.
- \* Knowledge of the main principles of the law of libel, contempt and copyright.
- \* Physical fitness for a trying, sedentary life that takes its toll of nerves, sight and digestion.
- \* Team spirit—a newspaper is one of the more striking products of cooperative enterprise and effort.

The tools necessary for copy-editing are universal. They include a dictionary, stylebook thesaurus, encyclopaedia, grammar handbook, atlas, book of familiar quotations, telephone directory and city directory. Most should be within easy reach of copydesk; others may be in the newspaper's library.

All these tools are necessary because the copy editor must check the factual content of stories; memory cannot be trusted. Frequently, they may be used to embellish a story.

In the numerous developing countries where newspapers are produced by the traditional “hot lead” method, the copy-editor requires other tools as well: a heavy-lead pencil, eraser, scissors, paste pot to use if portions of copy are pasted together, and perhaps a typewriter. Copy is edited by hand and the headlines are written either on separate sheets of paper or at the top of the stories. The stories and headlines are set into type and proof-read. The type then is placed into forms for stereotyping or direct printing on presses. In many countries, offset printing, based on lithography, is replacing this process.

The use of video display terminals (VDTs) is spreading around much of the world. On newspapers with such equipment, a story is written on a VDT and transmitted to appropriate editors and hence to the copydesk. There the copy-editor calls up the story, edits it, writes a headline and indicates the type size and column width of text and headlines by striking the proper symbol keys. Finally, the copy editor touches a key and dispatches the story to the phototype setting machine.

Newspaper publishers in some countries, finding video display terminals too expensive, have purchased electric ribbon typewriters for their newsrooms. Using white bond paper and carbon-firm ribbons, reporters write their stories on these typewriters. The stories then are scanned by an optical character reader (OCR), also known as a scanner, and covered into computer language to drive a photo-typesetter. Because corrections must be neatly typed between type-written lines, a time-consuming process, reporters and editors have found that the introduction of OCR technology discourages editing.

A copy-editor should first read the entire story to gain a full understanding of what the writer is trying to say. Then, much like the sculptor with a chisel, the editor begins to chip away clutter and redundancies. Other writing faults also are corrected as the story is gradually shaped into sharply delineated form.

It is rare that a story cannot be simplified. With a keen eye, the editor deletes extraneous words and phrases, constantly asking:



“Are these words necessary? Can the story be told as well, or better, without them?”

The straight declarative sentence—first the subject, then the verb—serves comprehension well. Unnecessary phrases, clauses, adjectives and adverbs reduce understanding.

Most sentences should be short—like this. For variety and rhythm, and perhaps necessity, however, adjoining sentences may be longer and more complex—like this. Many editors follow the guideline of ONE IDEA TO A SENTENCE. Care must be taken, however, to avoid choppiness and changing the meaning of what the writer wanted to say.

Superfluous attribution is another example of clutter. Statements, of course, must be properly attributed to the source, but some writers insert a constant “he said” element that can be eliminated.

Just as in a conversation, many writers say almost the same thing twice, or more, to make sure the point is not lost, but more likely because of deadline pressure or sheer carelessness. The alert copy-editor notes repetitions and deletes them.

More commonly, redundancies take the form of one of several unnecessary words. Examples: “little baby,” “young boy,” “future plans,” completely destroyed.”

Clutter and redundancy are only two examples of the many writing faults for which the copy editor also is responsible if they are not corrected. Every country has its idiom, slang terms, clichés, bureaucratic jargon and the like that infest otherwise readable stories. The principles of proper writing, however, are universal. An American dictionary once erroneously defined “journalistic writing” as “hasty writing.” Even stories that are composed in a hurry can be grammatically and structurally sound; if not good editing will make them so.

After checking copy for accuracy, clarity, conciseness, unanswered questions, consistency of style and tone, the copy editor’s next task is writing a headline.

A good headline:

- \* Attracts the reader's attention.
- \* Summarizes the story.
- \* Helps the reader index the contents of the page.
- \* Depicts the mood of the story.
- \* Helps set the tone of the newspaper.
- \* Provides adequate typographic relief

Headlines have been called the display windows of the newspaper. But they are more than that. They also are a major source of information. Few people have the time or desire to read everything in the newspaper. By perusing the headlines, they quickly learn "the top of the news" and can decide which stories, including features, merit further attention.

Varying headline sizes and styles and the placement of stories, whether on the first page or elsewhere, serve an indexing function they convey to readers the relative significance of the news. Gothic headlines generally indicate serious stories; the use of italics and typographical devices such as boxes generally indicates that the story is printed primarily for its entertainment value rather than its significance.

Headlines also:

- \* Complete with each other in enticing readers to their stories. A good story may be largely overlooked if its headline fails to attract the reader.
- \* Provide the ingredients of an attractive display package. The headline in all its various forms is essential to assembling pages that are eye-catching, balanced and attractive. \*Lend character and stability to the newspaper. The consistent use of familiar headline families and styles gives the newspaper a relatively familiar and welcome personality.
- \* Sell newspapers, especially those editions that are purchased mainly at newsstands or in sidewalk boxes.

The skills necessary for successful headline writing include: (1) accurate perception of the story; (2) a vocabulary that is both broad and deep; (3) a sharp sense of sentence structure-, and (4) a keen eye for ambiguity.

The headline must be drawn from information near the top of the story and key words selected that will fit the allotted space. Normally, a noun is followed by a verb and both are placed in the top line if at all possible. Label (non-verb) headlines may set the appropriate tone for some stories, usually features. Except in feature headlines, articles and most adjectives and adverbs are eliminated.

The copy editor should try to capture the flavour of the story. Short, simple words are preferred. Overworked headline words, known as HEADLINES, should be avoided. Abbreviations generally should not be used. Phrasing the headline in the present tense is almost always essential. A person's name should be used only if he or she is prominent. Verbal phrases and nouns and their modifiers, as well as infinitives and prepositional phrases should not be split from line to line. Only single quotation marks should be used. The headline should be specific, not vague. Most important, it must FIT, its length neither too long nor too short for the allotted space.

The clatter of press association teleprinters, delivering stories hour after hour with almost relentless precision, stirs a sense of subdued excitement in newsroom throughout the world. The dispatches typed to by the automatic keys of these machines on continuous rolls of paper represent the world of action, under datelines of Beirut, London, Lima Moscow, and a thousand other cities.

Gradually, however, these teletypes are being replaced by computers and VDTs, just as the teleprinters replaced the More dot-and-dash circuits. In the most technologically advanced newsrooms, dispatches are fed directly from a news service computer into the newspaper's computer, for editing on a VDT, at a much faster tempo than previously. High speed printers are available for backup in case the newspaper computer fails.

Largely because of poor revenues and labour union resistance, as is true, for example, with most daily newspapers in Portugal," hundreds of dailies have not yet been converted to the new technology. They still receive dispatches via radio or landing teletype circuits at approximately 66 words per minute. In some offices the dispatches are accompanied by perforated teletypesetting tapes. These tapes are used to drive a linecaster or photo-typesetter, thus eliminating the need for redundant key-boarding of wire service copy. This chapter focuses on the handling of traditional teletype dispatches.

Each press association usually divides its flow of news into P.M. and A.M. reports, or cycles, the former for afternoon newspapers and the later for morning papers. These reports always begin with a "budget," or check-list, of the most important stories that are to be transmitted. The budget represents a summary of the basic stories then available or known to be forthcoming during the next few hours. Usually it contains 10 or 12 items. The news editor is thus able to plan the paper's makeup and to save space for stories most likely to be run.

Major stories that break after the budget has been delivered are designated FLASH, BULLETIN MATTER and URGENT. Such designations, which differ in terminology in various parts of the world, alert the news editor to important, newly developing stories.

News editors receiving the dispatches of more than one press association select the stories that they like, check facts in one story against another, or combine the best elements of each. In the latter case, the credit line is removed and replaced with a overline such as "From Wire Services."

As the dispatches arrive, either in their entirety or in "takes" of successive parts, including new leads' inserts and corrections, the editor places them in stacks or in folders according to their anticipated use or location in the paper. Copy for inside papers is handled first with the principal news items held for possible later developments. Each story carries notations showing its priority, number, slug (one or more words denoting its content), dateline,

lead, and ending matter indicating, among other things, the source and time the dispatch was sent.

The copy editor handling a certain story is given all the dispatches that pertain to it in order to mould the copy into finished form. If the copy is printed in all capital letters, the copy editor marks each capital and small (upper and lower-case) letters, and then it is edited the same as local copy. The copy editor, if required, trims the story to fit the allotted space, then deletes errors and polishes the copy, and writes the headline. In some countries, such as India, this process is known as "subbing" (sub-editing) and "copy tasting."

Editing perforated tele-typesetter tape is difficult and time-consuming, so generally the full story is set and any superfluous copy discarded. Otherwise, changes must be made manually with the use of editing or proof symbols. Newspapers using this system surrender much of the flexibility in editing that they have with other forms of copy.

One important task of the wire editor is to check incoming copy for news elements that may be localized.

In computer-to-computer news delivery systems, the wire editor may first receive an abstract of the cycle's complete offering, transmitted to the newspaper's computer at speeds of 1200 words per minute. Through computer commands, complete stories may then be called to the editors VDT screen. The editing is much simpler than with teletype copy: Rather than inserting new leads and corrections, the editor receives updated stories in their entirety. Split computer screens make it possible for editors to combine portions of stories from different news agencies.

## The Fundamentals

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In a news organisation, editing plays a vital role. A news item or a news story, as it is called, is written by hurried reporters, and is rough-edged like, raw diamond. Hence, the copy is polished and honed by a team of editors, who form the Editorial Desk. The team, also called the desk persons, works under tremendous pressure and severe time constraint. The desk persons work well past midnight, and ensure that your newspaper reaches you on time in the morning.

A newspaper office or news agency receives a large assortment of news items. These originate from different sources, mainly local sources and wires (Teleprinter and telex). The news copy is written by experienced and inexperienced people, and, hence, lack readability.

The news reporters are the main news writers. They are in a hurry, especially in the evenings, when the news development gathers momentum. The copy written by them under pressure is bound to carry errors of all types. In any newspapers, there is always a shortage of space for all news items, which are received in the office. The newspaper's advertisement department is ever eager to grab the valuable but limited space. Moreover, newsprint

and means of production cost a lot of money. Ultimately, a newspaper's success largely depends on the space and its most efficient, judicious and economic use. Hence, within the space set aside for news, as much news as possible need to be packed to serve a divergent readership. Considering these factors, editing of the news copy becomes essential.

### **The Definition**

All incoming news items, collectively called copy, is sifted, before being processed, to achieve a balance of news between that originating within the organisation and that pouring in from outside. Sorting out and sifting also helps induce parity between the well-written articles and those written by the inexperienced reporters. In the process, the unwanted matter gets weeded out. Only the newsworthy stories are finally, selected. These are checked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures, and sense, and also clarified for betterment, and are condensed for economy of space.

News editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size, using the right kind of expressions and symbols. A copy is edited to highlight the "news sense" in a story, and to bring uniformity of language and style in an issue of newspaper. The newsroom in a newspaper or a news agency office is the hub of the entire activity in a news organisation. The Editorial Desk (also known as the Editorial Department or Copy Desk or News Desk) is the nerve centre of a newsroom. It is here that everyday the newspaper issues are planned and made.

However, in a news agency, the news desk is the final stop before a story is sent to the transmission room or creed room for transmission on the wires. In news agencies, there news operations are computerised, such as the Press Trust of India (PTI) or the united News of India (UNI), the edited copy is transmitted directly to the newspapers by the News Desk itself. The newsroom is headed by an editor or a chief editor or an editor-in-chief or a chief news editor. The designation varies according to the choice of the organization. He plans and directs the day's news operations. He

is supported by a team consisting of the news editors, chief sub-editors (chief sub), senior sub-editors and sub-editors (sub).

The news desk-usually operates in three shifts: morning, afternoon and night (till late in the evening, even up to 2.30 a.m.). In between, there are two link shifts-morning and evening-which are headed by the news editors and or chief subs. They are also called 'slot' men. Ideally, in a newspaper, it is the news editor who plans and directs page-making, while the chief sub helps and implements it.

In a news agency, news editors and chief subs looks after the smooth functioning of the news desk. They plan and write "leads" (updated versions of developing stories). Here, there is an additional shift called "Extra Night" (from 2 a.m to 8 a.m.), which is managed by a senior sub-editor.

News has a number of characteristic elements. Five conventional determinants of the news values are:

**Proximity:** The nearer the origin of news, i.e., the closer it is to home, the more is its impact. For example, on a particular day, there may be 45 deaths in a boat tragedy in Bangladesh. But, on the same day, a local bomb blast that kills five people is sure to have more impact on the readers.

**Timeliness:** News grows old quickly. It decays and perishes fast. The more recent its occurrence, the more worthy it is. On the contrary, an event that happened six months back, but is discovered and reported now could grab the front page. For example, the bank securities' scam involving Harshad Mehta and others, or the Bofors gun deal.

**Prominence:** Names make news and the newspapers like to use as many local names as possible. For example, if the Vice-chancellor of a university gets hurt while playing cricket, few people will take note of the incident. But, if a public figure like a minister is injured in a game, we have a more interesting story. When the film celebrity, Satyajit Ray, and the Nobel Laureate, Mother Teresa, were hospitalised, most papers carried everyday reports on their health.



**Consequence:** A reader's interest is aroused in a large measure if an event or occurrence affects him, and more so, if he participates in the event. He is eager to know what will this mean to him in the long run. How will it affect him and his family. For example, weather stories attract consistently high readership. A brief storm that leaves behind some casualties, and causes heavy damage in a town or city, will receive better coverage will be given a good display, and attract large readership. A steep hike in the prices of petrol, cooking gas, milk or an increase in water and electricity tariffs will have widespread consequences.

**Human Interest:** Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities, and their infinite variety, make for wider readership. The human interest stories are pure identification. These are the little things that have happened, or could happen to yourself or to your neighbours or friends. These stories are worth little or nothing as news in any strict sense. Yet these are worth telling. For example, a 30-year-old women with a baby in her arms is trapped in a building on fire. Such a story interests the readers.

The five elements cited above, generally, have a direct bearing on a majority of news stories. In addition, there are various other elements that could come into play in judging the news:

- (i) To be newsworthy, a story must interest a large number of the readers.
- (ii) A story's worth is determined by its impact on the readers. That's why the functioning, of the government and the politicians receive a lot of coverage. On the contrary, lack of impact sometimes makes news; and also, the unusual, odd, provocative, intriguing, moving and educative make news.

Scientific discoveries, even the hints of some, find space in the newspapers. For example, any seeming step toward the cure of cancer or AIDS is sure to generate headlines, even though the scientists might not have discovered the drug or vaccine. But the hint will be newsworthy. Archaeological events relating the present to the past, could make headlines. The state and local news always

rank as the major focal points in the newspapers. These are followed by (the order or selection depends on the Desk) accidents, accords, agreements or pacts, announcements, business, the common people's interest (rise in milk or sugar prices), crime, cultural events disasters, education, elections, environment, fashion, health, labour, obituaries, and tragedies.

Under the managing editor in most organizational lineups are two or three people with whom you will have most of your dealings. One is the news editor (or in some instances there are both an executive news editor and a news editor), who supervises the placement of your stories in the newspaper and dictates the typography or "layout" of the pages. However, the news editor often is a distant figure in your daily work concerns. Most of your dealings will be with the city editor (called metro editor on some newspapers). The city editor selects your daily assignments, determines to a large degree who does what, and controls any number of assistants who carry out directions. The city editor usually is the authority figure whom you, as a reporter, are most responsible to. However, his or her assistants generally carry much authority in editing your stories. Especially on big projects-series and such-the city editor usually assumes direct command in doing the planning and resolving confusions.

Organizational structures, of course, vary from one newspaper to the next. Some of the largest papers have national editors, in control of a national desk-a collection of reporters and assistant editors charged with covering the nation. Some newspapers also have a state desk responsible for state news coverage. Also, there are special feature sections with special editors-feature editors, life-style editors, people editors, fashion editors, women's editors (a position, of growing obsolescence in feminist times), special assignment editors, ad infinitum. In the sports department, the sports editor usually is very much like the editor in that he or she is charged primarily with opinion making. The overseer of the daily sports news flow is the executive sports editor, who is to the sports department what the city editor is to the news operation.

Unless you move into a specialized area, you usually will be

assigned to the city desk and will be controlled by the city editor. "City editor" on most newspapers actually is a euphemism of sorts, since the person carrying that title often has responsibility for state and national coverage as well. Such papers may also have a national and state editor, but often as not their function is strictly that of reviewing wire copy, which comes from various national news agencies, for placement in the newspaper.

Once you have carried out an assignment, having conducted the interview, taken all the necessary notes and written the story, you encounter the classic editing process.

On smaller, less technologically advanced newspapers, editors may use the old pencil technique, drawing lines on your copy through stuff they do not like, and inserting by pencil stuff they want added.

More, likely, you will relate to your editor through some sort of computer network. At most dailies, you will have written your story by either of two means: (1) on scanner ready paper, or (2) directly into a Video Display Terminal (VDT), tied to a computer that remembers your story and holds it ready for transmission to the newspaper. The scanner ready copy is typed on an electric typewriter using various codes that can be read by an optical scanner that records the story on computer tape. Increasingly, the scanner is becoming an unnecessary step, with reporters being trained to write their stories directly into the computer via the VDT. What is on the VDT is what is being fed into the all-important computer. The computer is capable of setting the material in type ready to be pasted into a page that then can be photographed and transferred to a plate that can be put on the presses for printing.

Often as not, the editor who checks a story uses the same kind of VDT the reporter uses to write the story. However, ancient rules and techniques apply to editing, regardless of the method used. The editor basically looks for two things: (1) Does the story make sense? and (2) What mistakes has the reporter made? then, your version is either altered or accepted as it is.

More than likely, as a novice reporter, you will not have to

concern yourself with the finer points of editing, but it does help to know what the editor is doing. In fact, it helps to be an editor of your own copy. The more problems you eliminate, the more impressed the editors are by your skills. Review everything you write, and insert or delete that which appears necessary to insert or delete. To help you be able to do that, let us offer a few hints as to what the editor is doing and looking for:

- Does the story really make sense? First, the editor reads through the whole story. If he or she is confused, the logical assumption is that the reader will be confused. Sometimes, the editor will try to fix the story; other times, you may get it back for repair.
- Is all the pertinent information high up in the story? If not, the editor may move buried -details toward the top. More likely, it will be handed back to you with such put-downs as “lacks focus” or “get to the point” or “I think your lead is in the 13th graph.”
- Do you have a working knowledge of English grammar? For every sentence you write, there are rules that some editor has memorized. Split modifiers, mixed metaphors, and just plain poor syntax are hazards of deadline pressure. A merciful editor will patch these up with merely a word. A wise teacher will draw them to your attention- if time permits- and tell you never to do that again.
- Can you spell? F. Scott Fitzgerald had a problem with spelling. Unless you have a novel such as *The Great Gatsby* to your credit, learn to spell. Newspaper editors expect you to know how to spell and are apt to ridicule your slightest lapse, especially if you misspell the name of somebody important. An otherwise excellent reporter we know once spelled a recent Georgia governor’s last name “Busby.” Unfortunately, his name was Busbee.
- Is the ‘story too’ long? Ever more frequently, newspapers are faced with space shortages-the so-called “shrinking news hole”-because of newsprint paper shortages and increasing cost. In addition, readership surveys tell editors

that people really don't like to read long stories. If the story is, say, 18 inches long, and the editor thinks it would be fine if it were 12 inches long, he or she may cut it, which is the editor's prerogative. Hardly anyone is immune from being cut. Even Ralph McGill, the Pulitzer Prize-winning editor and publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, used to complain that his front-page columns were cut.

What can be eliminated? To cut a story, the editor may whack out (or blip off the VDT screen) whole paragraphs deemed superfluous. In the enthusiasm for detail, some reporters are inclined to repeat certain facts and ideas. To an editor, these repetitions are readily obvious and easily cut out. After that, the process becomes more tedious and arbitrary. After lopping off paragraphs, the editor may begin cutting sentences within paragraphs, with the constant question: "Do we really need that?" Then, the individual words are scrutinized. Could a shorter, perhaps simpler word do better? (Obfuscate might be changed to confuse.) Is the wording as accurate as possible? (A "gutted" house may replace one the reporter has "burned to the ground except for the walls.") Is the reporter relying too heavily on the words of the interviewee? (Rules that have been "promulgated" may become merely "made public.") Some nonessential words often can be eliminated at first glance. ("The mayor related to the press that he is of the opinion that ice cream tastes quite good" can be written simply as, "The mayor says he likes ice cream.")

Editors, of course, have their quirks that can cause a reporter misery. Some editors, for instance, think that said is the very best word you can use when somebody had said something. Others like variety: "he declared" or "she commented" or "he related" or even "she opined." (However, do not confuse merely saying and commenting with words that lend slightly different meaning to the qualifier, such as "he guessed" or "he implied" or "she hinted" or "she gurgled.") Some editors like to draw fine lines of distinction. Slay or kill, they argue, is not the same as murder, which is a criminal act of homicide. (Homicide, in fact, may or may not be a

murder.) But chances are pretty good that a slain person who died under suspicious circumstances has been murdered as well. Some editors also insist that *who* rather than *that* should be the pronoun of choice in modifying a reference to a person. (The man *who*, rather than the man *that*.) Other editors prefer *that* for almost everything, arguing correctly that is a “neutral” pronoun. The safest way to walk across such deep waters is to find out what your editors like and try to, do it their way.

There are definite regional quirks that are not the editors’ fault. In the South, particularly, there seems to be a grander tolerance of colloquialisms, slang, and, most definitely, dialect. Because of the South’s rich and disparate dialects, you find editors letting pass such quotes as “I heered the shots, then I seen running” or “How ‘bout them dogs” or “I be settin’ here.” And “y’all” of course is almost as common in Southern newspapers as “you.” But again, an editor’s quirks can take precedence. Some editors forbid dialect, arguing that it can be viewed as an act of condescension. Others argue just as forcefully that newspapers are too stuffy already and that dialect often adds a touch of color and genuineness.

## **Editing Process**

In the editing process, each newspaper has its set of rules that generally are strictly enforced. These are contained in something called a stylebook. At some smaller newspapers, this may be no more than a mimeographed sheet of paper. At larger newspapers, the stylebook may consist of up to two hundred pages and resemble a dictionary in format. Most commonly, newspapers rely on the stylebooks adopted by the Associated Press and United Press International, which vary slightly. Top editors also add their personal idiosyncrasies. In Atlanta, for instance, Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport abruptly became just Hartsfield Airport. There was a brief move on one newspaper to use no middle initials in identifying people in stories. This presented a problem when, Robert E. Brown ran against Robert H. Brown in a municipal election. Middle initials quickly were reinstated.

The chief keepers of the stylebook rules are the newspaper's copy editors. The copy desk is something of a court of last resort in the news-room, providing a final check to the balancing act of the city desk. In the modern newsroom, copy editing is done via the VDT. Once a city-desk editor has finished reviewing a story on the VDT, he or she presses a few magic buttons, and the story blips from the screen into the computer's memory bank, from which the copy editor can summon it onto his or her VDT screen by pushing another set of magic buttons. It is this last reading by the copy editor, with rare exceptions, that renders the story ready for putting on the presses in the form that readers will see in that day's newspaper.

By the time story reaches the copy desk at most dailies, the basic wording of the story is considered Approved and will be tampered with only sparingly. The copy editors function much as quality controllers in an auto plant. The reporter and the city desk have built the car. The copy editors make sure nobody has left a screwdriver stuck in the fan belt. They look primarily for errors that jump out at them: any glaring grammatical stupidity, misspelled words, or inaccurate street addresses. Copy-desk veterans often are old-timers who know the city and thus know that at a certain point Peachtree Street becomes Peachtree Road. Names are given particular scrutiny, since printing a misspelled name is a cardinal sin.

The copy editor handling a particular story also usually is the one to write a headline for it. That is not an easy job. Countless periodicals thrive on reprinting the worst faux pas of headline writers, and headline ridiculing is a favorite pastime of reporters. An example of an amusing and misleading headline was: Murderer sentenced to life in Washington, D.C.

Such misplaced modification occurs because it is very difficult to summarize an entire story in a few words, and occasionally headline writers goof. The *Colombia Journalism Review's* editors contend that their most popular feature is the reprinting of hilarious clubs and bloopers. Gloria Cooper, the *Review's* managing editor, compiled some of the best examples in a book, *Squad Helps Dog*

Bite Victim and other clubs from the nation's press. The reporters themselves often get criticized unfairly by readers for "that dumb title you put on the story." At major dailies, reporters have absolutely nothing to do with what headline appears over their stories. One reporter we know was chastised by a reader for a headline mentioning ham radio operators over a story about citizens-band-radio operators. The reporter had made no reference to ham operators, but the headline writer erroneously assumed that the terms were synonymous. (Ham operators, who must undergo a battery of tests before getting a Federal Communications commission license for long-range broadcasting, consider CB operators rank amateurs who merely toy with their short-range equipment.)

The headline writer is like the football lineman who gets attention only when he misses a tackle. However, filling the big hole above the story with something that will draw a reader's attention to it takes a special skill. Writing headlines is not simply a matter of attaching a "title" to the story. For one thing, the headline must fit. Only so many letters can be stuffed into the space reserved for the headline without having them fall off the page or extend past the column. The headline count, as it is called, varies according to the size of type and how many columns the headline is to cover. Newspapers also have various other rules that make headline writing even ore trying-such as requiring that a preposition and its object be on the same line. The headline is expected to capture in five or six words the essence of a story that may run thirty or forty inches long. This is another reason for the inverted pyramid mid in that it helps the copy editor who is pressed for time sum up the essence of the story.

Puns are fun for copy editors and sometimes catch the mood of a story. Over a sports story about the Atlanta Braves baseball team losing a third straight game to the Cincinnati Reds, one copy editor wrote: BRAVES BLUE AFTER REDS, 3-0. Sometimes, however, puns can be misleading. Over a story about the new popularity of row housing in the city, a feature section-copy editor wrote: A "ROW" OVER HOUSING. Actually, there was no "row"



in the sense of an argument; the copy editor thought the pun could be used by putting the word in quotes, but he misled some readers into thinking there was something along the line of a zoning dispute. Double meanings and bad taste have to be guarded against.

## **The Puzzle**

The story and headline are parts of a puzzle the copy editor helps put together for the news editor and assistant news editors, who control the page layout. These editors call themselves line drawers, and they basically are that. They draw lines on a dummy—a blank, miniature page that serves as a guide for printers who will compose the plate for actual printing. What the news editors, or layout editors, do is measure the length of a story (by counting characters) and then draw in the appropriate space on the dummy along with the desired space for a headline. Space also is mapped out for photographs, charts, logos, and anything else that is to greet the reader in the first edition. (On some newspapers, the news editors decide only priority play for stories, with separate makeup editors designing the layout accordingly.) The space allotted for a particular headline usually includes a code to tell the copy editor what size type to specify and what the letter count will be. At this point, stories also are sometimes cut, usually from the bottom of the story (which is another argument for the old inverted pyramid), in order to fit the space.

Headline writing and type sizing are handled by computers at most large modern dailies. Into the VDT is sent the typed story and headline with all the necessary codes to help it pop out magically ready for paste-up in the composing room, or backshop, as it often is called in the trade. From typewriter-size letters on the VDT may come a two-inch-high banner headline.

Problems do not end in the backshop. Therefore, the news desk normally has a representative in the composing room to stomp on any news bugs. The makeup editor has to make hasty and sometimes arbitrary decisions. A story that was supposed to fit often doesn't. The bottom is sliced again. The headline comes

out with a 72-point error: “Mr. Dinnan” has been made into “Mr. Drinnan.” Editors scream. The makeup editor calls for hurried changes to save embarrassment before the presses roll.

A news story must play upon the event reported therein. Ideally, read every story, preferably thrice-once for familiarisation, once while you edit, and the third time to check your work. If the story has no glaring problems, and if you fully understand it, you would be ready to edit it. Now, you are concerned with spelling, punctuation, grammar, consciousness of expression, smoothness of writing, general accuracy and comprehensibility.

**Format:** A news story is divided in to two parts-the opening-para called the “intro” (introduction) or the “lead”, and the body. The lead describes, simply and briefly, what happened. The body documents also elaborates the lead.

Adequate attention should be paid to the lead, the most vital part of the story. Written in a single sentence, it should grab the reader and compel him to read the body. Normally, the lead is in about 25 words, or may be less. At the maximum, it should be limited to 40 words. The intro should be concise and crisp. It the maximum, it should be limited to 40 words. The intro should be concise and crisp. It should not meander or puzzle the reader, but summarise the story. Details should be dispersed and blended in the subsequent paragraphs.

There is a famous example of any eye-catching intro.

“James Wilson lit a cigarette while bathing his feet in gasoline. He may live.”

This is a masterpiece of economy of words in writing. It tells the whole story at once: the careless stupidity of the act, the swift of retribution and the grisly consequences, all conjured up in our minds in vivid detail.

In sense, we do not need to read on. But, we all would. We would want to know more about James Wilson, why he was soaking his feet in gasoline, where he was performing this act, and so on. And, all this would be told in subsequent paragraphs, in a logical order.

This particular example is what is called a “teasing” intro, for it arouses our curiosity and makes us read on.

**Opening Para:** Conventionally, the news story has followed the “inverted pyramid,” structure. The most significant information is placed at the top, the story’s beginning and other details follow in their order of importance. Thus, the story tapers to smaller and smaller details, until it disappears. It may begin with the five Ws and one H, i.e., the who-what-why-when-where and low lead. Basically, a news story should answer what, when and where. The answers should find place in the opening para. The three other questions - who, why and how - do not necessarily arise in all the news copy. In case they do, the answers are accommodated in the subsequent paras. Each succeeding para should add an essential detail without being dependent in content or style on what follows.

The inverted pyramid style enables :

- (i) a new story, to be self-contained, even if paras are deleted at the bottom due to space; shortage [consequently, a coherent story is left at each point where it could be cut];
- (ii) a hurried reader to skip over many stories in a short time by just reading the opening paras [those with greater interest could read a story completely];
- (iii) a sub-editor, to write the headline gets in the gist in the gist in the first few paras; and
- (iv) a sub-editor, to change the order of paras or insert news material, even after the matter has been sent to the press for composing.

If the news is not in the opening para, trace out where it is buried. Bring it to the top, and also locate its supporting details. If there are two important news points or angles that vie for the top spot, assess and evaluate which one is better and more catchy. This could call for rewriting the entire news item.

Next, see if the second para supports the lead. It should deliver the promise made in the opening para. The third para

should continue the development implicit in the lead and in the second para. The paras should preferably be of one sentence, and not more than two. This helps a lot while trimming the story, and makes for easy comprehension by the reader, if there are any direct quotes, ascertain if these should be retained. Find out if there are opinions, and if there are, make sure these are suitably attributed, i.e., given within quotes.

**Rewriting:** 'While editing a story, the sub-editor should, as far as possible, look for errors in spelling, grammar and syntax, and correct these and 'pass' the copy. But an instant second look might sometimes compel him/her to rewrite it. The opening para may lack the punch, or the copy may seem confusing, or the news may be hidden below. Hence, rewriting may become necessary for the sake of clarity. Highlight the news point, taking care to avoid distortion and respect the facts produced by the reporter. Sometimes, the reports obtain the information but fail to exploit it. This could happen particularly when some one is reporting the press conferences and disasters.

### Attractive Headings

Every morning, when a reader looks for something interesting in a newspaper, it is the heading which catches his eyes. After scanning the headings, he settles down to read the story in detail.

A story, howsoever well-edited, would not attract him unless it is given a heading or headline, the most vulnerable spot in a newspaper. The headline attracts the reader to go through the story. It tells him what the story is about. Thus, a headline sells the story. Besides, a headline serves the reader in several ways.

The size of the headline determines the importance of a story: the larger or bolder the headlines, the most important is the news story. Writing a headline is like applying the finishing polish on a well-crafted piece of furniture. While writing headlines, you should keep the following points in mind:

- (i) A headline should speak. It should say something which educates and entertains the reader. Avoid headlines like, Lok Sabha, S.D. Sharma.

- (ii) A headline should stimulate the readership, and lead you to reading the story under it. The news items with bad headline do not get read.
- (iii) A headline should be sharp, and convey the essence of a story.
- (iv) A headline should be active and positive.
- (v) The best headline is written in the present tense, because it provides a sense of immediacy. The use of the present tense verbs lends an air of urgency and freshness to the news, making it up-to date. The past tense headlines make it seem that the publication is reporting history.
- (vi) Use commonly-known abbreviations:
- (vii) Never split names between lines of a headline.
- (viii) Single quotation marks ( ' ' ) should be used in headlines, since double quotation ( " " ) marks consume more space. Single quotation marks are more attractive.
- (ix) Articles such as 'the' 'an' and 'a' are generally not used in headlines.
- (x) Above all, common sense should remain the primary rule in determining clarity.

**Kicker:** Kicker is another conventional headline, usually a one-line heading with a second line (Kicker) above it in a different style and half the type size. It extends no more than midway above the main line. Kicker headlines are used to dress up a page by lending variety.

**Hammer:** Hammer is the reverse of kicker, but, usually, in all capital letters. The big type is the hammer and the smaller type the main headline. One word, or two at the most, will suffice of the hammer. By virtue of their size, hammers impress the readers with their importance. But too many hammers on one page may dilute that significance, and destroy the look of the page.

This main news lead is different from the one we have already talked about above. Suppose there is a train accident at

Aarah, about 60 km. from Patna. Just an hour before the first edition of a newspaper goes to the press. The first information reports from the Railways, or any other sources, convey the news about the accident but give scanty details. There is no precise mention about assaults. It will take about two hours for a reporter to reach the scene to get the first hand details. But we cannot wait till the reporter telephones from the spot or comes back to file the story. We must cover the story in the first edition. The story may be written thus:

Patna, Oct, 15-at least five passengers were killed and several wounded when three bogies of the Magadh Express derailed tonight at Araah, about 60 km. from here, the railway sources said.

Details are awaited.

Details will pour in once the reporter reaches the site, and a composite story would crystallise besides, the Railways Ministry, in New Delhi, will give the official version. There shall also be eyewitness accounts. Hence, many news items are bound to flow in on the same event. All these are tied together, highlighting the major facts, and the Lead is written for the newspaper's city edition. A Lead is a device, used mostly in the case of developing stories, for updating the top or changing the story's emphasis in the light of new information of facts as these unfold.

Such stories include a strike, a 24-hour bundh, a river flood, an air crash or a train accident or other mishaps, a conference or a political meeting, an election, a visit to a state by a VIP such as the Prime Minister or the President. As the story -advances with the day, all these may require one or more Leads, like the Second lead, Third Lead and finally a Lead all.

Besides, a Lead is used to tighten loose ends of a dispersed story. A tie-up will provide a combined top for different items relating to a single subject or related development, namely, the Independence Day or Republic Day celebrations, religious festivals, etc.

A copy editor or sub-editor is a bridge between a reporter and the reader. He/she need not execute all these functions

simultaneously. But, on any given day, he/she will be required to play all these roles.

A copy editor, generally known as the sub-editor or desk person, is a gatekeeper and image builder who protects a newspaper's reputation. He/she is a surgeon who performs surgery, and a priest who conducts a happy marriage between speed and efficiency. He/she is a tailor, too. He/she is an unglamorous backroom worker, who does a thankless but stupendous job, and represents the last stage. No one can see his/her edited copy except the proof readers, who, if smart and vigilant, may detect faults with subbing (editing). A desk person takes all the blame; he/she rarely gets any credit and remains anonymous.

A copy editor or a sub-editor receives, sifts, processes and issues news items after, giving them a final shape.

A copy editor:

- (i) removes rough edges from the copy and polishes it to make it presentable; (Any story that comes into the newsroom is often raw, blunt, and rough edged. The first task of a sub is to remove rough edges so that the copy makes sense. This will make the copy pleasing and presentable to the readers.)
- (ii) adjusts the copy to the style of his newspaper;

[Style is essential, particularly, to a newspaper, and every news organisation follows its own style. It is a device to maintain consistency and, thus, the credibility of a newspaper.]

You may ask what difference would it make if "P" is parliament" is written in the capital letter at some places and in small letter at other. It does make, for at least two reasons: style lends a sense of craftsmanship, and it affects the reader at two levels - consciously simplifies, and clarifies and corrects the language.

Hong Kong      Hongkong

Fertiliser      Fertilizer

Only one of the above should be followed consistently.

- (iii) A reader who scans through his morning newspaper is in a great hurry. Hence, a copy editor should carve out each story in a familiar language so that it runs smoothly through the average reader's mind. Smooth writing ensures smooth reading. Simple, direct sentences are more directive. Also, he/she should delete clichés, extraneous words, jargon, ambiguities, non-descript adjectives and adverbs.

As far as possible, the predicate should be close to the subject. If an intervening clause removes the verb too far from the subject, the reader could lose track of the sentence and its meaning.

- (iv) Tailors story length to space requirements.  
(v) Detects and corrects errors of fact.  
(vi) Simplifies, clarifies and verifies meanings.  
(vii) Adjusts stories to make them objective and fair.

If a controversial matter is reported, then there are bound to be two sides or different points of view. Hence, all the points of view must be fairly presented. Carrying only one version and ignoring others in the coverage will amount to taking sides.

- (viii) Adjusts stories to make these legally safe.

You should avoid using adjectives of pejorative nature with respect to persons. However, unpopular a person might be the law will protect him against defamation.

In matters before the courts, the cases of both the petitioners and defendants must be given space in the report.

For example,

When reporting an accident between a car and a bus, avoid writing who hit whom, unless it is established through a judicial inquiry. It should be described as a "collision".

- (ix) Rewrites and restructures stories extensively, where necessary. As far as possible, the sub (editor) should look



for errors in spelling, grammar and syntax, and clear the copy. But, an instant second look may sometimes compel him/her to rewrite it. The opening para may lack the punch, the copy may seem confusing, or the news may be hidden below. Hence, rewriting may become necessary for the sake of clarity.

Highlight the news-point, taking care to avoid distortion and respect the facts produced by the reporter. In case the copy is badly written, show it to the reporter. Sometimes, the reporters obtain the information, and fail to exploit it. This could happen while reporting the press conferences and major tragedies such as plane or train accidents.

- (x) Follows the policy of the newspaper.

Sometimes a newspaper may support the policies of a particular political party, and, hence, would avoid criticising it. Even though you have a different opinion, you shall have to follow the paper's policy.

- (xi) Corrects copy in the interest of good taste.
- (xii) Avoids sensation.
- (xiii) Removes those points that could be called undue publicity or 'puff'.
- (xiv) Deletes doubtful words and sentence, following the thumb rule "when in doubt, leave out". Every story does not require all these treatment. But, every day, some story or the other will require any or most of these operations; a sub frequently performs these functions.

A copy editor /sub-editor should make sure that words are spelt correctly. A spelling error is a major effort, and reflects badly on the credibility of a newspaper. A few moments spent on checking the spelling of a word will keep the reader's mind at ease.

### **Undivided Attention**

The production of a newspaper calls for undivided attention of 200 to 300 people in different departments, as it is delicate and

complex process. There is tension since a deadline is to be met. In a news agency, the deadline is 'now'. Amidst this tense atmosphere, the sub-editor has to perform his job meticulously. He should possess certain qualities to discharge his functions efficiently.

The sources of the essential qualities of a copy editor/ sub-editor are:

- Calmness:** Be calm and composed, come what may. You should not get excited when a big story breaks-be it a disaster, calamity, the assassination of a big political leader or the collapse of a government.
- Decisive:** Take quick and correct decisions. The editorial department has no place for indecisives.
- Non-partisan:** Never take sides; be non-partisan.
- Memory:** Have a sharp memory for counter-checking facts, if necessary.
- Grasp:** Size up the situation as it unfolds, and estimate its relevance.
- Know your reader:** Know the particular readership. This means you should engage one hand with subbing, and the other with the pulse of the reader.
- Self-confidence:** Have confidence enough to correct a bad copy written by anyone, even the senior most reporter or the paper's editor.
- Mature:** Be mature enough to correct only bad copy, and not just make changes for the sake of changing.
- Sceptical:** Do not accept anything at face value. You should approach everything as a source of potential error.

- Knowledge:** Be a jack of all trades, because a sub handles a wide range of stories (from killings to oil prices to satellite launch). You are required to have some knowledge about these, including how these compared with the past events, how the names of different nationalities are spelt. A good editor should store most of the information as it comes across, and search for more.
- Stability:** Have enough stability to work under pressure.

## Helping Set

The copy editor will require a set of tools, the lack of which may lead to loss valuable time while subbing the copy. These aids are indispensable. Often, you may come across problems of spellings and facts, arising out of an average day's handling of the news. You should focus on the errors, and correct the name.

## Use of Words

The basic building blocks of journalism are words. You should respect the words, and follow the way these are arranged and strung together. Any Misplacement of words could twist the meaning. Hence, you should pay attention to punctuation marks, grammar and syntax. All these are important in the sentence construction.

**Punctuation Marks:** Punctuation problems start and almost end with a comma. This little mark causes more trouble than the rest put together. Consider these examples:

Ram says Raj is an idiot.

Ram, says Raj, is an idiot.

Observe how the placement of the comma has changed the meaning. Remember that commas define relationships within a sentence.

Punctuation marks bring in clarity and better readability. At the same time, too many of these clutter a story.

There should be no comma after a verb unless it is immediately followed by a parenthesis.

One of the areas of punctuation in which mistakes are often made is the dash and the hyphen. These serve two nearly opposite purposes, but are often mixed up.

A dash is used to create a pause for emphasis, or to provide an abrupt change of thought, or to introduce a phrase or clause in parenthesis. Thus, a dash separates, and is spaced; the whereas, a hyphen joins the two, often unconnected, ideas. It is not spaced, and is half the size of a dash.

## The Symbols

**Slug:** A news item or story may run into several paras, and also exceed one page. If running into pages, a news story has to be kept track of from amongst various stories, and chronologically arranged. Hence, these paras, in a page, are divided into two of three parts. Then, these parts are 'slugged' and numbered, i.e., given a label, which identifies that story for that particular day, and helps the editor on duty to bring different parts together. Related stories are slugged to make the relationship clear.

Slug is an identification mark or tag. It is often the key word in a story and written on top left or right of a page. For example: On a day like 15th August, 26th January, festivals, disasters and press conferences, there are bound to be several stories related to the same subject. So, "Day" will become the Master Slug'. And for each story a "Subslug" shall be used. e.g., 'Day-PM' will be the slug for the story relating to the Prime Minister's speech on the occasion. Thus, PM is the 'Sub-slug', with 'Day' serving as the 'Master Slug'.

**Editing Symbols:** As soon as you start editing a copy, the first symbol you use is for paragraph indentation. Even if every para is indented, you should mark this symbol on every para. This

would help the typesetter in knowing that you want paragraph to begin at that spot.

Pictures submitted for publication in the newspapers and magazines have to be edited to fit into the layout of the page, and also the unnecessary portions cut off, which the photographer might have added in the actual composition. The competent photo-editor's job is to see to it that he does not waste space, and trims a picture keeping the main essence of the subject intact. This reduction process, keeping the essential parts of the photographs intact, is called cropping. Since the photographers are emotionally involved in shooting their pictures, they might think whatever they have added in a picture would be published. This aspect is left to the judgement of the photo-editor, when the final composition of the photograph for publication is made.

## **Photography**

A photographer might have given a group picture of the newly appointed ministers. The clever photo-editor might use only the heads of the ministers and cut off the rest of the portion in order to economize on space. A narrow strip of the faces of the newly elected ministers is certainly of more interest for the readers, and definitely not the dress they are wearing! Just as the editor edits a story by cutting the irrelevant portions, the photo editor also crops the picture, bringing out the emphasis of the photographic message as effectively as possible. To improve the look of the newspaper or a magazine, the photo editor might opt for vertical or horizontal pictures depending on the layout of the page make up, and, in the process, mar a picture drastically, keeping the main subject in focus. Unless he has the freedom to crop the pictures, he will not be able to introduce new ideas for improving the look of the page.

A good photographer must be able to handle every assignment the editor gives him to his own satisfaction. Pictures are in everything around us. Each one of us sees different pictures in the same object and situations, owing to the different background and experience each of us have. You must have seen a lot of

photographers which have won prizes. The subjects of these pictures must have been very ordinary or common. But, the way the photographer's composed them, and brought forth the essence, made a difference. Didn't they? Probably, you might have tried a picture or two on the same subject. But the judges were not excited. Why? It is not that you are wrong, and they are right; it is just that your vision is different. There could be as many photographs on a particular subject as there are journalists. You will be most successful when your vision is in tune with that of your editor. It does not mean that you will have to suppress your creativity. It is only to channel your creativity to achieve certain goals.

One has to work with great speed on a location. This is significant. On location, no one will wait while you try to figure out your shutter speed and lens aperture adjustment in your camera. Even as you get out of your vehicle, you should be setting your aperture for the type of lighting available on the location or what you intend to use (like an electronic flash), and be ready to focus to an average distance. You should actually shoot a news event from several different angles, and let your photo-editor decide which picture to use. But when everything starts happening, at the same time, you must be quick enough to do your own editing on the spot. Your grasping power must be like quick silver. You must decide which picture from what angle would be the best, and then get yourself in position to shoot it.

The newspaper photographs are based on factual situation. The photograph illustrates an event, brings depth into it, and probably comments on it. Usually, the photographer is given only an idea to work with, and is expected to create an appropriate photograph to illustrate it. This is where a good memory or a notebook will come in handy. The photographic techniques involved in shooting for magazines are not much different from those in newspapers. The technical skill is again taken for granted, and your primary concern is to illustrate the story clearly and completely.

Is a caption a must for a picture? Yes. Even though the news picture is supposed to tell a story on its own, one should say

where and when the incident took place. Caption writing is an art by itself, and it comes with experience and aptitude. It is, generally, the job of the new editor. The picture and its caption are complementary to each other, and it is very essential to mention when and where the picture was taken, and who the persons seen in the picture are. When a picture shows a VIP getting down from a car, the caption instead of saying that such and such a person is 'getting down' from the car should rather say so and so is 'arriving' at the particular venue or place for doing a particular activity, as the case might be. There is, for example, no need to say that a person is eating when the picture is showing it. One should say why, where and what he is eating, and on what occasion. A caption reading 'under the clutches of a monster', showing the picture of a scooter trapped under a huge lorry, is a good one.

If photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the picture could hang in between the paragraphs. Sometimes the News Editor might prefer to box a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to brighten the page. A really good picture could express the equivalent of a thousand words! Captions for the sports pictures are very important, and most of the photographers simply prefer to say something like a melee in the goal mouth which should actually say who is doing what. For example, it should read as 'Mr. X, who scored a hatrick, scoring his third goal in a row beating the defender Mr. Y'. This applies to all games. Sometimes the news editors prefer to give no captions, and the pictures simply hang under the headline, which itself serves as the caption. 'Queen Ann wins the Derby, 'Kapil clean bowled for a duck' and 'Mr. X takes over as Chairman, are some examples.

In most news coverages, the photographer reaches the spot only after the incident takes place, and is able to take only the result of what had already happened. In such special cases the newspaper or magazine might have to depend upon graphic illustrations to detail the activities that had taken place on a particular spot earlier.

From the information available, the entire incident in the

original sequence could be sketched out so as to give the reader a clear idea of what the news story is about. Such graphic illustrations have been used time and again of depicting incidents of varying degrees. For most of the mountaineering expeditions, the routes taken by the mountaineers could be sketched out, adding all the necessary information regarding the routes. In an assassination case, a graphic illustration could show the position of the assassinator, the victim and others in the vicinity.

The graphics come in handy for the tabloids and magazines, where detailed stories are published with lots of illustrations-pictorially and graphically. With limited space, the newspapers go in for graphics, but not as a routine.

### **Technical Knowledge**

Though the newspapers and magazines we read today have gone through several stages of developments, more changes are taking place as new techniques and technologies are introduced. The first newspaper in India was published on January 29, 1780. It was called the Bengal Gazette. Later, it also came to be known as Calcutta General advertiser or Hicky's Gazette. James Augusts Hicky was its founder, editor, printer and promoter all in one. The Bengal Gazette was a weekly. It consisted of two pages, measuring 12" × 8".

The Bengal Gazette of 1780 was a one-man show. Large newspaper establishments today employ thousands of workers, and use most modern equipment worth crores of rupees. Skills and inputs from many specialists in different areas are essential to produce a newspaper today. In India, we have over 27,000 publications, in this field, in more than 90 languages. The newspaper composing and printing methods have gone through major changes during the past few decades. However, the basic function remains the same, to convert the printing matter into printable format.

An understanding of the printing-matter composing methods would help in better understanding the limitations as well as advantages of each composing process, in designing the page.



To create the desired amount of leading or space between lines, he/she inserts metal strips called leads. When the composing stick is full, the lines of type are transferred to a long shallow tray, called a "galley".

After taking out proofs and carrying out the necessary corrections, the next step is to make up the page. i.e., to assemble various elements such as the text type, display type, picture blocks, according to the designed layout. Since the composed matter consists of hundreds of individual pieces, it is essential that it is held together securely or locked up. This may be done by tying up the type with a string, or by surrounding it with furniture strips of wood, metal or plastic. These, in turn, may be held firmly in place with metal strips. The type may be locked up on the galley in a metal frame, called a "chase" or directly on the bed of the press.

Collectively, type and other printed matter locked tip and ready to be proofed or printed is called a "forme".

**Machine Setting:** This method involves casting type from molten metal. For this reason, machine-set type is also referred to as hot type. There are four popular type casting machines-Linotype, Intertype, Monotype and Ludlow.

**Linotype and Intertype:** These are mechanical methods of composing and casting type in one piece lines called "slugs". Since these machines cast lines of type rather than individual characters, these are called "line-casting" machines.

The name Linotype is derived from casting a line-of-type. In both systems, the operator sits at a keyboard, not unlike that of a typewriter. The machine is adjusted to set type to the desired pica measure and leading. The upper front section of the machine carries a magazine, a slotted metal container, which holds the "matrices", or letter moulds, of the type to be set.

When the operator strikes the keys, the matrices fall into positions to form a line-of-type. The operator sets as many characters and Wedge-shaped space bands as possible within the

given line measure. The space hands are used for the word spacing. When the operator is ready to cast a line, he/she pulls a lever which sets off a series of event. The line, made up of matrices and space bands, is transferred to the casting mechanism. The wedge-shaped space bands are driven up between the words to justify the line. Molten, metal is forced into the matrices, and the trimmed line of type or slug is ejected onto a pan or galley tray. As soon as the type is cast, the matrices are returned to the magazine with the help of a mechanical distributor, and the space bands to the space-band box, ready for the next line.

After the matter is composed, the type is locked up on a galley. Line-casting machines can set type and leading as one piece. For this reason, it is impossible to reduce the amount of leading, the space between lines and words, once the type has been cast. However, leading can be increased by inserting leads between lines by hand. The cost of corrections is reasonable. Any change within a line means that the entire line, or even all the succeeding lines in a paragraph, have to be reset. The basic difference between linotype and intertype is that the intertype of matrices. They can be used for casting headlines as well as body matter.

**Monotype:** As the name suggests, “monotype” casts the characters one by one rather than as a complete line. It is a combination of two machines, a keyboard or perforator and a typesetter. It is a two-step or two-machine method of casting individual type characters, mechanically.

**To Set Type :** The machine is adjusted to the required pica measure and leading. As the copy is typed, it produces a perforated paper roll, which is used to drive the typesetter. A combination of holes dictates the letters, spaces and punctuation marks to be set. Normal spacing is punched into the roll between words. A calculator, measures the amount of unused space at the end of the line, and the operator then punches the holes to indicate the amount of additional space to be given between words to justify the line. When the roll is fed into the casting machine, it is fed in

backwards so that the machine “memorizes” the amount of space to be added between words, as the letters are cast.

To set type, the perforated roll is fitted on the typecaster, where it directs the casting mechanism by means of compressed air. The air passing through the perforations brings the matrix holder and the specific matrix ready to be filled with molten metal into proper position. Once the type has been cast it is ejected onto a galley, one character at a time.

**Ludlow:** This is a combination of handsetting and machine-casting operations. Like linotype, it produces a slug, but in a different way. The operator sets the type matrices and leading in a composing stick by hand. The composed matrices are then locked into a casting machine, where they are filled with molten lead to produce the slug. Ludlow was designed primarily to cast display type from 12 to 72 points, but it is mostly used for the newspaper headlines.

**Phototypesetting:** It is also known as photocomposing, or cold type setting. All the other methods stated above involve hot type. That is, they require the use of molten metal. Since photocomposing does not involve metal casting, it is also called a cold type-process.

The first phase of photocomposing resembles that of monotype setting. Unless the perforator is attached to a video display unit (VDU), the operation is limited to conversion of copy matter into a coded perforated tape. This perforated tape is then fed into a programmed computerised unit, which projects the desired images of type characters onto photosensitive film or paper. This paper is then made up in mechanicals or photomechanicals from which printing plates can be produced. Photocomposing provides a fast, flexible and reasonably economical method of setting type. This method offers several advantages over other methods. In handsetting and casting, type is to be inked in order to print. The pressure of the metal type against the paper causes ink squeeze, which tends to make the edges of the printed forms irregular. Offset plates produced

from art pull's tend to have rough edges. In phototypesetting, on the other hand, individual letters are projected and exposed directly on to photosensitive paper of film, resulting in the sharpest possible letter forms.

As long as type is on a piece of metal, there is a limit to just how close the letters can be set. With phototype setting, it is merely a question of projecting the letters, where one wants. Letters can be set touching, overlapping, in fact, in any way one wishes. Another advantage of phototypesetting is that type can be set and matter made up directly on photosensitised film or paper. This means that it is possible to go directly from film to plate-making. This process saves time for the designer as well as the printer. A phototypesetting unit with a visual display terminal (VDT) offers the additional advantage of providing a visual display of the composed matter.

Phototypesetting is done through the computers, which are essentially electronic equipments capable of logic functions, according to predetermined programmes. The computers can carry out programmed decisions and eliminate errors caused by human judgement. The programmed decision-making process can be used advantageously to reduce pre-press time. This is one of the major crisis areas in newspaper production. In hand or machine setting, the speed of compositors is restricted because of the requirements of proper word-spacing and the line alignment process. In computer setting, these functions can also be programmed to carry on predetermined page make-up.

The computer input is text set on tape, and the output is a coded tape, including format and typographical instructions. Just as the compositor, composing by hand or by machine, has to think of the text as type in a specified type face of a certain size, of a certain line length with all the spacing, word breaks italics, capital letters, and other textual conventions, the computer programmer has to design his programmes to convert straight input tape ("idiot tape", as the computer experts picturesquely call it) in to the typographically stylised output.

The computer contains, within its stored programme, all or most of the typographical decisions an experienced compositor takes as a result of his knowledge and experience in typesetting. The programme may be written to produce the required kind of text-setting. The output of the computer-coded paper tape can be used to control the actual typesetting equipment, including the conventional automatic composing machines using hot metal or any phototypesetting system. The outcome of the total system is dependent on the computer programme employed.

The programmes used in computer typesetting do not differ in principle from those used for many other computer operations. That is to say the computer obeys the programmer's instructions by performing a series of calculations, in accordance with the needs of the output, which in this case is the tape used to operate a typesetting machine. A computer can be programmed to carry out all the calculation needed to establish wordspacing within acceptable limits, and, beyond these, a word-break is required to break up a word and place part of it in the next line. Photo editing and page designing can also be done on the computers. Now-a-days, almost all big newspapers in India are using the computers for composing purposes.

As you know, different editorial components of a daily newspaper or a magazine are generally news reports, special reports, photographs, book reviews, are reviews, are reviews, film reviews, feature articles, interview stories, investigative and interpretative reports. Along with these, newspapers also publish advertisements, with display and classified public information, notices and jobs/employment advertisements. In addition, newspapers also publish the stock market information, weather reports, radio, television, cinema and theatre charts.

The newspapers operate in a competitive world. In addition, these have to compete with the radio and television.

Also, as living styles and product consumption patterns of the readers improve, the newspaper editors and proprietors have to improve the quality of their product.

Therefore, to keep up with the times, there has been a marked improvement in the use of the typography and newspaper design on the newspapers during the last few years. More improvements are bound to take place with innovations in newspaper production. If you take a closer look at the newspapers being published from different centers in India, you will notice many differences in their use of typography, design and production techniques. Several newspapers have started using colour printing for improving their appeal to the advertisers and readers.

At any newspaper stall or shop, you will notice a large variety of newspapers and magazines. Newspapers come in different shapes and sizes. There are newspapers that provide general public interest news to the readers. There are others which cater to the needs of the specialists. Every newspaper has its own way of presenting news, views and features. In a competitive market, it is essential for each product to have "uniqueness" or an individual identity. By appropriate use of typography and layout design, each newspaper attempts to require and perpetuate its unique identity.

Even if the contents of two papers are similar, the use of different typography and design can give the newspaper two distinct identities. For example, take a daily English language newspaper published from Delhi, and compare it with a newspaper published from Patna, Jaipur, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Lucknow or Bangalore. The page one design, layout of the news items, pictures, box items type faces, even display of news items will stand out prominently. Besides, the newspapers from Delhi will carry more national and international news. Others will emphasize more local state, regional, national and international stories in that order. Almost the same criteria apply on other pages, including the edit page. The reasons for these varied emphases are the needs of the readership.

The front page of a newspaper is like the face of a beautiful woman. If it is attractive, it will hold the attention. You may have

heard the expression, “the front page news”. For a newspaper, to report news is a normal function, but there is something special about the fact that the news is printed on its front page. The front page is the “face” of a newspaper. Let us take a closer look. Carefully, read the news items printed on the front page of your daily newspaper, and try to find reasons for these items being printed on the front page, of your daily newspaper, and try to find reasons for these items being printed on the front page. Remember, front page is normally the page that is read first, or, at least, looked at first.

We all acquire a unique identity by our own name. The uniqueness gets reinforced by the unique way we write our names, i.e., the signatures. Many other distinct features add to our individual identity. Similarly, newspapers have a name. If you observe the front page of a newspaper closely, you will see that the masthead of a newspaper is much more than just the name of the newspaper. To understand the significance of masthead, you should take as many different newspapers and magazines as you can, and see how newspapers and magazines try to acquire a unique identity by their mastheads or names.

Newspapers sell news, Headlines are a means to attract the readers towards the news items. For a page designer, each headline is a new and unique challenge. For him/her, the headlines of the news items are much more than just a set of words. It is the responsibility of the page-designer to make each headline as distinctive as possible within the given newspaper format and its policies with regard to the use of type faces and type sizes. These policies evolve over a period of time

To get a better understanding of the concept, let us again go back to our newspapers, and examine how the headlines are made distinctive and used to provide an eye-appeal or an attractive page design. The task of the page designer or make-up person is to decide whether he/she wants to give more news items and shorter coverage of each, or less news items and emphasise them with greater details. A headline can be made bold (big typeface),

a single line and run horizontally across columns, or short with width: small typeface two lines and one column. Carefully notice these variations in the headlines in your paper. Each, page designer uses his/her own experience and creative genius to make the page attractive and give each news item an appropriate placement on the page.

Headlines are given generally by the sub-editors/ copy editors. The page make-up person cannot change them, but he/she can increase or decrease the display value, readability or importance of the news item by using different techniques at his/her disposal such as type face and size, placement, making it run horizontally across more columns or less. You will find that most newspapers every day give a four or five column bottom spread on their front page; it is down to give a solid base to the whole page.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. On the same basis, it can be extrapolated that a good cartoon is worth at least two thousand words. From a page designer's point of view, it is important to realise that photographs, cartoons and graphic have a special significance. Placing a picture or cartoon at wrong place may not only reduce its utility, but also reduce the design appeal of the total page.

A page designer has to examine whether the picture, cartoon, graphic, chart, has an independent value or it has to be juxtaposed with a particular news story. The size may have to be adjusted due to placement or space considerations. Having closely examined some of the major components of the front page of your newspaper, individually, let us now take a look at the architecture of the page or the overall page design. For this, we have look at the page from some distance. One way is to do a comparative study of two or more papers.

Hang two or more papers of the same date on the wall, and stand at a distance to take a critical look at these. As you look at these pages, study the structural outline-of the news stories, bold headlines, pictures, cartoons, placement of box items, etc. Take a look at the whole page from the masthead to the bottom line. Look



at the page, as if you were trying to study a painting or a sculpture. You will notice that there is a design in the page, a form and a structure. Each page designer has his/ her own concept of beauty and page structure. To bring it out, he/she uses different type sizes, white spaces, placement of pictures, graphs, charts, cartoons, etc. Inside pages of a daily newspaper differ from the front page in their format, structure, and presentation of contents. If you open a daily newspaper, you will see that on top of the page, there may be indications about the topic covered on that page - international news, national news, state news, sports news, city news, business and economy news, etc.

Even if there is no indication on the top, you will notice that the news items on that page have a common link. It helps the readers in their search for a news item. Also by grouping news items on specific pages we are able to give the newspaper a structure. The inside pages under one-group often tend to cover as many news items as possible. Hence, often these pages may seem cluttered.

One common feature in all daily newspapers is the editorial page. The format of this page looks similar in many newspapers in India and abroad. On this page, you will notice that there is a section where the editor(s) write their analysis of the major national and international news items. These are often referred to as the "newspaper's point of view". Along with that, there may be one or two articles written by prominent people on current topics. Also, a demarcated section devoted to "letters to the editor", giving reaction of the readers to the news/views, which might have appeared in the newspaper, or items of concern to the readers but not covered in the paper.

Each newspaper has, usually, a fixed spot for general information items such as the weather forecast, entertainment, cinema, radio, television, etc. The design of the inside pages of a newspaper is relatively much more structured than the front page, which is dependent on the major happenings during the past few hours. Advertisements have special significance for commercial

publications. The very existence of newspapers and magazines depends on the revenue from advertisements. Hence, special care must be taken with regard to placement of advertisements along with the news stories on the pages.

There are some important factors, which influence the effectiveness of advertisements in a newspaper. Therefore, in many cases, advertisements are placed on these pages according to the product or services to be advertised. For example, advertisements of sports goods such as shoes, wear, equipment or sports programme are generally placed on the sports pages. The advertisers often request for such placements, and even pay extra for such favours. Advertisements, in a way, are paid for news items. Large colour advertisements have special significance in page design. Page design can be made more attractive with colour advertisements.

Newspapers are meant to be read. Anything that obstructs or reduces the convenience of the reader must be avoided. As far as possible, the news item should be contained in a neatly defined area. Look at the page of a newspaper as a reader, and ask yourself: Are the news items displayed in a nice, readable manner? Could you suggest any improvements?

Each letter, each word and each story has special significance. Headlines, photographs, cartoons, box items, charts and graphics - all these are important ingredients of the newspaper page design. Readability for a page designer has a different meaning than that for a reporter, sub-editor or proof reader. Readability for a page designer has more to do with its visibility and the convenience of its reading for a reader than the actual contents. Readability from a page designer's point of view depends on placement of the news stories, typography and the overall page layout.

Daily newspapers and periodicals differ in their size, format, page layout, overall design, and printing techniques. While pages of most daily newspapers measure 41 cms x 56 cms, magazines or periodicals tend to be around 27cms x 20 cms. However, there are weeklies such as the Sunday Mail, the Sunday Observer or

even the weekly editions of daily newspapers, which are registered as weeklies. They are also of similar size, look and design as the daily newspapers.

The cover pages of periodicals have special significance from the editorial and newspaper's policy. While about 85 per cent dailies are subscribed to and delivered at homes or offices, more than 50 per cent magazines are looked at before being bought. Hence, the magazine covers have special significance. Next time you go to a magazine stall, take a critical look at the arrangement or display of magazines. You will see how each magazine tries to attract attention. It is the cover of a magazine that holds your eyes, makes you pick it up and compels you to purchase it. Generally, the magazine covers have photographs of women. It is said that the readers like pictures of women on the cover of a magazine, but no cover on the women.

Now, if you take a few magazines of the same kind such as Business India, Business World and Business Today or India Today, Sunday and The Week, put them side by side, you could examine the difference in cover contents, price and design strategy to attract readers' attention. Limits of imagination of a page-designer determine the limits of page design for a magazine. However, there are a few factors that make some designs more suitable than others.

Every magazine has history behind it, which gives in a tradition in cover-design. This tradition or the past pattern of the cover-page design tends to set the standard for selection of the alternatives, which may or may not be suitable for particular magazine.

To attract the new readers, a magazine will need to adopt unconventional designs, but too much variation from the past may also tend to alienate the regular readers.

To study the design-pattern trends, take a look at three or four issues of the same magazine. You will see some common or regular features in the designs. Study the format and the items displayed on the cover page.

The final test for a magazine is at the newspaper or magazine sales stalls. The success is measured by the number of readers willing to pay for it, and that determines its paid circulation.

To understand the sales promotion strategy, we have to find out first the readership profile that an editor and publisher of a magazine have in mind. The readership profile is defined in terms of age group, educational level, marital status, disposable income, nature of job, quality and place of residence, consumption pattern, etc. Most general interest magazines are read by a wide spectrum of people in different age groups, income levels, educational standards, etc. The readership profile is defined in terms of groups and percentages.

Another factor that tends to influence the price and cover design of a magazine is the long term sales promotion strategy of the newspaper management, i.e., editor and publisher. The most important question can be: Is the management trying to build a long-term (one to three or five years) subscription and distribute the magazine through mail, as is done by the Reader's Digest, or, is the main emphasis on sales promotion through newspaper and magazine stalls. In case the management adopts the sales promotion policy of promoting newspaper through open sales, i.e., through newspaper stalls, the magazine cover design acquires strategic sales promotion importance. The cover designs, in this case, should be critically evaluated with the cover of other magazines in the same genre.

### **Frequent Change**

Change is a way of life in journalism. No two editions of a newspaper or magazine are alike. Whenever a reader picks up a newspaper or magazine, he/she expects to find something new in it. However, in newspapers and magazines, changes take place within the predetermined format. Formats provide a sense of continuity. Format, may be viewed as a rough outline of the newspaper or magazine, its shape and size, placement of its masthead, and the typeface used for it; placement and presentation

of the news, views and other contents. Presently change in a continuous manner is the skill that makes design layout a challenge for each item, on each page, of each publication.

At the first glance it may seem obvious that the change is inevitable, so the question of “need” may seem redundant. However, it is essential that we understand the areas of change that influence the very existence of a newspaper or a magazine and also determine its readership growth pattern. While incorporating changes in page make-up or design layout we must keep in mind a few factors:

- (a) While bulk of the readers will remain the same, some new readers, however small, may be added with each new edition.
- (b) Some readers dropout and thus change the overall readership profile.
- (c) Newspapers and magazines operate in a competitive environment, hence new challenges from competitions have to be met.
- (d) Tastes, information requirements and entertainment requirements of readers keep changing.

To respond to change one must understand the compelling reasons for change to incorporate meaningful and effective changes. The Readership in newspapers and magazines is built up slowly. It is a painfully slow marketing and editorial effort.

With passage of time most readers get “addicted” to the nature and quality of presentation of the news, the views and the format in which the newspapers and magazines present their contents. Yet as we saw in the previous section there is a need for change. Hence, the question crops up “how much and how” the change should be incorporated in each issue?

Since each publication is a unique entity, there can be no simple clear cut answer. However, generally, it would very much depend on the subject matter of the topics to be covered. In most cases the change would be reflected in the treatment of topics,

language, the quality of illustrations, allotment of space, positioning of articles, typographic changes etc. With the common observation that a picture is worth a thousand words-the nature of pictures selected to accompany the composed matter often indicates the degree of change. Pictures or illustrations used indicate the degree of change. Pictures or illustrations are usually the first to be noticed and often draw relatively strong reaction from readers. Hence it is important that the quality and contents of pictures or illustrations selected should not have to vary from the earlier issues. However, on the other hand, it may also be necessary to keep up with the competing publications.

A cautious approach may be to stay within the bounds of past practices of the publication and the standards of lead publication in that genre of publications. Some leaders, tend to lead in bold ways and later make amends under pressure from readers.

It is not uncommon in the newspaper industry that changes have to be incorporated when the total publication is almost ready or at times under print. In daily newspapers it is almost a way of life. Whenever last minute changes have to be incorporated-the effort is to incorporate the required changes or include the new items with minimum disturbance to the overall page layout. However, some sudden events may warrant total change in the front page layout or cover design of a magazine. Even in case of the most drastic situation, the important factors to be taken note are the time required to bring about the change and the impact of changes on the printing process and schedule. Each printing process and schedule, has its own advantages and limitations. While bringing about changes in the editorial matter their impact on the printing time should also be considered. Events, which demand last minute changes usually require prominent display.

For an editor or reporters of an English newspaper there are only twenty six alphabets with only two symbols each-one-as a capital letter and the other in its small form, for he page make-up man the choices are almost unlimited. Today with the help of

computers one can develop new type faces by incorporating variations in size, form and shape of each letter. It is the size, form and shape that determine and distinguish the type face of a letter.

For a page layout designer, letters become a visual framework that gives readers their first overall impression of a printed page. As page designers, we must select type by analysing its visual appearance as well as readability of its type face.

While the choices may be many, editors of daily newspapers for the sake of economy, workability and convenience to its readers, make deliberate attempt to limit the variations of type faces used in their page makeup. Many newspapers adopt just one type face in different sizes throughout the newspaper.

However, magazines and advertisers tend to experiment with typography to give their pages and messages an eye catching quality.

### **Speedy Transmission**

Speedy transmission of news is as important as the actual news gathering. It has been made possible by the advanced electronic equipment. Increasingly, apart from the speed of the delivery of the information, serious thought is being given to the aesthetic presentation of the textual and visual material on a printed page. This is being treated on par with the editing of information, for both content and language.

The computers and word processors are being used in page make-up. The painstaking manual typesetting and page layouts are a thing of the past. The expertise of the graphic designers and the options made available by the computers have together provided a variety of page designs to choose from.

The facsimile machines, popularly called the 'fax machines,' have proven themselves to be indispensable in reporting back to a newspaper office from the location of an event. These facilitate faster despatch of news from the newspaper office too. Let us now

see what functions the electronic equipment must perform to meet the requirements of the newspaper office.

## **Functioning in Newsroom**

The newsroom is a place in the newspaper office, where the news items arrive, and are sorted out. The faster the incoming flow of news, the greater the speed of production of the various pages of the newspaper. The photographs and illustrations need to be quickly located or prepared to supplement the information in the text.

News is a perishable commodity. The newspaper staff have to be on their toes to ensure that important news items are processed quickly, to meet the deadlines of publication. Speed is a prerequisite of the newsroom, and its importance in the production of a daily newspaper could not be emphasized enough. Speed is essential in the following aspects of the, newspaper production: in communicating information; in processing information; in page-designing and layout; in printing and production; and in packing and distribution. Rapid transmission of news becomes meaningless, if information being imparted is inaccurate. This might even affect the paper's credibility. In this context, the accuracy of the data and apparently minor details of spellings and language, assume importance. Such correction work is done with the help of the computers and 'fax' machines.

Sometimes, to give in-depth treatment to an issue, complete information might have to be provided in the form of the historical data or facts about the events preceding the current ones. The computers are an ideal system for storing data in, their memory and this data could be retrieved at a later stage. The computers act as the data banks, and are very useful sources of reference for the newspapers.

The computers permit data maneuverability to suit the needs of the page designers. This might become necessary in the presentation of the same news item in a different format. The computers could even be programmed for an unlimited supply of



type faces. Software for a variety of page designs exist and continue to be invented. The typography, thus, is another requirement of the newsrooms.

### **The Layout**

The arrangement of captions, photographs and graphic on a page would have to facilitate easy reading, besides being visually appealing. Certain parameters of format are fixed for any newspaper, such as those of the page size, print area, number of columns, positions of masthead, allotment of articles according to their categories and page titles. The page make-up artist works both independently and with the software packages to give a variety of options for the design of pages or their layout. The Desktop Publishing, the DTP for short refers to both hardware and software that are involved in preparing high quality prints of pages, once these are composed satisfactorily. The prints are used as artwork, and the actual duplication is done by offset printing, owing to the high costs involved in the DTP operations. The hardware of a DTP includes a large-sized colour monitor of the VDU and a laser printer apart from the CPU, which is programmed to suit the DTP software. The laser printer involves a high-speed, high-quality printer technology. The DTP software consist of programmes to compose pages and their layout. These perform the function of the word-processing and automatic margin alignment, providing a variety of type-faces, page-numbering, etc.

## Editorial Policy

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Press is an opinion making institution, a newspaper should not confine its energy only for printing the news accurately, but it should also comment editorially on important matters and events. An editor of a newspaper can exert a lot of influence for the social good of the society. In fact, the editor of a widely circulated national newspaper is the keeper of the public conscience. The editor of a newspaper should always use his paper's influence to improve the lot of the people, to suggest reasonableness when passions are aroused, to remove corruption from public administration and political life and take the administration to task for its failures. No doubt, this is a very important responsibility of the editor of a newspaper which he should discharge sincerely.

The editorial policy of a newspaper should be based upon fairness and accuracy. It should not only be applied to the editorials but it should also be applied to the news items published in the newspaper. Such a policy will increase the popularity of the newspaper as well as create a lot of confidence among the readers of the newspaper.

Of course, the aim of a newspaper is to serve the public

interest. In a popular newspaper the news is given an accurate and fair treatment, its editorials are straight, even if a little partisan. A good newspaper will give an honourable treatment even to its opponents. Thus, the editor of a big newspaper can exercise a lot of influence in making his newspaper popular.

Although much of the time of the editor is occupied in the direction of the complex machinery of newspaper as well as attending the conferences with heads of departments, yet he can enthuse the spirit of honesty and public service in all the staff members of his newspaper. The editor commissions writers to write articles for his newspaper, he decides the subjects for the leaders and the lines upon which they are to run, especially when they concern some controversial topics. Some editors also contribute leaders and specials to their columns two or three days a week. In this way, we see that the life of an editor is not an idle one.

Nobody can deny the fact that a good newspaper influences the minds of the people to a great extent. No doubt, a pernicious influence is always more easily exerted than a good influence. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the editor that he should have a good influence on the people by conducting his newspaper in a clean and honest manner. Although the editorial opinion expressed in the editorial may not have a direct influence on the minds of the public, yet it is a fact that if there is a continual reiteration of a certain set of truths, it is bound to make an impression upon the minds of the readers sooner or later.

Public opinion is largely influenced by the newspaper's opinion indirectly. On controversial issues people generally adopt the arguments given in the leading articles on the subject in the different newspapers. In fact, like all subtle influences, a newspaper's opinion is imbibed subconsciously by the readers and therein lies its strength.

Undoubtedly, a newspaper chiefly makes its influence felt on its readers, especially in the political field, by means of the leading articles. In fact, leader writing occupies a very important place in

any newspaper. A leader writer should have the quality to write an article on any subject with equal facility. In a way, he is the editorial handy man who should be able to express the considered judgement of his newspaper without being influenced by his personal views. There is no doubt that the leading articles of a newspaper can be used for a lot of good by starting a campaign against many social, political and economic evils existing in the society.

An editorial should always be written in an independent style. Generally, the important national papers take an independent line editorially on all things and matters about which they write. Such newspapers do not write their leading articles regarding political controversy in a partisan manner. In fact, the editorials of these newspapers are written in a broad-minded and unbiased manner. The editorial columns of a good newspaper are always interesting. They are full of life and compel attention. The leading articles should be thought-provoking and instead of being biased and partisan they should be independent and full of inspiration for all the readers.

## **The Editorial**

A leading article in a newspaper should appeal not only to the few but to the largest number of the readers. A leading article should be the true leader of thoughts in a newspaper. It will not be wrong to say that the best newspaper is that which has the best editorials. Some people believe that the leading articles are read by a microscopic minority of the readers. And, sometimes, jokingly it is said that the leading article is read only by the proof reader who is paid to do so. Apparently, this is not the correct thing. In fact, good editorials are read with the same interest as any other part of a newspaper.

Some people feel that the leader writers generally make too much use of political topics for writing their editorials. According to these people the ordinary citizens are not interested in boring politics all the time except at election time. The common citizens prefer to read articles on general topics which concern the day to

day life. Therefore, it is a good policy that from time to time leading articles should also be written on such topics as are of interest to the average readers and which concern their day to day life.

Sometimes, a newspaper editor has to speak about the truth in the columns of his newspaper, even at the risk of some danger. While doing so, the editor should do his utmost to retain the goodwill and respect of his readers, otherwise his plain speaking on a topic which is considered a taboo by the people may make his paper suffer. However, the editor should always keep the public interest supreme in all these matters. There is no doubt that a newspaper editor who is afraid to write, even when he knows certainly that this is the right course to pursue, is unworthy to hold his high post. An editor who tries to adopt the easier and safer path whenever faced by such a decision to take a bold step in support of a true cause, will prove himself a coward and will condemn his paper to eternal mediocrity.

The editor of a newspaper should maintain certain high ideals of his newspaper worthy of being followed by his juniors. The newspaper editorials should be free, fearless and outspoken, as far as the rooting out of social and economic evils is concerned. He should also be fearless to write against the prevailing corruption, both in the social and the political life of the country. Similarly, he must not be afraid of writing against the administration or the government to safeguard the rights and the freedoms of the people. An editor must maintain the high principles of honesty and integrity to enhance the reputation of his newspaper. In fact, an editorial is just like the heart of a newspaper and it is to a great extent responsible for the success or failure of a newspaper.

*Advertorials and Booklets* : Most publications are on the look-out for ways of increasing their circulation and some are also looking for extra revenue. This means that both the editors and the promotion department of a particular publication may be interested in 'advertorials', associated booklets, competitions and special offers. The fact that a particular publication does not offer these

types of promotion on a regular basis does not mean that it will not be interested in discussing a bright idea. And though it is usually consumer publications that are involved there have been some notable exceptions among even the more staid members of the trade press.

These promotional tools can be extremely useful to the discerning PRO, particularly for products and services which have passed their first peak of interest. The first advantage to the participating company of all of these types of activity is that they are not seen by the reader as advertising but as part of the editorial content of the magazine and therefore as having the endorsement of the editorial staff. This is true even though the approach may vary from a fairly soft sell in the 'advertorial' to quite a strong sales pitch in the special offer.

The second advantage is that such promotions enable the name of your organization or its brands to be included in the copy, which can be very important in publications which would not normally use such names.

The choice between the different types of bought space outlined below will depend partly on the product or service in question and partly on the available budget. It will also depend upon which type of promotion the editor is prepared to tolerate in his or her pages, for the choice of medium is as important here as in many other parts of the media programme. The best advertorial in the world will be of no value at all if it is aimed at the wrong audience.

**Advertorials:** Advertorials are paid-for editorial material and though they must be labelled as advertisements they are designed to look as much like the editorial pages of the publication as possible. The difference is, of course, that the copy has been supplied by a PRO and the photography and space have been paid for by the PROs organization or client.

Advertorials may take the form of single or double spreads in the magazine or they may be more elaborate booklets which are bound into each copy of the magazine. They are particularly

useful to PROs who have the unenviable task of promoting everyday products such as soup, shampoo, paint, weedkiller or garden tools. The products are good enough to need little in the way of revamping and apart from the odd addition to the range or a change of packaging little of any interest happens to the product. But the PRO is charged with keeping it in the public eye. Even fashion products such as nail polish or lipstick, which do have regular changes of colour, can benefit greatly.

*The Contents* : In theory an advertorial could be put together on almost any subject appropriate to the magazine and to the sponsor. In practice it has mainly been used in the fields of food, cooking and beauty. But there is no reason why an enterprising PRO might not put together any package which would be of interest to the general consumer. A gardening magazine might be interested in advertorials on growing certain types of plant on different soils or on dealing with pests. Obvious sponsors might be seed merchants or weedkiller manufacturers.

Similarly, holiday route guides or DIY maintenance might be of interest to motoring magazines, with car or accessory manufacturers as sponsors. Home decorating and colour scheming advertorials might be offered by paint and wallpaper companies; indeed the opportunities are many and varied.

## **The Structure**

The mechanics of the advertorial vary. Some editors try to avoid them altogether, others only include them under pressure from their promotions departments. This means that the copy and photographs are usually provided by the sponsor. Do not make the mistake of trying to write the piece yourself. It is better to hire a freelance expert who can write to the style of publication concerned and who will avoid the kind of PR cliches so beloved of the marketing department.

Remember that every time you use outside writers, whether for articles, advertorials or booklets, you will need to draw up a contract to cover all aspects of copyright.

Where photography is involved-and it usually is-it is even more important to get the style right. After all, the advertorial is intended to look as much like the other editorial pages as possible. Arrange a briefing meeting with representatives of the magazine and the sponsor, the author and the photographer to make sure that everyone knows exactly what is required.

The cost of any advertorial will depend upon the publication and the size of its circulation. If the cost is higher than your budget will stand it is possible to collaborate with one, two or even three other manufacturers to put together a bumper bundle. One national women's magazine recently carried an advertorial with no fewer than ten participating, but of course non-competing, manufacturers. However, you might well think that some of the impact is lost in such an exercise.

*The Booklets* : Associated booklets distributed with a magazine are another form of bought space, though they are a little less subtle in approach in that they are not bound into the publication and may have a different format. However, the editorial endorsement may still be fairly strong in that the booklet may carry the name of the magazine in its own title such as the 'Modern Woman's Guide to House Buying'. It may or may not go on to say 'produced in conjunction with brand X or company Y'.

The content of such a booklet is very similar to that of an advertorial. There is a relatively soft sell of the company's products or services and the copy is as useful as possible. The idea is to create goodwill by producing a really helpful guide or a series of ideas which will be of use to customers and potential customers. However, the shape and length of the booklet may be planned with effective presentation in mind. It will not be as limited by the size and shape of the magazine as the advertorial.

Distribution in conjunction with a particular publication can be expensive both in the distribution fee and in the cost of producing so many copies. It might therefore be worth considering the alternative of independent production and printing, relying on editorial mention for distribution. Booklets can be very popular indeed and some booklets have been taken up in large quantities.



### ***Checklist for Advertorials and Booklets***

1. Choose a subject which will be of interest to the readers of the magazine concerned and which will illustrate the best use of your organization's range of products.
2. The content must, first of all, be useful to the reader. Any attempt to introduce the sponsor's range of products must be low-key. This is not an advertisement in the usual sense.
3. Consider who is best qualified to write the copy. An independent or outside expert may be the answer.
4. Make sure that the photography or drawn illustrations are in keeping with the editorial image of the magazine.
5. Look at the costs involved and if these seem too high for your budget, consider joining with non-competing manufacturers.
6. Before committing yourself compare the various costs, advantages and disadvantages of advertorials against booklets.

***Special Offers*** : Special offers fall into two main categories: those which are really free give aways or are very cheap indeed and those which offer relatively expensive items at a discount.

***Free Offers*** : Free giveaways are almost always associated with new products and form part of the sampling operation which is often necessary for the public to acquire a taste for them. They may be physically attached to the front cover of the publication, slipped between the pages or offered on the editorial pages.

Items which are physically attached to the front cover gain in that they could not really be more prominently displayed and are bound to reach all the purchasers of the magazine. But they do need to be small enough to fit on the cover without taking up much space, and light enough not to tear the paper. Packaging can also cause a headache.

Slipping between the pages of a magazine may work for a sachet of shampoo or for a soup mix, but the product can very

easily slip out again and the end purchaser may not receive the sample.

Offers made on the editorial pages need to be particularly attractive or the readers will not take the trouble to send off their stamped addressed envelope. With all these promotions you must be prepared to give away large numbers of the product. The magazine may have a circulation of half a million or more. Even with editorial offers the magazine will want to be sure that stocks will not run out too soon, or there will be many disappointed readers.

*Discount Offers* : Special offers involving a discount, on the other hand, can both promote the product and bring in some revenue. However, magazines will drive a hard bargain and if you are to enjoy the advantages of full-page coverage you will have to offer a very good discount, guarantee stocks and pay a handling fee.

A problem arises with sample offers if you are not geared up for individual direct mail dispatch. Of course, you can hand the whole thing over to a direct mail house but there may still be additional and expensive packaging to design and pay for.

For some companies special offers are more difficult because their product may only be used by professionals, such as hairdressers, or it may be perishable and not suitable for selling through the post. Money-off vouchers are one answer, but they are not very popular with magazines and may not be well received by suppliers either. If you do try to use them you must be very sure that they will be honoured or you will be generating bad rather than goodwill.

#### *Checklist for Special Offers*

1. Does the cost of the product in question point to a free offer or a discount?
2. Is the product or sample small enough to slip between the pages of the magazine or can it easily be attached to the front cover?

3. Are you prepared to fulfil quite large demands for the sample or offer?
4. How is the discounted product to be dispatched and how is it to be protected en route? What is the cost of this?
5. If vouchers are under consideration will retailers be happy with the redemption system?

**Editorial Competitions :** A competition is another device for promoting your product or services by name in terms of both write-up and pictures. Most types of publication and indeed some radio stations will consider competitions. They are fun for their readers or audience and offer a chance to win something for nothing or at least for a very slight effort. Of course, the prizes are crucial. Ideally they should be associated with your product or services. They are also the means of 'buying' your way into the publication. Publications which run editorial competitions on a regular basis usually have a set price level, which may vary from as little as £100-£500 value for a small provincial weekly to around £25 000-plus for a national women's magazine. There may also be a handling fee.

**Prize Structure :** Bearing in mind that it is essential to include your own product somewhere in the prize structure, consider the size of the top prize *vis-a-vis* the second tier of prizes, whether there should be more than two tiers of prizes or whether there should be, say, 50 or 100 prizes of equal weight. Discuss these questions with the magazine's promotions department. They have the experience of many hundreds of competitions to call upon.

An electrical equipment manufacturer, for example, might decide to go for a fully-fitted kitchen including all their own appliances as the top prize, with a small number of runners-up receiving a toaster or sandwich maker. Alternatively the choice might be ten top prizes of the latest cooker with a larger number of small runners-up prizes or with two tiers of second-or third-level prizes.

Where the sponsor's product is low in value there may be 100 or 500 second-or third-tier prizes, the top prizes being taken

from other organizations in the form of holidays, cars or even cash. The latter is popular with the public but not with the sponsor, there being little chance of a discount.

**The Format :** After the prize structure has been established the next most important decisions will concern the competition format. This must be designed to attract entrants, but you will also want it to focus attention on your organization and its products. To some extent the format will depend upon the chosen publication and the likely number of entrants. If you are expecting thousands of entries the format will need to be such that it is easy to eliminate incorrect entries. A competition which requires every entry to be judged on its creative content, for example, would be impossible here.

Ideas for large-scale competitions are many and varied. They could involve matching a variety of situations or uses to a list of products or a list of items using those products; they could involve putting the benefits of the product in order of merit or they could take the form of a question and answer quiz with specified answers from which to choose.

All of these ideas can be prejudged for the correct answers, which can then be very quickly matched against each entry. They also have the advantage of having a great many permutations and combinations and this will cut the number of correct entries to a minimum, thus making final judging much easier.

In addition to the above format there must also be a tie-breaker. This gives the final level of judging between all the correct entries. This tie-breaker lends itself even more than the general format of the competition to focusing attention on the product in hand. 'I think Brand X is the best because is the theme of most tie-breakers.

This type of format can also be used where a smaller number of entrants is expected, but these competitions do offer an opportunity for getting some useful creative ideas from the public. Designs for cake decorations, recipes using a particular product, advertising slogans and the like could be the basis of the

competition. Do not forget, however, to include a clause in the rules stating that the sponsor will take the copyright of all entries.

This type of competition may take much longer to judge as the judges will have to look at all the entries. Similar ideas, some of which will come up rather frequently, can be removed by a preliminary screening, but there will still be a great deal to get through, so warn the judges in advance.

Another disadvantage of this type of competition is that it may look just a little too difficult and thus put off some of the would-be entrants. This might not matter too much if they have read all the competition copy first, but it is a point to watch. Local regional newspaper competitions should be particularly straightforward and simple to enter or the entry figures will be disappointing.

**Judges and Rules :** The choice of judges is fairly important and getting one or two well-known personalities on the panel could be a booster for the competition. In any event, you will need to have at least one independent judge who is unconnected with either the company or the publication.

The formulation of the rules is another easily overlooked, but very important, area. You do not necessarily need to take up space by publishing them with the competition but they must be readily available on request. It is probably worth taking advice from a specialist competitions house when organizing your first big competition. However, here are a few points to include:

1. Closing date for entries and address to which entries should be sent.
2. Prohibition of entry to anyone working for the companies involved in the competition, including the sponsors, publishing house competition handlers, and advertising or public relations consultants.
3. Statement that the judges' decision is final and that no correspondence will be entered into.
4. Statement on copyright in the designs, ideas or slogans.

5. Statement on elimination of incomplete, unreadable or changed entries.
6. Statement that proof of posting will not be taken as proof of receipt of an entry.
7. Statement that there is no cash alternative.

**Dispatch of Prizes :** The next stage in the planning should concern the dispatch of prizes to the winners. This is usually fairly easy to arrange if the prize is a holiday or a large piece of equipment and if the prize structure is fairly small. However, there may be large quantities of product to send out and special packaging may be needed. So liaise in good time with either your own dispatch department or an outside mail order company. This usually all works well with a large one-off competition, but if you have organized a series of regional newspaper competitions, for example, you will need to have a foolproof system to ensure that winners receive their prizes shortly after winning and you do not have irate editors ringing up saying that their readers are growing angry at the lack of delivery.

**Follow-up :** For the enterprising PRO the job does not end with the announcement of the winners. With a national competition there will be some valuable regional coverage to organize. The media in the winner's area may be interested in an interview and the newspapers will almost certainly take pictures of the presentation ceremony. Similarly, if runners-up win substantial prizes, arrange where possible for the handover to be on the premises of a local supplier. This will not only achieve your regional publicity; it will help to create goodwill within the trade and may even give you some material for the appropriate trade press.

### **Checklist for Editorial Competitions**

1. What are you hoping to achieve by the competition? The answer to this question could affect the rest of the checklist
2. What kind of prize structure is most appropriate to your product range and does this fit in with the experience of the publication?

3. Plan the competition format to maximize the publicity value of the competition bearing in mind ease of entry and ease of judging.
4. Draw up the rules with the legal requirements in mind and make sure that everything is covered.
5. Organize the packing and dispatch of prizes.
6. Plan a follow-up programme of media activity to maximize the benefits of the competition.

### *Significant Points*

1. Bought editorials and promotions can be a useful means of publicizing products and services which have passed their first peak of interest.
2. Advertorials are acceptable to a wide range of editors, and they can be made to look like editorial copy. To be effective they must be professionally produced.
3. Booklets, too, are a useful way of generating media coverage but they must be relatively soft-sell, particularly if you are expecting to distribute them through the media.
4. Think about free giveaways as a useful sampling operation for a new or misunderstood product.
5. Editorial competitions offer another device for promoting products and services through the media.

Take care with both the prize structure and the competition format: both will affect the numbers entering the competition.

**Sub-editing** : It is a curious thing that some sub-editors who can do an excellent job editing copy reach a stage of mental panic when it comes to giving a headline to the story. Not every heading, of course, can be dashed off in a moment, but the trouble frequently is that of ten the sub-editor finds that he has just that much time available to him and not more. He can't wait for eternity to conjure up that brilliant headline which will be the talk of the town the next morning. For the sub-editor, eternity is measured in seconds, especially if it is time to go to press and a major story breaks at that psychological moment.

The sub-editor works within certain limitations—the number of letters and spaces that will go into a line. That is why some newspapers indulge in what may be called “headlinese” in which an inquiry becomes a “probe,” a child becomes a “kid” and an attempt at anything becomes a “bid.”

What constitutes a satisfactory heading? There are some simple guidelines:

It must fit.

It must tell a story.

It must conform to the paper’s standard.

It must not be just a label.

It must be safe.

It must not commit the paper to an opinion. In other words, it must not editorialize.

At its best, a well-worded headline can actually excite a reader and make him want to read, first by telling the reader what the story is about, and doing it in quick and easy form. The reader has to be literally seduced into reading the text—the body of the story.

When several construction workers were killed in a building collapse in Bombay, the *Free Press Journal* ran a full seven-column headline on the front page that said:

### **TONS OF SOIL OVER SONS OF TOIL**

The headline clicked despite its somewhat irreverent tone and disregard to the sanctity of human lives.

The importance of headlines can scarcely be underestimated. The headline is like air and water, taken for granted and yet without it, no newspaper can possibly sell it will be a sea of letterpress, each story differing from its neighbour only in length—all unreadable. All an Holcomb writing in *Late City Edition* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.) put the art of headline writing in its perspective when he said:



A newspaper may be judged pretty accurately by its headlines. If its aim is to amuse and shock its readers first, and inform them afterwards, its heads will display an intensive repertory of shockers and thrillers. When a balanced news perspective is the idea, the head writer will endeavour to get the picture in focus, use just the right word and avoid the bromide, the shopworn phrase and the wisecrack.

The *Blitz*, for example, is well-known for the wisecrack and the bromide, the use of catch-words like Moralji for Morarji, in order to draw the reader's attention.

The headline, of course, is a part of the display. And the art of giving headlines is really the art of salesmanship *in excels is*. With right headlines and pleasing display, even a dull news page can be considerably brightened, though it is necessary to emphasize that typography of a newspaper is not a thing in itself. Typography and make-up are only vehicles of journalism by themselves they do not constitute journalism. Good journalism comes first, except that good journalism can get lost if presented poorly. As Alan Hutt, author of the standard work *Newspaper Design* (he was also chief sub-editor of *The Daily Worker*) put it, "High-grade content requires corresponding form; and the relationship of *form* and *content* is central to all newspaper typography". But before going into details about headline writing, we might learn some technical data about type size and all the rest.

Printers, for example, measure their work not by the inch but by the *pica*, which is one-sixth of an inch; and the *non-pareil* which is half a pica. And they measure advertising matter by the *agate line*, which is one-fourteenth of an inch.

Similarly, type size is designated in units of one-seventy-second of an inch, called *points*. Point size refers to the height of the type measured from top to bottom in its tray.

Type width is measured in units called *ems*. The standard or 12 point em measures one-sixth of an inch. Accordingly, we call

a newspaper column that is two inches wide a 12-em column. The *em* of any size type is the square of the body of that type.

The type in which a paper is set is called the *body type* of that paper. The minimum range of sizes needed for any newspaper's text is three: one for the body (7 point or 8 point), one for intros (9 point or 10 point) and one for smaller ads and other minimum size setting like race cards, radio programmes and the like (6 point, 5½ point or 5 point). The narrower the column, the more readable the small type; contrariwise, a body type (say, 7 point) set across two columns, will be hard to read. For a two column intro the type should be atleast 10 point.

**Style for Intros:** There are two good reasons why stories of any length or prominence should always open with a paragraph in a larger size type. First is that the reader's attention is caught and held. If the intro is in the same size as the body, the effect is flat and not catching. Second is the normal journalistic practice of making the opening paragraph-the lead-convey the most important point in the story; setting it in a larger size suitably signals. its importance to the reader.

An intro could run into two; three or even four columns depending entirely on the importance of the story. Spread over three or four columns the length of the intro must be such that it will not look unbalanced in the context of the full lay-out of the page. Nothing is more clumsy or unbalanced than an over-lengthy intro or, for that matter, an intro that is too short. A well-conducted newspaper will always prescribe maximum wordage for intros of different column-width and type-size.

For the shorter down-page doubles, the largest normal size of text, say 9 point, provides a perfectly adequate double-column intro. But for tops or page leads with double column or three-column intros 112 point or even 14 point is usual for the opening. one or two paragraphs.

But, once this is set, the principle of *shading over* comes in. That is to say, copy in intermediate sizes should be used to shade easily down to the body size.

Thus, if 14 point type is used for the lead paragraph-the intro the second para could be set in 12 point, the third in 10 point, the fourth in 8 point and so on to the body type which would be in 7 point.

In single-column setting, the use of one larger size for the intro (say 9 point) and then straight into the body, would solve the problem. Sometimes, after the 9 point intro, a further refinement could be introduced by setting the second paragraph in 8 point and so shade it into the third paragraph which would be in 7 point.

It is usual in all such instances to use drop letters to start off the intro. Drop letters, it is needless to say, should agree with the typographical display of the paper. Thus, if the headline dress is Century, then Century should be used for the drops and so on.

Generally speaking drop letters should not be more than two line in depth. Three-line (or even larger) drop letters are only suitable for magazine features and are best avoided in newspaper display.

Considering that the entire exercise is to make the page stand out, certain gimmicks are used by the sub-editor toward that end. One is proper paragraphing. Proper paragraphing and paragraph-leading are important factors in making a newspaper page easy on the eye, because they increase the *horizontal* white space showing.

The other is achieving a suitable variety of short, medium and larger paragraphs to secure a varied breaking of the page.

The third is the proper use of indenting. The *Roman* indent is the primary form of indentation. A paragraph in roman text is simply indented an extra *em* quad on the left. Thus, the first line of the paragraph has two *ems* on the front, the other lines just one. This provides a reasonable break in the copy.

Black indent is much the same as the roman, except that the paragraph is set in black (the text fount's duplexed bold face). The sub-editor should be careful not to overdo the black indent since it could give the page an irritatingly spotty appearance.

The idea, usually, is to indent a paragraph that the sub-editor wants to draw attention to because of the importance of the information contained in it. But some sub-editors use indenting strictly for the sake of display, a gimmickry that is best discouraged.

There is the third type of indenting—the reverse, or hanging indent—in which the first line is set full-out to the measure and the remainder of the paragraph indented one *em*. In this type of indenting the first line hangs over the white of the following indentation.

In addition to indenting, and varying the length of the paragraphs, another measure open to the sub-editor is sub-heading. The sub-heading may be set centred or flush left and is either set in caps or upper and lower case, always in black or in a slightly larger size, dictated by the needs of style. The centred single-line sub-head, written to retain reasonable white each end is usually preferred. As with indented paragraphs, whether in roman or bold, so in regard to sub-headings, it is important to remember that there should not be too many of them and that “bunching” should be avoided. And nothing looks more slovenly than a sub-heading placed two or three lines from the bottom of a column.

Mention must also be made of what is called centred indent, in which the paragraph is indented an even amount on each side, usually one en (a nut) for single column in the narrow measures now customary and one em (a mutton) for double column. The sub-editor can thus specify (indent t and t) or 1 and 1, or, in the press room language indent nut (or mutton) each end. Some subs do not like such indent in the body of the text and prefer to use it with rules up and down to signify a box.

Every news paper has at its disposal a variety of types to choose from, such as Cheltenham, Century, Caslon, Caledonia and the brilliant Bodoni. Bodoni itself comes in Bodoni Light, Bodoni Roman, Bodoni Italic, Bodoni Bold and Bodoni Bold Italic that should provide an imaginative sub-editor enough to make a beautiful display. Most newspapers use set sizes, so that they

need not carry enormous stocks. In general these are 5t pt, 6 pt, 7 pt, 8 pt, 10 pt, 12 pt, 14 pt, 18 pt, 24 pt, 30 pt, 36 pt, 42 pt, 48 pt, 60 pt, 72 pt, 84 pt, 96 pt and 108 pt.

It is customary for newspapers to prepare their own type-book examples of each size of type-for the sub-editors to use. A sophisticated newspaper will stick to only one type, as it gives a most pleasing appearance.

**By-lines and Date-lines:** Among a number of subsidiary points of text-setting that are largely questions of style-they vary from paper to paper-are by-lines and date lines. There is no special virtue in flaunting the name of the special correspondent in glaring extra-bold sans. In the first place, not many readers are impressed and in the second place, the focus on the correspondent detracts from the merits of the story. A story should stand by itself without needing supportive strength from a correspondent, however distinguished he may be.

It is customary with personal by-lines that the name of the writer is set in caps. In some western countries it is not rare that by-line and date-line are combined in one line, though that is not a very desirable custom. In Indian newspapers the rule is to place the by-line immediately beneath the heading as noted below:

### **MISHRA SON URGES PROBE**

By B.M. Sinha

Express News Service.

The date line is given in a separate line, flushed to the right. Thus:

Patna, June 16.

Mr. Vijay Kumar Mishra, eldest son of Mr. L.N. Mishra...

It is arguable whether the use of the "by" is necessary. Modern usage permits dropping of the preposition.

In the matter of giving headlines, it is wise to allow a *full* character between words, that is the width of a whole letter rather

than a half. If only a half is allowed, some headings may appear too tight, and therefore difficult to read.

The sub should know-and if he does not, he ought to learn fast by looking up earlier issues of his newspaper-the exact capacity of each line in a head. Types are not elastic and column width is fixed and headlines, alas, are written to fit the space assigned to them. If a line has room for exactly 20 units of a certain type, the sub cannot expect the printer to accommodate one extra unit. It simply cannot be done.

In counting units a sub must remember that all letters count for one unit with the exception of M, W or dash (-) which measure as one and-a-half-unit each. Period, comma, colon, semicolon, exclamation mark, hyphen, apostrophe, I and figure 1 count as one half unit. There may be slight variations in the method depending on type faces, but this rule generally holds good. e.g.

#### **FORMATION OF ANDHRA STATE**

1111 ½ 11½11 11 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

To count the exact number of words that can go into a column, the spaces between the words have also to be taken into account. Or else one may get a line that runs:

#### **FORMATION OF ANDHRA STATE**

There are some points worth noting while giving headlines. The keyword in the headline must be found in the lead para. Thus:

#### **WORKERS KILLED IN FIRING**

Express News Service.

Pune, June 17.

Labour unrest aggravated by industrial shutdown due to power scarcity exploded at the Bajaj auto unit at Akurdi this morning leaving three workers dead in police firing.

Generalizations should be frowned upon. Importantly, specific facts should be incorporated in the headline. If it is a two, three

or four-decker headline, care should be taken to see that the same word is not repeated in the remaining decks. A good sub should never exaggerate. Better to use a question mark to denote doubt, e.g.,

***SUBHAS BOSE SEEN IN PEKING?***

The story might suggest that a man resembling Netaji had been seen in a monk's garb in Peking, but to draw from it the inference that Bose was indeed seen in Peking is to impose on the reader's credulity.

At the same time a sub will see to it that too many headlines don't end in question marks. That is likely to shake the confidence of the reader in the newspaper. The question mark must be used sparingly.

A cardinal principle in giving headlines is the free use of the present tense. Take the instance of a train crash the previous day.

The temptation would be to be accurate, time-wise, and give this, heading:

***20 WERE HURT AS TRAINS CRASHED***

The sub would then be implying that the trains crashed the previous day and not on the day the newspaper was out. But that would be taking the excitement out of the story. The reader has to be given a sense of active presence at the spot where the trains crashed. Hence, the more appropriate heading would be:

***20 ARE HURT AS TRAINS CRASH***

In practice, however, the tense is simply implied, so that the heading would read:

***20 HURT AS TRAINS CRASH***

The urgency of the heading is also increased by the use of the "active" voice and not the passive. Thus:

**MASKED MEN SHOOT BANK MANAGER**

is better than

**BANK MANAGER IS SHOT BY MASKED MEN**

As well as implying such verbs as “are” and “is”, the definite and indefinite articles can generally be omitted. Dropping “the” and “a” also economizes on words as well as adding speed to the reading of headlines.

### ***DEVI WANTS ASSEMBLY MEET ON JUNE 28***

There is virtue in dropping verbs and articles. In the case of ***BANK MANAGER IS SHOT BY MASKED MEN***

There is a slackening of the pace as if the shooting of the unfortunate bank manager really doesn't matter very much. Equally worse, the heading is wordy and awkward to read.

Headline space is precious. It should not be wasted. Every word in the headline must earn its place. Also nothing should be included in the headline that does not add to its power. Vagueness and ambiguity should be avoided. Thus:

### ***THIEVES GRAB RS 1 CRORE GEMS***

is better than

### ***VALUABLE JEWELLERY STOLEN***

“Valuable jewellery” is vague; the word “stolen” is weak and it does not tell who did the stealing. But the first heading tells it all.

Thieves did the stealing. They just did not steal. They “grabbed” which is more powerful a verb. And we are told that the items stolen were not jewellery-which could mean anything-but gems, which is more specific.

There was a time when multiple deck headlines were the rule and not the exception. This gave the sub-editor plenty of opportunity to tell the entire story, though the style was not without its pitfalls. But the multiple-deck style is rapidly going out of fashion if it has not gone out already and the trend increasingly is to give one line headlines that take less space and help in page lay-out. This places a special burden on the sub who has now to find ways mid means not only to make the headline



snappy, but meaningful and complete in itself. This is any day a harder task.

Some newspapers circumvent this by giving a shoulder heading, left flush, with or without a rule underneath, to strengthen the main headline. Thus:

5-day shut-out of all general units

**WORST POWER CUT IN STATE**

OR

The great split begins

**URS SACKS RIVAL**

Sometimes both the shoulder heading and the main headline are in lower case though, obviously, the shoulder heading would be in smaller point.

The one-line headline, it must be said, not only saves space but eases the sub-editor's task of designing the page. Thus:

**BOOST FOR ANTI-CPM ACTION**

can be conveniently contained in three columns with copy equally distributed in three columns.

With headlines spread over two and more columns increasingly limited to one liners, attention may be focussed on how to give a single column headline. They are of four kinds: Stepped, inverted pyramid, Long, short, long and flushed head.

Stepped: Here is one variation:

**zzzzz zzz**

**zzz zzzzz**

**zzzz zzzz**

Inverted pyramid: This is used often in a single column, though, in the past it has been used effectively across two and three columns as well.

**ZZZZZZZ**

**ZZZZZ**

**ZZZ**

The character count must reduce evenly throughout the decks of the heading.

Long, short, long: This has many variations, but basically it should be remembered that the longest line should be the *first* one:

**ZZZ ZZZZ**

**ZZZZ**

**ZZZZZZZ**

It is uncommon these days of single line three or four column headlines to indulge in single column over-three line headline. But the long, short, long headline can be extended. e.g.

**ZZZZ ZZZZ**

**ZZZZZZZZ**

**ZZZ ZZZZZ**

**ZZZZZZZ**

The flushed head: This is becoming more popular, with headlines set flush either left or right. e.g.

**ZZZZ ZZZ**                      **ZZZZZZZZZ**

**ZZ ZZZ**            or            **ZZZZZZ**

**ZZZZ**                              **ZZZ ZZZ**

**ZZZZZ**                            **ZZZZZ**

**ZZZZZZZ**                        **ZZ ZZZZ**

There could be variations of the style depending on what words are used. Also it is well to remember that although the word "flush" is used, the effect is more satisfactory if the headline

is not set flush, but indented, so that the edge stands away from the column rule.

**Boxes:** "Boxes," indented copy set either in single or double columns but mostly in single columns were popular in another day and age but are now going out of fashion. They would look as in the examples below:

<b>zzzzz</b>	<b>zzzzz</b>
<b>zzz</b>	<b>zzz</b>
<b>zzz</b>	<b>zzz</b>
<b>zzzzz</b>	<b>zzz</b>

**The Art of Attraction:** The first thing to remember about headlines is that they must be attractive; this means that the sub must choose the best headline type available and concentrate on it. For contrast he may use roman or italic, lower case or caps and either a bolder or lighter version of the same face. If this range is not always available, the sub should pick one other type which "marries" well with what he has. But whatever the type face he has used, the art of laying out a page lies in giving just the right headline size, starting with big headlines at the top of the page and grading them proportionately as one goes down. Bold types can be a size smaller than light type, caps, again, smaller than lower case.

Each story must look as if it is separate and not belonging to the next. Where two stories "belong" to each other then they are separated not by a line but by white space, indicating the link between the two stories.

The evolution of news page make-up in recent years may simply be described as from the *vertical* to the *horizontal*. The process began with the development of the double-column and multi-column streamer, but it reached full stature only in the last few years when make-up men realized the sophistication of the one-line headline and the wastage of the double and triple decker.

The make-up man will remember not to make a page top-

heavy. In fact “strength below the fold” must be considered the first principle of good lay-out. For any page to be “dynamic” this principle should be followed to the letter. A weak “below the fold” make-up does not command respect. The page hangs limp and unattended. The aim should be to command overall attention and this is only achieved by giving attention to the whole page and not just to the top of the fold which is what a passer-by notes when he goes by a news stand. A powerful, exciting top of the fold lay-out is obviously a must, but an equally authoritative lower half gives the front page status.

One obvious way to make the top of the fold attractive is to use cartoons or pictures that illustrate the lead story. A plane has crashed or a train is wrecked. A good news editor will see to it that pictures are quickly obtained and suitably captioned. Giving captions is an art by itself. It is jejune to say “Our picture shows... This formula is fine for the photographer whose job it is to identify the pictures he has taken, but is not suited to the front page. The caption has to be written so that it is as exciting as the picture itself. A poor picture can be, in fact, given added excitement by proper captioning. A rule to follow is not to use the same type for both the body text and the caption. Type for the caption must stand out as separate. It should also be set nut or em each side. Additionally captions are best not set across more than two columns; three column captions can fatigue the eye and in the end, it is the eye which is the medium we use. To tire the reader is to lose a reader and nothing could be more tiring to set three or more column caption in 8 pt.

If there is more than one picture on the same subject, use the caption to help divide them. This avoids such clumsy explanations as “Above (left)... above (centre)...(left)” etc.

Pictures must be chosen with great care. Cropping of pictures to eliminate unnecessary detail contributes towards making them visually more effective and exciting. It is advisable not to use pictures that are too glory. The reader’s sensibility must be respected, not assaulted. Tabloids use pictures to titillate, but a family paper will avoid needless nudity.

Also, when pictures of famous personalities are chosen it is well to choose the latest pictures. Pictures are news too, if news is what happened only a moment ago, why should not pictures also be the latest? To illustrate the obituary of a man who died at 80 with a picture of him taken when he was 45 is bad journalism and worse news sense. Tired old blocks of a Prime Minister or other familiar figures make for tired old papers. But if the Prime Minister yawns at a solemn moment or a foreign minister emerges smiling from a tough conference or a grim-faced doctor leaves the bedside of a dying great man, those faces tell their own story. A reader always looks at pictures before he reads the text. Pictures therefore demand generous treatment.

But pictures by themselves are not enough. Readers *need* captions. They must understand what the picture is about. The sub should not assume that the reader knows what he knows. This holds good especially of foreign celebrities and lesser known local politicians.

Magazines and newspapers are agreed on one thing; they want photographs of the first order, namely, quality pictures. This, of course, presumes that the paper they use is of high quality as well. Even the best photographs do not reproduce well if newspapers use poor quality newsprint, as is frequently the case in India. In this regard managements are helpless they must often take what is available to them or what is supplied to them. And if managements are helpless, even more so are chief subs who often have no idea what sort of newsprint is available to them on a day to day basis.

Dynamic pictures and those that tell a story-pictures, in other words, that are self-sufficient-would naturally be quickly acceptable. Close-ups of individuals are usually better than more distant views, but the photographer need not hurry to get the mug-shot. If he is patient, he may get his "victim" unawares yawning or perhaps scratching his head which would any day make a more interesting picture than a regular one. Besides, action shots are far better than static poses. A politician gesticulating wildly or

flaying his arms would provide a better picture than the man at ease.

Posed pictures, especially for magazines, are legitimate devices. If a magazine wants a quick picture of a motor accident, it cannot wait for an accident to take place. The photographer can arrange for an "accident" complete with a covered body and plenty of "blood" in the shape of tomato juice. There is hardly a single newspaper in India which employs its own pictographer or cartographer. Newspapers depend on syndicate pictographs and maps. Too often readers are told of a flood in some part of Uttar Pradesh or Bengal and the reader is left to guess where the particular flooded area is. One good map can provide more information than: a hundred words of explanation. Maps, specially that locate boundaries' topographical features, cities and villages are almost indispensable in articles on distant states or foreign lands.

Many people still believe that Berlin is on the border between East and West Germany. And it is a grave impositiotti on the reader's knowledge of geography for him to be expected to know where Lome is or Timbuctoo.

Of all newspapers and magazines, *The New York Times* and the *National Geographic* with the German magazine *Geo* now giving stiff competition provide the best maps and charts. *The National Geographic* especially gives the utmost attention to the writing of captions. Caption-writing at the *Geographic* is treated with as much respect as the photograph itself or the article it is illustrating. Caption-writing is serious business and captions go through several drafts before one is accepted.

*The Illustrated Weekly of India* has justly become famous for its captioning of pictures. A picture of a lovely damsel in the barest of clothes swimming is entitled: "Beauty and the beach...." Another caption said: WAILS OVER VEILS. "Miss Tunisia" Malek Nemlaghi was thrown out of the Miss World competition because she refused, on religious grounds, to strip down to shorts and T-shirts for the line-up parade. The picture of Miss Teenage Inter-

continental was entitled: AN INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILE...And a picture of a man rowing across a flooded street seated in a frying pan was entitled: "FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO.. Necessity is the mother of invention for this man in Varansi who, during the floods, rowed to safety in a huge frying pan using a slotted spoon for an oar..."

Most photographers are fastidious when it comes to getting details for their pictures but some justifiably expect a reporter to accompany them on assignments. Photographers could be too busy concentrating on taking the picture than on finding out what was relevant of the pictures they had taken.

Captions generally fall into four categories:

- (1) Describing a picture which is *part* of a story running along side that picture. Here, the caption should be brief.
- (2) Describing a picture where they story is published elsewhere in the paper. Here the caption should be fuller. Or the sub can give a teaser caption: "Why is Mrs. Gandhi smiling at Dev Raj Urs? Find out on page 6.
- (3) The self-contained caption where there is *no* accompanying story. In this case the caption must be as complete as possible.
- (4) The story caption where a picture illustrated a story for which there are not enough facts to have that story stand in its own right in the paper. In this instance, the caption should be absolutely complete since there will be no cross-references.

**The Front Page:** The front page is, news-wise, the most important page in a newspaper and must be designed with the loving care a bride bestows on herself on her wedding day. One can reduce a page make-up to a pat formula. This has its uses; the reader will become familiar with it and come to expect it day after day. On the other hand, a predictable front page make-up may lead to boredom. The reader expects variety and not uniformity

of approach. Change is the spice as much of front page make-up as of life.

There is always the nagging question: should the news fit the make-up or the make-up follow the news? On a routine day when no big news is expected (which is rare indeed) and no big news actually breaks-out, the chief sub can probably amuse himself trying to make the news fit the make-up. But when big news is breaking all over, it is hazardous to stick to a pre-conceived layout. That is falling into a trap. As a general rule it may therefore be said that the layout must fit the news, never *vice versa*.

Of course, no news page make-up can be left entirely blank until every major news story has been finally weighed and given its appropriate position. That may be desirable, but is not always practical. In the circumstances, a certain amount of planning will be necessary. But within the necessary technical limits, no make. TIP should be regarded as sacrosanct. It should be amenable to last-minute changes.

For precise page-planning, scaled miniature make-up blanks are usually available in most newspapers. With these, the chief sub-editor will draw up the page as it should finally emerge, knowing before hand what stories have broken or are due to break and how they should be positioned on the front page. It is customary to give the lead where people are used to look for it most-top left. The lead obviously calls for the bigger headline, and perhaps a deeper into. Once the lead is positioned, the second and third leads could easily be placed. If a picture or a cartoon has isolated-the main lead, the second lead would be on top right. This follows the non-Arabic reading habit-from left to right. The third lead could be placed immediately below the picture with scaled down type-face.

In planning a layout, there are two possibilities: the symmetrical and the asymmetrical. In the symmetrical layout, the eye does not wander as much as in the asymmetrical layout which, if well executed, could be very exciting. Such a layout would include



pictures, cut boxes, deep multiple column intros, and flushed large type sub-heads. But the asymmetrical lay-out poses one major problem it makes sudden changes very difficult to affect, besides contributing to a good deal of time being wasted on the stone. Happily, it is rapidly going out of fashion.

A newspaper composed entirely of single column tops is said to be the ultimate in vertical make-up. *The Hindu* of the thirties and forties and even much later stuck to this style faithfully and that had its own dignity. It has since been discarded with no regrets. Today's *Hindu* has a more attractive and certainly not less dignified lay-out keeping up with the times.

The Thomson Foundation's *Guide to Advanced Techniques in Journalism* advises not to run one double column story immediately under another in the name of symmetry but suggests use of single columns side by side. For asymmetry the Guide suggests staggering the lower double-column to the left or right of the column. Some make-up men would disagree with that. Some would also deplore any scheme in which a single rule runs unbroken from top to bottom of the page. This may be taking the asymmetry theory too rigidly. The purpose, as always must be to strive to make a page attractive visually and correct technically; rigidity is clearly prescribed.

Talking of rules, nothing makes a page look more shabby than worn and badly-jointed column rules. Subs should insist on super vising rule work. There are a number of standard weights and style of rule from the ordinary column rule normally used for story division to the overly heavy. Some papers prefer to increase the weight of their story cut-offs by using medium rule. This, needless to say, does not apply to feature pages where more decorative rules are permitted and may even be prescriptive.

In the end a truly good-looking front page is the result as much of design as of accident. After all the effort has been put in, the page next day may look scrappy, dull or too contrived. But only chief subs know why and they don't have to be told. So

many imponderables go into the making of the front page, like inefficient composing rooms, untrained subs, shoddy reportorial work and pressure from circulation managers to go to press earlier than usual or a major newsbreak just when everything was set and ready. It needs an especially efficient composing room, a subs' desk that can work as a team, smart reporters submitting clean copy and some luck to provide the ideal front page. And that would be asking too much.

But asking from reporters for clean copy is not asking too much. Asking subs not to while their time but to send down at least one galley of tightly-written "fillers" for later use is not asking too much. If the flow of copy is smooth and steady, pressure would not build up at the last moment, a point that cannot be stressed too much on subs. Proof-readers would be grateful to them for this act of considerateness.

Senior sub-editors and certainly the chief sub-editor would be alert to news developments and would wait for the news to break. This is part of his job, to know when and how news of importance should be expected and to prepare for the contingency. When Acharya Vinoba Bhave, for example, went on a fast unto death to force Parliament to amend the Constitution and bring cow protection in the Concurrent List news desks would have been well set to face up to the prospect of (a) last minute political activity leading to his calling off the fast or (b) his death and its likely repercussions. As it turned out, Acharya Bhave called off his fast. This was announced by United News of India (UNI) in as-ring flash:

### **FLASH**

**ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE BREAKS HIS FAST: UNI TBG RDM  
1600**

UNI repeated the flash three times in a calling-attention message. The Press Trust of India was late by 15 minutes in making the same announcement.

**SNAP SNAP SNAP BOM 43 GEN (COW-BHAVE-FAST)**

**PAUNAR, APRIL 26 (PTI)-THE BHOODAN LEADER ACHARYA  
VINOBA BHAVE GAVE UP HIS FAST AT 15:55 HOURS**

**TODAY**

**PTL CVN/MJA/TIV 26/0-ZM 1615**

**URGENT**

**BOM 44 GEN COW BHAVE EAST TWO-PAUNAR PTI ACHARYA  
BHAVE ACCEPTED HONEY AND WATER TO BREAK HIS FAST  
PTI**

**URGENT**

**BOM 45 GEN COW BHAVE FAST THREE-PAUNAR PTI ACHARYA  
A DADA DHARMADHIKARI OFFERED THE BHOODAN LEADER  
HONEY AND WATER PTI CVN/SND! MJ/KVP 26/4 1616**

**URGENT**

**BOM 46 GEN COW BHAVE FAST FOUR PAUNAR PTI PRIOR  
TO BREAKING HIS FAST, ACHARYA BHAVE WAS PRESENT AT  
THE PRAYER MEETING HELD TO MARK THE OCCASSION:**

**MORE PTI CVN/GSK/KVP 26/4 1617**

**URGENT**

**BOM 47 GEN COW BHAVE FAST FIVE PAUNAR PTI TODAY  
WAS THE FIFTH DAY OF THE INDEFINITE FAST THAT THE  
BHOODAN LEADER HAD STARTED TO DEMAND TOTAL BAN  
ON COW SLAUGHTER IN THE STATES OF WEST BENGAL AND  
KERALA: MORE PTI CVN/GSK/KVP 26/4 1618**

The UNI, having beaten PTI with the news followed with a Top Priority message.

**TOP PRIORITY**

BY 35

**LEAD BHAVE FAST END PAUNAR, APR 26 (UNI) ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE BROKE HIS FIVE DAY OLD FAST BY TAKING HONEY AND WATER OFFERED BY HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATE ACHARIA DADA DHARMADHIKARI THIS AFTERNOON:**

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY PRIME MINISTER MORARJI DESAI IN THE LOK SABHA THAT A BILL TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO MAKE COW PROTECTION A CONCURRENT SUBJECT WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT RESULTED IN ENDING: OF ACHARYA BHAVE'S FAST MEANT TO PRESS HIS DEMAND THAT TOTAL BAN ON COW SLAUGHTER BE IMPOSED IN KERALA AND WEST BENGAL: MORE UNI TBG CM PE RD 1625**

The Press Trust of India gave a "lead all" at 1956 hours.

**URGENT**

**BOM 74 GEN-XX LEAD ALL COW:**

**UNDATED (PTI): ACHARYA VINOBA BRAVE TODAY (THURSDAY) ENDED HIS FIVE DAY OLD FAST AFTER WINNING ASSURANCES FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA THAT IT WILL MOVE TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION AND BRING FORWARD LEGISLATION FOR A COUNTRY-WIDE BAN ON COW SLAUGHTER WHICH HE HAS DEMANDED: THE PRIME MINISTER, MR: MORARJI DESAI, TOLD THE LOK SABHA THE 84-YEAR OLD GANDHI AN LEADER'S HEALTH WAS "FAST BECOMING UNSA TISF ACTORY" AND ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS TAKING STEPS TO BRING COW PROTECTION IN THE CONCURRENT LIST OF THE CONSTITUTION: THIS WOULD ENABLE THE CENTRE TO BRING FORWARD LEGISLATION TO BAN COW SLAUGHTER ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND BYPASS WEST BENGAL AND KERALA WHERE THE CPI-M AND CPI-LED GOVERNMENTS HAVE REMAINED ADAMANT AGAINST SUCH LEGISLATION:**

**WITHIN AN HOUR, SOON AFTER THE PTI MESSAGE ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT REACHED PAUNAR, ACHARYA BHAVE BROKE HIS FAST BY SIPPING A FEW TEASPOONS OF HONEY AND WATER: THE NATION HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF AS A MEDICAL BULLETIN HAD REPORTED EARLIER THAT HIS CONDITION HAD DETERIORATED FURTHER AND WAS CAUSING "GREAT ANXIETY:" MORE PTI: TEAM/GSK/KVP 26/4**

The breaking of the fast became the lead story in morning newspapers. In this instance, the story broke early in the evening and the chief sub-editor had plenty of time to plan his front page. He would have been sorely tried if the story had broken, say, half an hour before the time to go to press, in which latter case he might have been compelled either to wait or to go ahead with another lead.

## Leader Writing

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Garrison's reports which on each issue of *The Indian Social Reformer*, "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. I am in earnest-I will not equivocate-I will not excuse-I will not retreat a single inch-and I will be heard." Here lies the soul of the matter. Lowell in one of his poem writes about.

Garrison his expertise in editing,  
his dauntlines spirit,  
and his workmanship with the places.

### Basic Requirements

Coming down from the equipment and training of the writer to the needs of newspaper offices, it should be remembered that there are certain features that are common to all newspapers, and individual variations. The difference among newspapers is in the editorial columns. The young editor has to bear in mind that every that every policy matters should be commented. Policy commitments should be kept to a minimum and on broad issues. A newspaper which seeks to make an issue of every subject, will soon find itself in trouble.

The distinction comes here in between the editorial and the

leader. Obviously there are fewer leaders. According to the books on journalism, the "leader" is the principal article in the newspaper. But definitions have revealed a great deal of confused thinking. One writer insists that it is the first editorial; another derives its origin from the practice of "leading" out the article in order of draw greater attention; and yet a third would restrict it to editorials which give a lead to the readers. Neither position nor manner of display can lend importance to an article.

The old form of the editorial has often deviated from the break up into three sections: topic, development, conclusion.

The informative or interpretative editorial, which makes up the greater number of editorial writings, has to conform to this pattern as a normal rule.

The appreciative or the critical article affords greater possibilities of variation in style.

The editorial in itself a class a rare feature in Indian journalism. It depends to a great extent to the individual writer.

It is not essential to say that controversial writing must be convincing and interesting; often it is resorted to because it attracts more easily than other writing. The informative editorials and human interest articles must given the reader something new and different. If you cannot hold the reader's attention in the first few sentences, it is not likely that you will be read at all. And though there is considerable doubt these days whether editorials are ever read, the editorial writer should be the last to think that no one will read him. Unfortunately, the writer who gives thought to his work is assured of readers nor even that his work will be recognized.

But, on the other hand, by neglecting precision he is not certain either of making a mark. He may at least give himself the satisfaction of feeling he has done a good job. For the young journalist, it cannot be too strongly impressed that there is no shortcut not even by way of that tempting feature, the gossip column.

It is reported that newspapers differ. There are variations from place to place. The studies editorials of *The Hindu* of Madras would be out of place in any other centre of Indian journalism; the lighter touch of the Bombay press is unmistakable—the informal style of the *Free Press Journal*, the editorial table of the *Bharat*

Jyoti, and the light third editorials of the daily newspapers have not been copied elsewhere; Bengal writing has a recognizable character, indulging as it does in a heavy style reminiscent of an earlier age. A study of editorials in the leading newspapers of these centres and of the Union capital will benefit the student of journalism considerably.

Apart from this there are the oddities of individual editor which no student will need to know from personal experience. When I first joined the Pioneer, I was sub-editor, and my attempts to submit an occasional editorial were frowned upon by the assistant editors, who felt that I was encroaching on their sacred preserve, and by the news editor, who objected that "those hulking brutes (the writing staff) are not enough to do as it is without your easing their burden".

### **The Distinction**

Newspapers are distinct among themselves and in fact cannot be ignored this is obviously truer of the one-man productions which are still quite numerous in Indian journalism but which have to a great future and are not of importance to students of journalism who look upon it as a profession. The significance of newspapers in public life they may or may not be significant though the chances are that a man who is determined enough to enter on the adventure and to keep it up, is important enough to be listened to. But they are necessarily limited in time, and, if they are not linked to some organization or group, they lack the resources needed in modern journalism. Certainly it requires teamwork, even if it is indirectly, in attracting a strong group of able writers.

Today there are no tall poppies in public life and, therefore, one cannot expect journals to come into being like Gandhiji's Young India and Harijan, Mrs. Besant's New Indian and Mohammed Alai's Weeklies. The emphasis has shifted from opinion to information, and on the whole it is a healthy change, what has to be guarded against is that it does not also mean change from opinion and conviction to interest. Opinion, a weekly started by A.D. Gorwala, a publication of editorials alone without any other news reports or features. A slim 4-page single column sheet, Opinion has a public of its own. Mr. Gorwala started it as



a protest against existing newspaper which, for one reason or another but mainly because of Mr Gorwala's criticisms of the Government, were not prepared to extend to him the freedom of expression they sought for themselves. Mr. Gorwala's example, however, is not to be lightly emulated and, is not an economic venture. Since the 1930s there has been a shift in ownership of the newspaper from the middle class out of which was drawn the nations teachers and individualists, to the business community. The mounting costs of production no longer allow of the Garrison touch. A great deal rests on the integrity of the writer in a newspaper office to maintain standards, and very often the burden is beyond him.

### **The Style**

There is the matter of style. As the general grasp of the English language grows less, cliches, flourishes and ornate phrases are in vogue. There are some writers who can turn them out by the dozen. Somehow, flowery writing seems to hide a lack of serious thought. It is said of a cynical Journalist that, when he was asked how he was able to obtain all the information for his articles, he replied: "Information? My dead fellow, I write best when I am totally ignorant of my subject."

A good deal of the argument on this subject is beside the point: The pompous writer will continue talking of "Caesar's wife", of 'paling into insignificance", of "sea-green incorruptibly". On a larger scale, this applies to quotations as well; very few know exactly how to quote aptly, but many do it because it is the right thing to impress.

What appears to me to give the final judgement on writing is Walter Pater's warning in his essay on "Style". The "artist" says Schiller, 'may be known, rather by what he omits; the ornamental word, the figure, the accessory form or colour or reference, is rarely content to die to thought precisely at to right moment, but will inevitably linger awhile stirring a long 'brain-wave' behind it of perhaps quite alive associations."

For the person who starts on his writing career, it is very essential that austerity and discipline in the use of words be

rigorously observed. There is no other guiding principle for the writer than this that words should not become an obstacle to the reader's getting at his thought.

We have had long arguments with journalists who talk in terms of long sentences and short sentences. But all this is quite beside the point. What is important is the when someone is reading your editorial he must to have his attention diverted by the thought of how well you have written it or how teamed, and well-informed you show yourself. First, he must follow the argument and see your point of view. The best writing only impress itself as well expressed afterwards; and admiration for the writer must be a second thought.

The Indian writer can be warned of one great danger in Indian Journalism—do not mistake slipshod and colloquial writing for simple writing. Since the English one speaks in normal conversation is well mixed with Indian words, Indian phrases and Indian idioms, it is easy to see how the misunderstanding it likely to rise in discussions of simple writing.

Do not plead the excuse that English is not your language. So long as you use it, has to be; and no one is compelling you to use English. "Journalise" too has not the force of justification for bad writing. It may take you longer, to start with, to write correctly it should not be a lasting or prolonged problem though-but it will be easier for the reader.

Indian languages have through the influence of journalism become simpler and the distinction that marked the literary forms, trends has greatly reduced. In English writing too, the trend are found towards greater realism but it is partly spoil by a certain amount of carelessness. It is also true that more persons today feel that they can write which is a healthy development provided they see that writing has to be natural and without affectation.

It has been frequently remarked that the editorial columns of Indian newspapers are their strongest department. What has not been said is that it is this fact which is largely responsible for the shortcomings of the Indian press. For the young entrant into journalism the attraction is the opportunity to comment, to criticise, to hold forth. In this country, historically many a newspaper has

come into being in order to express a point of view. The newspaper was in the past a political or social or religious pamphlet. It is only after World War II and the attainment of Indian independence that the responsibilities of presenting news have begun to be realized.

It is a sign of transition that both in reporting and in sub-editing the older mood shows itself, projecting the views of the reporter and the sub-editor into the presentation of the story. I have not in my experience as a sub-editor myself been able to shake off the temptation and I have great sympathy for the sub-editor who, on being rebuked for infusing his bias into his headlines, lapses in to dullness and apathy.

Today, it is an unfortunate fact that you find it very difficult to impress on the man who would be reporter that he must know shorthand-it will surprise people to know that about a good 90 per cent of Indian reporters do not know shorthand-and it is a rare experience to find an aspiring journalist who does not droop to hear that, if he wishes to be a sub-editor, he must know proof reading and be prepared for the drudgery of inserting "a" and "the" in copy, of re-writing other people's staff without destroying their ideas and of using his judgment without imposing his opinions.

At the bottom of all this lies the unfortunate fact that Indian journalism started off on the wrong foot. Perhaps, it was inevitable in the circumstances. The press to begin with was an organ for expressing opinions unacceptable to authority. It changed into a vehicle of authoritative opinion. It divided into instruments of differing opinion. It has still to grow into a live expression of public opinion. What impedes this growth is, of course, on the passive side, the small number of educated persons in this country. But on the active side, the insistence of the early pioneers of journalism on journalism being a mission has much to answer for.

To say that modern journalism is burdened by the mission idea is not to deny the very debt it owes to the spirit. Most Indian news-papers today—certainly all that came into being before that 1920 so we their very existence to the missionary zeal of their founders. But today that phase is ended. The modern newspaper is big business and, where the missionary spirit is invoked, it is done to economize on the essential equipment which it must have.

The newspaper offices that can boast of a reference library can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly true that strong conventions are rare: and the feeling among journalist themselves is growing that when these do exist they are out of place in a newspaper office. Without adequate information and without faith, the average writer is driven to mechanical churning out of matter for the hungry columns.

The editorial column of our newspapers betray a disjointed aimlessness. I believe that we have emerged, if only just emerged, out of the dark ages of journalism when newspapers were run on "apprentice" staff. But still the editorial staff of an Indian newspaper lacks the tie and energy to train personnel; the recruit shirks the drudgery and routine that make up the great part of newspaper work; and the desire to "strike a blow for some good cause" and the fascination of the gossip column between them distract the student who comes to the newspapers office to learn. No other profession demands so much labour and painstaking study; no other profession affords so many distractions and opportunities for slapdash work; and, alas, no other profess in offers so little reward for industry and study. I think, too, that very often we who write for the press tend to forget that we write to be read. Most writers in English today have a deeper knowledge of the language than the average newspaper reader. English journalism is doomed in this country because English writers will not see the futility of using words which are beyond the understanding of their audience. I do not agree with this. All know that the great advantage of the Indian language presses its forging of a language which is in tune with the spoken language- in most Indian languages an innovation from classical obscurity. But I think the problem is not as simple as that. It is more a case of writers not having very much to say which drives them to the unintelligible. And if the Indian language press does not face this situation, it will sooner or later be confronted by the same difficulty. Public interesting editorial writing can be held only by strict adherence to accuracy clarity and precision.

Traditionally Indian journalism was merely a matter of writing. The men who sought an entry into the profession concerned

themselves little with the technical side. They were editorial writers who restricted their activities to writing and very often specialized in some particular subject. With the growth of many newspapers and the pressure of competition, this has almost entirely disappeared in India and the range of interests has broadened, the depth of writing become more shallow. Yet the psychological resistance to learning the technique of journalism persists in many places and very often a writer is almost afraid of becoming a journalist lest he lose his writing work.

As the editor in an office becomes more of an administrator, the assistant editors look to greater dependence on them for the writing. This is an extremely narrow view to take because of a variety of reasons editorial writing in India will have only restricted scope. Chain newspapers and the technical development of the modern newspaper must place the emphasis on other departments. There are specialists in all branches of life outside a newspaper office who can be induced to give their views and crackpots who are willing, even eager, to old forth to the public. Specialization is growing so fast that the main value of the writer in a newspaper will become his ability to bring to the consideration of special contributions the broad outlook of the all-rounder. It is a great responsibility. Not being specialist we can all appreciate the difficulties created by the claims of the specialists and their demands that they, and they only, should be heard. But there is another side to it.

In the words of Ortega y Gasset: "The present-day writer, when he takes his pen in his hand to treat a subject which he has studied deeply, has to bear in mind that the average reader, who has never concerned himself with this subject, if he reads does so with the view, not of layering something from the writer, but rather, of pronouncing judgement on him when he is not in agreement with the common places that the said reader carries in his head".

It is between these two extremes of profundity and ignorance that the newspaper must intervene. Whilst everyone in a news paper office has a part to perform in this task, a special obligation rest with the writers in it. And no one can hope to have a better equipment for this work than a good general education and the habit of constant study.

## Basic Editing

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The basic editing of copy on a newspaper is carried out by sub-editors. These vary in number from three or four on a small weekly, ten to fifteen on a town evening paper, to perhaps twenty or as many as thirty on a big national paper. Because of shift systems and holidays not all work at once. Some papers have separate features sub-editors, some divided the news sub-editors into a home and a foreign desk. The sub-editing function, however, is the same.

### Sub-editing

The job of the news sub-editor is to:

1. Check the names, addresses, figures and other facts of the story.
2. Check and put right any errors of grammar or spelling.
3. Check for legality, if necessary referring queries to the office lawyer.
4. Edit the story to the length needed for the page, if necessary -cutting the copy or collating copy from a number of sources into one story.

5. Rewrite any part, or all, of the story, as needed, to reduce it to length or bring it to the standard required.
6. Prepare the story for the press by nominating instructions for type-setting.
7. Write a headline, with type instructions.
8. Write any captions needed to go with the story.
9. Revise the story in length and context for later editions in the light of new information or a change in position in the paper.
10. Ensure that all these procedures are carried out to meet page and edition deadlines.

### **Amount of News**

The amount of news and the sheer accumulation of facts in a newspaper, coupled with the speed of production, makes inaccuracy a daily hazard. People are quick to condemn when a newspaper gets things wrong, and the graver errors can get an editor into serious trouble.

A vital part of the sub-editor's job is to check, check, everything that is checkable. If available mistakes get into the paper it is not the writer who is blamed but the sub-editor who handled the story, who is expected to have almost a sixth sense that detects hidden traps.

Error can arise in many ways. No two eye-witnesses see things in the same light so that discrepancies can occur in different reports to the same incident. Reports have to be relied upon to cross-check information on the job. There is not much the sub-editor can do about this aspect except check back with the reporter any fact or figure that is suspect.

Checking with the reporter should be a regular practice where there is the slightest doubt about anything. Even if the original source of information cannot be contacted by the reporter, a quick works might reveal an error in telephoning or in keyboarding (either typewriter or VDU). A nought might have

been added to a figure, or left out, or a sentence garbled. An unlikely age an unusual spelling of a name, or a figure or sum on money that seems disproportionate to the facts should alert a sub-editor to possible transmission.

We have seen from the way news is selected, and from the variables at work in new creation, that a great deal more news copy enters a newspaper than can be used. Even after copy-tasting, much remains to be done to reduce the amount of copy to the size and shape needed to projection in the pages. The sub-editor is the catalyst for this process. The main task of subbing, after checking the facts, is the cutting and collating of copy so that a story is given an orderly shape within the space chosen for it.

There can be hard feelings between reporters and sub-editors over this. Here the sub-editor has the advantage of having invariably worked as a reporter before joining the subs' table, whereas the reporter is more concerned with the two hard days spent on gathering a story than with questions of balance on the page.

It is not often possible to give reporters a precise length to which to write because the facts governing space—the number of pages and the volume and quality of news stories available—become known too late. Some favoured quality of news stories might, in the end, get less space than expected, or be dropped altogether. In other cases stories can grow. Extra copy might come in from other sources or a story might become topical because of unforeseen circumstance. Thus the length and shape of a story can be decided hours after the reporter has finished writing it. It has entered the editorial production system and it is the sub-editor who is now in control of it.

Having been briefed by the chief sub-editor on the length and setting required, with guidance perhaps on the handling of aspects, the sub-editor 'shapes' the story to the page. A quick reading of the copy will reveal by how much it needs cutting, if at all.

Some stories might be 'schemed' into the page at almost their original length. Some are the work of several hands, with important



aspects embedded in accompanying agency tapes, or with the promise of 'more to follow' from a reporter still covering the job. Some 'running stories' continue right through a day's editions with 'add copy' falling at intervals and revisions necessary.

Throughout this job of checking, cutting and revising, not only of one story but of several during the shift, the sub-editor has to carefully assess and update his or her material for the reader, keeping in it what is essential to the reader's understanding of it, but being prepared to modify it in the light of the latest information.

This assessment is based on a close reading of the copy and a judgement of what the story is 'saying'. Newspapers are accused of formularizing news into stereotyped situations. Some criminal court cases, marriage-and-divorce situations and showbiz stories seem to come type-cast, with the order of events and even the things people say being recognizably similar. Such stock situation stories are not common enough to make life easy for the sub-editor. Sometimes the crux of a story has to be pulled out of a long account, or comes to light through a query raised. The simplicity and directness of the final version can conceal a lot of work.

## **Order and Shape**

There has to be order and shape in the editing of a news story to get the maximum benefit from the space it occupies. The essence of what the story is about has to be drawn out and made into an attractively worded introduction, or intro, so that the reader's attention is aroused. Thereafter the facts of the story must be unfolded so that the intro is justified and the story fleshed out. The story has failed if the supporting facts fail to justify the intro or if they leave the reader asking questions. The facts themselves have to have an order of importance, those most connected with the intro statement being given first, irrelevant ones removed and the least important left to the end. The notion that a story should have a potent end paragraph is an attractive one but in the heat of late copy and quick edition changes a story often has to be cut at the last minute and it is easiest cut from the end. It is also true

that the least likely read paragraph in a news story is the last one, so that a pearl of information could be wasted.

Various attempts have been made to impose a neat formula on copy subbing to help in the teaching stage, but none is watertight. There are always stories that require a different approach, and some of these differences of approach will be examined in later. Perhaps the most useful way to look at the technique is to say that a well subbed story should have:

1. A statement; 2. Explanation; 3. Corroboration; 4. Qualification.

These categories, as will be seen, apply only in the most generally way, as do most teaching slogans. It is perhaps easier just to say that the story should have a logical sequence in which the facts drawn to the reader's attention in the intro are explained in the body of the text for the reader so that story is as clear, complete and up-to-date as the sub-editor can make it in the space and time available.

Let us now examine the various stages.

**The Intro :** The opening paragraph of a news story must hold the reader's eye once he or she has started to read it so that he or she is persuaded to read on. The intro, as it is called, is a contrived device in which attention is gained not by starting at the beginning of the story, but by giving first the highlight, or the most important or interesting part of the story. The sub-editor establishes this in the reader's mind and then arranges the facts in sequence to follow.

The fact sequence explain and justifies the intro and amplifies the story so that the reader will read right through to the end to get the full picture. Fashioning a good intro is a skill a sub-editor must learn sine it is the cornerstone of the methods by which news stories are edited and presented in modern newspaper practice.

Experienced reporters, who are aware of the importance of intros, can produce copy that requires little editing, but there are always stories in which the vital fact is not immediately apparent. Later information or the arrival of copy from other sources. Or the

more experienced judgement of a night editor or chief sub-editor, can result in the story being treated in a different way. Its position on the page or the arrival of news pictures to go with it can cause a shift of stress to be given to parts of the story.

With a straightforward story the sub-editor might know what the intro should say after a first reading of copy. With a running story or with several copy sources, or with changing news angles, some preliminary tasting and editing is usually necessary. The more variable is the approach to the intro. With a big running story of a disaster it is sometimes the last paragraph to be written and put into type since it must contain the most up-to-date information. In such cases stories are keyboard into the system for typesetting in sections as edited and are marked 'intro to follow.'

Useful guidelines which can help a young sub-editor master the art of intro writing are best demonstrated by examining actual examples.

Let us see how a provincial British evening paper, the Liverpool Echo, writes its intros. Here is a little story about a missing mother:

A mum missing for more than two months has contacted her family after the Echo revealed the plight of her three young children.

There is a simple sentence. To be strictly grammatical it should have said 'after the Echo had revealed' instead of the simple past tense, but it is a small fault. The point of the story is clear and uncluttered and the reader is intrigued to know about the circumstances.

We read in the next paragraph that teenage schoolgirl had written to the paper asking for help in tracing down her mother, who had walked out of their home. It given the address and the date.

Good. To have tried to include these facts in the first paragraph would have clutter and made it too complicated.

The denouement, infact, it kept to the third paragraph. Christina and her two brothers. John and Steven, have had a letter from their mother to say she is safe.

We would like to know more. Is she coming home? The story does not say. Probably no one can tell at this stage, otherwise the story would have said. It has said neatly what there is to say. The story demonstrates how the simple fact of a letter received, and the circumstances surrounding it makes news. The sub-editor has also highlight in the intro the newspaper's part in the story. This is good for the paper as well as for the reader.

The story demonstrates two rules about an intro

It should highlight the salient or most interesting part of the story.

It should not try to say too many things.

Here is another intro which is less effective:

A total of 325,000 children will have their education disrupted next week when the National Union of Teachers stages the fourth in its weekly three-day selective strikes in support of the teachers' pay claim.

It is not a bad intro because it gets to the heart of what is to happen, but it uses too many words. It would have been better to have said.... stages its fourth three day selective strike over pay. That would have used nine words instead of sixteen -for that part of the sentence, and would have avoided using the word 'teacher' twice. The rest could be explained in the second and third paragraphs.

This bring us to another rule about an intro.

Every word should count in making it attractive and readable.

The third example from the same issue shows how, in a town evening paper the 'where' of a story can be an important intro point.

Liverpool Walton MP, Eric Heffer, vowed today to continue his battle for a Labour Party pledge to pull Britain out of Nato.

There follow eight paragraphs of explanation about the issue, and why the local MP feels as he does. This is an important

political subject on which parties feel strongly and it is, given point by being presented to readers in terms of local connections.

It will be seen in a all these intros that two sorts of judgement are called for from the sub-editor: one, a judgement of news value in terms of the paper's readership; and two, a language judgement in terms of words and sentence structure by which to present the facts clearly to the reader. If the first story had begun:

Following a letter to the Echo asking for help in tracking down her mother. Teenage Christina Mullen has now had a letter from her it would have read flatly. Why? Because it gives fourteen words of background before getting down to the point of the story, thus giving precedence to the wrong facts. The news judgement is at fault. Worse still, it starts with a subsidiary clause, thus robbing the sentence of pace and verbal immediacy. The language judgement is also at a fault.

An intro that starts with a subsidiary clause, or with the words 'following', 'as a result of' or 'because', is putting the cart before the horse. The causes of an event, or what went on before-it, though important, are less important than the event that is being disclosed. They should become part of the explanation that follows. This brings us to another important rule about the intro.

It should not start with a subsidiary clause because this weakens contact with the reader.

In making a correct news judgement the sub-editor is recognizing the point of the story, which is something that the reporter (who has put together all the facts) may not have recognized. For a story to be chosen to be used it has to have a point to it. It is news in terms of the paper's readers because it is out of the ordinary humdrum life. While news has to be the first tidings or disclosure about an event, it has to have something about it that makes it of interest to the reader and worth printing in a newspaper-which is where the whole business of selection comes in.

Even a report of a school sports egg-and-spoon race has its point-the disclosure of who won. The sports themselves have their point-which school house won, and who were the champions among these who took part. It would be nonsense, in news value terms, if the paper carried a long description of the sports and gave these important pieces of information right at the end. The sub-editor's news sense is the guarantee that a story will be properly presented to the readers, even if twenty folios of copy from two reporters, a local correspondent and a news agency filed chronologically, have to be searched to find the facts that matter.

Here are two intros that a local paper short of staff and time might have let through:

Local USDAW delegate Len Nobes told the TUC conference that TV publicity about the NGA-SOGAT dispute was damaging to trade unionism.

'I believe the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches will draw closer together as a result of world reaction to the Pope's work for peace,' said the Bishop of Durham, Dr So-and-so, when Convocation resumed at York yesterday.

In the first example the reader knows what TUC and TV stand for, but what about USDAW, NGA and SOGAT? This intro would fail to keep the attention of any reader who is not in the know. It also looks ugly with five capital letter abbreviations in one sentence, even though two can be pronounced as words, through meaningless.

This brings us to another rule about the intro:

It should avoid the use of abbreviations where possible and either spell out organizations in full or use a general reference, such as the miner or the engineers.

In mentioning organisations generally, the sub-editor should give all about the best know in full at first mention and then, if need be, use the abbreviated form afterwards.

In the second example quoted the effect of the intro is weakened

because the reader has to digest twenty nine words of quotation before finding out who is saying it. While the things people say make news it is usually in the context of who said it and in what circumstances. The quotation used here is meaningless until we find out that it is by a leading Anglican divine on an important church occasion, and scanning through twenty nine words is liable to make us lose interest before we get there.

A better way would be to rewrite it:

The Bishop of Durham, Dr so-and-so, said yesterday that he believed the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches were drawing closer together as a result of the work of Pope John Paul II.

Dr so-and-so referred at Convocation at York, Yesterday, to 'the world reaction to the pope's work for peace....' etc.

The intro rule to remember here:

It should never start with a quotation.

Yesterday afternoon in Salford, a five-year-old boy, Kevin Jones, was knocked down by a reversing lorry outside his home and died later in hospital.

Here is an example of the right information in the wrong order, with the result that the effect is weakened. The intro should relegate the time and place to the end of the sentence and get straight down to the news fact:

Five-year-old Kevin Jones died in hospital after being knocked down by a reversing lorry outside his home in Salford yesterday.

The intro rule:

It should not begin with the time and place.

**The Delayed Drop** : One type of intro that does not follow the above rules is the delayed drop. Here the substance of the story is deliberately kept from the reader to create a feeling of suspense. It can work well in off-beat humorous or human interest stories or

in atmospheric stories in which the facts depend more on how they are presented than upon their own importance. For example yesterday was Vera Jones's-46th birthday. It was a day she is not going -to forget easily for five good reasons.

First, she slipped getting out of bed and emptied her Teasmaid pot of tea all over the carpet.

Second, the cat, unused to such confusion, took flight and jumped out of the first floor window.

Third, when Vera struggled down to the kitchen she found it was flooded, She'd left the tap on.

Fourth, when she managed to get to the local pub just on opening time for a birthday drink it was on fire.

Fifth, when she returned home for lunch, fed up to the back teeth, she found a letter on the mat saying... she'd won 110,000 on the pools. Vera, of Culrose Street, Bolton, said last night.... etc.

The story breaks all the rules. It starts with the time of the happening. It leaves the main point to paragraph five, and where Vera lives to paragraph six. It uses the shortened forms she and she'd. Yet, if told straight it would have lost some of its bite.

Delayed drop intros are effective on the right of story but like many special devices they become tiresome with over-use. The story structure must be contrived with great skill so that the reader is 'hooked', and the denouncement must make the slow-burning effect to have been worth while.

On no account should this treatment be used on a hard news story, nor should more than one delayed drop intro appear on the same page. It has to be kept for a special sort of story.

**Story Sequence** : Writing an effective intro, when needed, on a reporter's story, or improving the existing intro, not only helps to sell' this story to the reader but sharpens in the sub-editor's mind what the story is about. This makes easier the job of presenting the facts in logical sequence so that the story has shape and pace as the reader moves through it.



The first point to remember in choosing and ordering the facts is that the intro must not be left unsupported. The paragraphs immediately following it must explain any incomplete references it contains even if this means changing the order of the reporter's copy. If it describes a boy of seven then his name and details, if known, must be quickly given. If it contains a general reference to union, group, or other organization, then the full identification must be given soon so that the reader is not left guessing.

Any device or generalization used to make an intro short and pithy—references to leader, boss, court, team, minister, etc. rely upon a fuller description being introduced in the next two or three paragraphs. Where, for example, a story says:

A Labour councillor told a delegation of young mothers at the town hall today that the party supported their demand for more creches.... The councillor and the composition of the delegation should be quickly identified.

Thereafter the facts and quotes should unfold in logical sequence. Facts given in the intro should not be repeated as new facts but should be referred to and amplified as they occur in natural sequence. If the story has several 'end' (information from different locations, or writers, or enlargements of specific aspects of the story), the segments should be connected by linking phrases so that the reader knows that the narrative has diverted from the main story, even-though the material still relates to the theme in the intro.

The skilful unfolding of a news story should have a natural rhythm of its own whether it consists of three paragraphs or twenty seven paragraphs.

Here are some special points about story sequence:

**Quoted Speech :** In stories based upon eye-witness interviews there must be first a proper account of the event, even though an eye-witness's words might be used in the intro. This is necessary to back up the facts in the intro and to give context to the

descriptions that follow. Selected interview quotes should then be given where relevant. It is useful to have a number of accounts to corroborate each other. For instance a story of a train struck by lightning might begin:

A hundred people were injured when an express train ran off the lines north of Watford after struck by what a witness called ‘a ball of fire’.

- A story based upon what someone has said is incomplete, and can lead to trouble, if the person’s quoted views are not included as they were said. If a story starts:

Boomtown’s Tory mayor said last night that the Labour Opposition group on the council were ‘preying ’ on people’s misfortunes to make political capital.... then it should have a qualifying paragraph to justify this:

The Mayor, Coun. Thomas Jones, declared: ‘The Opposition on this council are like vultures .... etc.’

- In introducing quoted statements by people, beware of misrepresenting their tone by using, or leaving in, words such as ‘criticized’, ‘insisted’ or ‘demanded’ in an attempt to sensationalize them or create headline ideas. Such verbs require strong views to sustain them. If a councillor said, ‘I think house-building tenders’-should be advertised over a wider area to try to bring in cheaper quotations, ‘he could be aggrieved to find on reading the newspaper report that he had ‘denounced’ his council’s house-building programme.

Many adjectives and verbs used in describing the things people say can have a loaded or emotive effect which goes beyond the objectivity required in news sub-editing. There is nothing wrong with the neutral ‘said’ or ‘told’ or added. Quotations have to be selected to suit the space and context, but at least let the person’s words speak for themselves.

- Some subs, in an attempt to get everything of interest near the top of the story, break up interview quotes used by the reporter, using first those of one persons, then those of

another, and even introducing a third speaker in the first few paragraphs. This might be useful for a factual order the sub has in mind but it can confuse the reader. In cases of reported discussion, the mixing of quotes and speakers is justified, it in the run of a story it is best to deal one at a time with the things people say rather than break up and shuffle their words. There is also a danger that if parts of an interview are detached and used in the same paragraph as other people's words their original meaning and intention might become distorted.

Where statements are made in a story, or by someone interviewed in a story, involving or criticizing another person, then the other person should be given an opportunity of commenting on them. If the reporter has not done this then the sub-editor should go and ask that it be done. Even if the person says, I have no comment to make' it is worth using it to show that the newspaper is trying to be fair.

- Whether quoted or paraphrased, statements in a story must be properly attributed.

Here is a report of a political speech from the Guardian morning paper, based not upon interview quotes but quotes from the actual speech, which demonstrate some of the above points:

By James Naughtie. Chief Political Correspondent.

The inner city crisis was blamed on spiritual and moral problems rather than economic difficulties, by Mr. Norman Tebbit yesterday, in another rallying call to the Conservative right-wing.

The Tory Party Chairman said it was the Government's duty to restore order-partly through tougher sentences as a deterrent to crime-and to overcome 'the poisoned legacy of the permissive society.'

He said that even if the physical structure of neglected urban areas could be transformed, it would be in vain unless personal responsibility was restored. This came through ownership, security, established by law and order and family stability, he said.

In an address at St James's Church, Piccadilly, London, Mr. Tebbit said that the freedom he sought for the country had to be buttressed by the law and by social pressures, notably a concern for standards and a sense of personal responsibility.

Identifying the root of the nation's problems as moral, he said: 'British society must regain a sense of order. Order reinforced by punishment of violent criminals. Order in our streets. Order in schools and order in the home'.

He went on to accuse those who regarded public feeling on law and order 'with a certain lofty disdain'. He said that the violence in inner cities had been engendered not only by physical but by moral decay—a lack of self-respect stemming from the collapse of traditional values.

'In my view too many well-meaning people concentrate solely upon treatment of the symptoms of inner city decline and fail to see that miseries derive in great part from family disintegration and its causes which are often spiritual and moral, not material,' Mr. Tebbit said.

He argued that freedom—both economic and individual—dependent on values which had been eroded by the permissive society' to the violent society.

'Legislation on capital punishment, homosexuality, abortion, censorship and divorce—some of it good, some of it bad, but all of it applauded as progressive—ushered in quick succession an overwhelming impression that there were not only going to be no legal constraints, but that there was no need for restraint at all; he said.

Mr. Tebbit argued that the nation was rightly concerned about inner cities, but the failure of previous collectivist policies, was shown in the deprivation, rootlessness and poverty which went alongside a lack of self-respect.

The intro summarizes the thrust of the Tory Party Chairman's message allotting the blame for the 'inner city crisis', linking it in paragraph two with the party's policy on law and order. There are four paragraphs of paraphrased material giving the readers the



Paragraph one sets up the story. Paragraph two qualifies and explains the point about the party's intentions of dealing with a borough's squatters. Quotations in paragraphs four and five are the justification for the story, and the remaining two paragraphs give the Council's spokesman the right to comment, demonstrating that the story is not just a piece of party propaganda.

### **Local Connection**

The local connection of a story is important in a paper serving a local or regional area and is a valid intro ingredient. In a national paper, geography is less important and is often relegated to the third or fourth paragraph or even later. Readers can become annoyed, however, if the location of a story is kept from them until almost the end when they find to their disgust that it has happened not in Little Tolpuddle down the road, but in Ulan Bator, Outer Mongolia.

Even in national papers, geography in a national sense matters, and foreign stories are often used in terms of their British connection. A person involved in a story about Saudi-Arabia would be a Briton in paragraph one, while he would be 'from Halifax' or wherever, in paragraph six or seven. In Halifax his local connection would merit the first paragraph.

**Time** : The yesterday or today should be made clear in the intro and followed through in the story. Any changes in the time sequence should be introduced by a linking phrase (sometimes in italic) such as, 'earlier in the day' or 'speaking last night. Once the time sequence has changed, the story should not revert to the original time or the reader will be confused. Other 'ends' to the story should be introduced after the main explanatory text by a similar device such as 'a spokesman at the town hall said later,' or 'Mr. X's former wife told reporters by telephone from New York'.

**Background** : In giving background material, especially from press cuttings, records and reference books, subs should be ware not to use it slant a story or influence the reader's reaction.

A person's career or achievements can often be filled out usefully in the editing, but if a person appointed to public office has been found in cuttings to have been fined for theft when a teenager this could be actionable if used, even though true. It could be construed as malicious.

Any background material worked in must be relevant to the story and not be used to support a point in view.

**Casting Off :** The usage to cast off comes from a hot metal printing term meaning to set a piece of copy or a headline exactly to fit a line to type. In subbing, it is widely used to mean to edit copy to an exact length to fit the space on the page.

To cast off a story, the sub-editor must first know how many words can be contained in a given column space in the newspaper. The best way to work this out is to cut specimens of body type 7 pt, 8 pt and 10 pt say, from the paper and stick them on a card in 9 inch or 3 centimetre amounts. Metric measurements are now more commonly used in electronic editing. The examples of standards 8½-em columns. Word count will vary according to the body type used and the different column widths. A check card should show column widths, double-column and column-and-a-half.

The number of words to the column centimetre (or inch) in any given body type quickly becomes familiar to a sub-editor, although a count might have to be made in the case of non-standard (i.e. bastard) setting where the depth to be filled is critical.

It is equally necessary to know how many words a given story contains when it is submitted for subbing so that the right amount of cutting can be made if it is too long for the space. On screen this is now no problem since the header will give the word count of the copy when entered. Where hard copy subbing is still the practice, or with any off-screen editing, the length can be quickly checked by counting specimen lines on a page of typescript, or print-out, averaging them out and then multiplying them by the

number of lines on the page. An average number per page can be worked out by the same means and this can be multiplied by the number of pages to give the total number of words. For instance, this book has about ten words to the line and an average of forty lines to the page (excluding pages with illustrations or ends of sections). Therefore each page contains approximately 400 words. If turned into newspaper type these words would fill a 20-centimetre depth in 7 pt Roman type in an average 8½ -em column.

A practised eye can measure the initial length of texts, whatever the number of pages, without being more than a few words out and should likewise be able to estimate how much of it can be contained in a given space on a page. The big problem of getting an accurate cast-off for the page in hard copy subbing arises where there are heavy editing marks and deletions which disturb the balance of the lines. This is no problem on screen since the text adjusts and rearranges itself in front of the sub-editor and a word and line count can be obtained at any time at the press of a command key.

The actual reduction is achieved by first considering the facts of the story. Those that are needed for the intro and main sequence are left, while those of least importance, which are either irrelevant to the points that need to be made or for which there is going to be no space, are deleted at the start. The remaining material is then checked and rearranged where necessary, making sure it reads properly where deletions have been made, to give the story its shape.

This is the part of subbing in which the sub-editor, reading and deleting, is mentally putting the story together around its salient points, basing it upon a personal news assessment and a knowledge of the newspaper's readership.

The next stage is to work through the copy carefully, paring down the text, rooting out repetition, ambiguity and redundant words, shortening wordy phrases, checking the grammar where



necessary and gradually tightening up the structure so that every word does a job and the best use made of the space.

Not all copy needs such heavy attention to the words as this, but the sub-editor, faced sometimes with a small space and a good deal of copy, cannot afford to waste words or allow slow, cumbersome grammar to get in the way of the story, or eat up the space.

At the end of this stage the story should be somewhere near completion, and a final reading of the material should enable the sub-editor to make a few adjustments to fact and word needed to bring the copy to the required length and standard. This part of the job is the second most important after checking for accuracy. Bad casting off, either well or well over the required length, can cause much trouble because of the amount of late cutting or adding needed to make a story fit, and delays can result in completing pages.

As will be seen from points raised, the economic use of words is essential in using space to maximum effect to enable modern newspapers to carry the number of news stories they do. Tight subbing should be regarded not just as using fewer facts and details but as making way for more by pruning inessential words and phrases. It is the content of a news story that matters to the reader.

### **On Line Work**

With direct input of copy into the computer the sub-editor has the advantage of electronic aids in editing. As with copy tasting, the ease of operation is greatest where everything comes through the computer, rather than with some subbing still having to be done on hard copy. Sub-editors who have become familiar with screen editing do not usually like to go back to subbing hard copy

Stories can be checked for length by relating the word count and number of lines given in the screen 'header' to the space

allocated on the page layout. Fact and word pruning are then carried out as with hard copy sub-editing. The difference is that the use of the cursor, or electronic pen, on screen enables deletions and alternations to be made faster than by ballpen, while at the same times resulting in instantly clean copy without the scribbles, scorings and connecting lines that characterize hard copy subbing. After each change or alternation the text automatically rearranges itself on the screen.

Split screen, on which two stories are displayed side by side, can be used when working on copy from another source. Deleted material may be also left in the computer in 'note' form from which it can be reactivated and brought back into the text, if needed, by a simple command stroke. With electronic editing, copy is capable of almost endless reworking and revising-as it is with any word processor-while at the same time finishing up clean and ready for typesetting. Moreover, after a story has been checked and cut to fit it can be scrolled back for re-reading on the screen and any late alternations made with greater ease than would be the case with already heavily subbed hard copy.

The final stage by which, at stroke, a story is hyphenated and justified in the computer ready for the photsetter, produces an accurate length and word count in the header on the screen. This enables the sub-editor to make any cuts still needed to cast it off exactly to fit the space on the page, thus saving time at the make-up stage. After setting, stories as a result of page changes or late news, can be then put back through the photsetter in a revised version.

Modern systems have a facility for delivering printout proofs after the H & J stage showing the story as it will look when typeset. These are useful if the story needs to be taken away-for telephone checking, say. In fact, many newspaper offices make little use of the facility once direct input has transferred the whole editing operation into the computer. Nor is the printout proof needed to increase the distribution of a story within the editorial department since it is now possible to generate 'car-bob' copies of

a story within the system. This means that it can not only be read by one person while being edited by another, but can be edited on screen into different versions for use in different papers fed from the system.

A difficulty in writing about electronic editing is that the sequences cannot be illustrated visually for the reader. The problem is not a serious one since. Once the keyboard techniques have been mastered, the sequences are the same as in hard copy sub-editing. Marks on text are simply replaced by keyboard commands, with the text rearranging itself in word sequence and length on the screen in response to the editing procedures. On screen the instructions follow the same sequence as with hard copy subbing.

Computerised systems do not call for a change in techniques but, rather, bring electronic facilities to the aid of the sub-editor in carrying out the techniques, with the aim being to produce the same result on the finished page.

## Style in Editing

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Text editing demands from the sub-editor not only the ability to present facts in an orderly way, and with economy of words, but also the facility to spot a variety of errors and misuse that can crop up in the wide range of copy handled. Some of these faults are grammatical-even the best writers go through life with blind spots that were never eradicated when young-and others to do with the use and meanings of words.

### Significance of Words

Newspapers respond to new usages that are part of a growing world use of English. They reflect popular expression and 'vogue' words and the subtle shifts of meanings that stem from the spoken language and the changing requirements of commerce and technology.

To pick a way through this minefield and decide when a new usage is acceptable is more difficult for the grammarian than for the journalist, since the grammarian feels himself or herself to be the custodian of the language. The journalist is merely using it to an end.

Even so there has to be some consistency and acceptability in

the way language is used if the journalist is to communicate meaningfully with the reader and not be misunderstood. For the journalist the yardstick of success is the effectiveness of language in this act of communication.

This is vital in editing when texts, even though well written, have to be condensed without loss of meaning, words and phrases substituted to save space, ambiguity excised and clarity and order imposed upon a story which might have a variety of copy sources.

The very act of selection and condensation can lead the unwary into error when time is short. In language terms the sub-editor is saddled with a dual role of imposing his or her own creativity on a story and acting as quality controller of the whole. Stories cannot be left with difficult sentences, misleading punctuation or words that do not make clear the writer's intentions. The sub-editor must ensure that the text on the pages gets through to the reader in an attractive, readable form, and that the best possible use is made of the space allocated to it.

The following guidance on language is given with this purpose in mind.

**The Sentence** : Good sentence structure is the key. All sentences must have a subject and a verb. The verb, if need be, can be qualified by an adverb:

subject	verb	adverb
the policeman	walked	quickly

The sentence can also have an object:

The policeman walked quickly towards the boy (object)

Newspapers, and some fiction writers, allow the subject to be implied in certain cases, and sometimes even the verb. This can work, provided the sense makes the subject clear to the reader:

The policeman walked quickly. Too quickly (he walked).

They did everything to give him a day full of activity. How full a day (they gave him)!

The use of an implied subject is a device that can give pace to narrative provided it is clear who or what is the subject. It should be used only to produce a special effect. If over-used, or used without justification in place of conventional punctuation, it becomes a tiresome mannerism and ceases to achieve an effect.

Where a verb is inactive (where it expresses a states of being or feeling) it takes a complement in place of an object. For example:

subject	verb	complement
the girl	felt	happy

It is important to know which is the subject of a sentence because the verb must agree with it in person and number. In person the very changes only in the third person singular:

I move      He, she or it moves      They move

Agreement in number, however, can cause problems. Where a sentence has a double subject the verb must be plural, as in:

Oil and water do not mix.

Where words are joined to the subject by a preposition the subject remains singular, as in:

Iron, with copper, is the most important metal.

In neither-nor or either-or sentences the verb agrees in number with the subject nearest to it, as in:

Neither John nor his brother is a member.

Neither Helen nor her sisters are going.

Beware of pitfalls with numbers and quantities. Use fewer than for numbers as in:

There were fewer than fifty copies left.

Use less than for amounts or quantities.

There was less than a quorum so the meeting was abandoned.

Generally, numbers used as terms of measurements are singular:

There was ten pence in the hat. But there were ten pennies.

None as a subject generally means not one and should be treated as singular.

Thirty years ago there were many fishing families in the village. Now there is none.

Agreement in person and number with the subject is most difficult in the case of collective nouns, the term given to collection of things such as a herd, a class, a bevy, a gathering, etc. Grammatically, they should be treated as singular.

The class was too lively for the new maths teacher.

The Government has decided to scrap its proposed wealth tax.

This is a useful rule on the whole, but sticking to it pendantsically can lead to stilled structure, and some newspapers allow collective nouns such as the Cabinet or football and cricket teams to be treated as plural subjects to make for ease of reading. In such cases consistency should be the rule. It would be wrong for a sub-editor to allow this sentence:

The government has decided to scrap their proposed wealth tax.

Words like politics, mumps, graphics and acrobatics should be treated as singular, despite ending in an S.

**The Participles :** Participles such as having, going, running, turning, etc., are said to be left dangling in sentences in which the writer has failed to identify the subject. For example:

Having addressed the meeting for two hours, an interval was then agreed.

The subject is the person addressing the meeting, but who was it that agreed the interval?

Passing quickly through the agenda it was then the turn of the treasurer to give his report.

Was it the treasurer that passed quickly through the agenda?

A dangling participle is a certain cause of confusion to the reader and a fault that crops up in the copy inexperienced writers.

**Pronouns** : The main fault in the use of pronouns occurs in constructions in which the writer has failed to elate them properly to their antecedents. For example:

Helen cooked for cooked for her sister her favourite

Whose favourite meal?

The general looked at his aide grimly.

His eyes were half closed.

Whose eyes?

Where there is any doubt about the identify of possessive pronouns (his her or its), or personal pronouns (me, you, him), the sentence should be reshaped or split into two sentences.

Confusion of me and I is pitfall. Broadly, the rules are these: where the first person pronoun is the subject of the sentence it should be I. Where it is the object of the sentence it should be me. Thus 'It affects you and me' is correct: but you would say 'You and I are good friends' because you and I become a double subject-you are a good friend and I am a good friend.

I should be used and not me following a conjunction, as in:

'He is as baffled as I (am)' not 'as baffled as me'

'He is younger then I (am)' not 'younger than me'

### Significance of Five W's

Confusion between who and whom is more deeply ingrained. As a very loose guide. One says to whom, from whom, by whom, of whom and than whom using who in most other cases. Thus, whom is used in the sentence when it is preceded by a preposition. A trick is to substitute he for who and him for whom in your mind and see how the sentence works out. 'I did not know he was the one would indicate that 'I did not know whom was the one could not possibly be correct. And so on.

A difficulty with pronouns is highlighted by the following passage: 'When the young journalist starts his or first job it is necessary that he or she should learn to take a competent note. If any problem crops up, especially over court hearings, he or she will be asked to substantiate... etc.'



The glaring fact shown here is that the English language lacks a singular pronoun of common sex that can be used where the reference are to either sex.

Otto Jespersen, in *Growth and Structures of the English Language*, refers to the three available makeshift alternatives-either using he or she, they or just the universal he in general references. Sir Ernest Gower, in *The Complete Plain Words*, is not happy with they or them. 'Each insisted on their own point of view, and hence the marriage came to an end.' He says this usage is not defensible, though he concedes that 'necessity may eventually force it into the category of accepted idiom.'

Strunk and White, in *The Elements of Style*, say boldly; 'The use of he as a pronoun for nouns embracing both genders is a sample, practical convention rooted in the beginning of the English language. He has lost all recently raised of maleness in these circumstances.' They go on; 'The furore recently raised about he would be more impressive if there was a handy substitute for the word. Unfortunately there isn't.'

Quite! Meanwhile this writer and others do all they can recast sentences so as to ward off the dreaded choice.

The personal pronoun one can also be a problem. One should follow through, once having started, through one can quickly find oneself wishing one had used a different pronoun, however much one feels that one should stick to one's guns.

Which or that-an old body in sentence construction. A general guide is that which must be used in a commenting clause. Example: 'This should go to the news desk, which deals with these matters, 'In a defining clause which or that is correct as in: 'The committee that which deals with the matter has been disbanded.'

'The man that deals with the matter...' and 'The man who deals with the matter...' are also equally correct in defining clause.

Sir Ernest Gower favours the use of that where the choice is justified as making for a smoother sentence. He also says that either should be dropped in sentence that sound right without, the

ear being the guide. This is useful advice. A sentence such as. 'I think the record which he wants is the one that is in that box, can thus be trimmed today, "I think the record he wants is the one in that box.

The sentence reminds us of the awkward fact that the word that, unlike which, can serve as a conjunction, a relative pronoun and an adjective.

**The Tenses :** The necessary thing is to be consistent in the use of tenses. Beware of captions which are in the present tense. Try to avoid:

Elizabeth Taylor arrives at London Airport when she came to attend the premiere of ... etc.

If an interview is in the present tense, do not allow she says in one part of it and she said in another.

Do not mix past and past perfect tenses in one sentence:

'I went there because I have been thinking that I should like to see her.'

A muddle of tenses like this is best resolved by recasting the sentence:

'I went there because I thought I should like to see her.

The verb to be can cause complications in the lesser used tenses. Note that I was and he/she was in the simple past tense become (i) were and (ii) he/she were in the past substantive. The were in this sort of usage should be reserved for unlikely or conjectural situations. For example: If I were the Prime Minister. 'The if is not necessary in a sentence such as, 'Suppose he were the Prime Minister....'

A good tip is that the tenses of verbs should relate to the tense of the governing (introductory) very on a news story, which is usually in the past tense. Allow for differences of tense in quoted speech but, at the end of the quoted passage, revert to the governing tense. An exception to this would be any reference to a permanent

truth. For example, 'He said that the world is round,' is preferable to 'He said that the world was round.'

On the whole, try to keep tenses simple. Recast sentences where there are complications. Be consistent.

**Verbs :** The worrying thing about verbs is the rate at which new ones are being formed from nouns-containerize, hospitalise, civilianize, servcize, computerize and so on many of the ize (or ise) verbs enable complicated things to be said briefly and should not be rejected, but the sub-editor should guard against using so many of them that a story begins to read like official, legal or technical jargon.

News stories have more pace and immediacy if verbs are used wherever possible in the active voice rather than the passive. For example 'The policeman saw the boy....' not : 'The boy was seen by the policeman.'

Two constructions seem to give some writers trouble; the use of shall or will in the future tense of verbs, and the use of lay or lie in the verb to lie (down).

Shall is normally used in the first person singular and plural as in 'I shall....' and 'We shall....' while second and third person singular and plural take will, as in 'He will....' 'You will....' and 'They will....' This order can be reversed in emphatic statements such as, 'I will go! or You shall win through!'

In the verb to lie (down) say 'He lay down...' (intransitive) but 'He laid down rules...' (transitive). Say 'You should lie down...' not 'You should lay down', unless the use is transitive: 'You should lay down rules.'

**Split Infinitives :** The infinitives of a verb is its basic form: to be, to go, to take, etc. Splitting the infinitive means inserting an adverb between 'to' and the verb, as into quickly go, to quietly take, to always be. People are no longer scandalized by the breaking of the old grammatical rule that infinitives should not be split in this ways as they were when H.G. Fowler first sanctioned it in certain cases in his *Modern English Usage*.

Conveying the correct meaning is the important thing, yet this can usually be done without splitting the infinitive. 'To further improve the working of the engine,' makes just as much sense, and makes for a smoother sentence, if worded: 'To improve further the working of the engine. 'If we mean there is a further intention to improve the working of the engine, then 'further' must go before the infinitive and in 'further to improve'. To say that the purpose of a drug is to better deal with hay fever is more correctly rendered as 'to deal better with hay fever', or even 'to deal with hay fever better.'

There is also the question of stress and scansion in some writing. 'For man to boldly move towards his future....' has a metrical ring absent from. 'For man to move boldly (or boldly to move) towards his future....' On these grounds—through they are unlikely to affect most newspaper writing—the infinitive might reasonably be split. In the vast majority of sentences the separating adverb can be placed out ' side the infinitive as shown above, with little or no damage to the sentence, or danger of ambiguity.

**Nouns :** These offer fewer problems than do any other ingredients of sentence. The use of collective nouns is covered above under 'subject' —and of possessives later under 'punctuation'. Plural forms of nouns can give difficulty. They end in *s* as in valley and money take an *s*; *y* endings without a preceding vowel change to *ies*.

**Oes and Os Endings:** mono-syllabic words like *no* and *go* become *noes* and *goes*: the commoner two and three syllable words such as *tomato*, *potato* and *hero* take *oes*. Long words, particularly imported ones such as *endings*. Words with a vowel before the *s* such as *cameo*, *intaglio* and *imbroglio* take *os*, do abbreviated words such as *photo*.

**Foreign Words:** many Anglicized ones, among them *sanatorium*, *syllabus*, *terminus* and *ultimatum*, take a simple *s* or *es* ending. Some French- and Latin-based words, however, keep their own plurals. These include:

Addendum	addenda	fungus	fungi
beau	beaux	memorandum	memoranda
bureau	bureaux	minimum	minima
cactus	cacti	phenomenon	phenomena
criterion	criteria	plateau	plateaux

Beware of words such as medium which becomes mediums for clairvoyants, and media for methods of mass communications; series which remains series; fish which can be fish or fishes, and folk which can be folk or folks.

A blight that affects, current English is the growth of polysyllabic nouns derived from the new generation of 'ize' verbs, themselves often derived from shorter nouns. Thus we get;

container	containerize	containerization
hospital	hospitalize	hospitalization
moisture	moisturize	moisturization

With casual, casualize, casualization, comes a more advanced growth: de-casualization. We are only one step from de-containerization, de-hospitalization and de-moisturization.

The space saved by using such monster words is wasted if the reader is lulled into insensibility before the end of the sentence. It is better in such emergencies to take up a bit more space and use a few short simple words to explain.

**Prepositions :** The rule never end a sentence with proposition is frequently broken without any ill effect in sentences such as 'She's the wife he goes home to 'or 'She's dating the chap the works with, 'which would sound pedantic as 'She's the wife to whom he goes home.' And 'She's dating the chap with whom she works'.

A good tip with prepositions is that if the sentence sounds right and is free of ambiguity then the preposition can be left at the end. Avoid collections of prepositions at the end such as in the classic. 'This was the book he wanted to be read out of from to'.

Most uses of prepositions with nouns and verbs (conform to, connive at, taste of, taste for, consequent upon, etc.) are idiomatic and have to be learned.

**Other Points :** Sentences can be made a nonsense through a misplaced clause or phrase: For the third time a baby was trapped in a washing machine at....Same baby? Or: 'There was a discussion about rape in the staff room', or 'It carried an important article about adultery by the Archbishop of Canterbury.'

The non-sequitur can strike: 'Injured in the fighting in North Africa. Joe Bloggs retired last week. 'The second clause bears no relation to the first. Even where the subject is clear there has to be a sequential connection for the sentence to be successful.

If correcting the grammar of a sentence makes it sound stiff and pedantic it is better to re-write it until it sounds right.

**Length :** Because of narrow newspaper columns, short sentences (and paragraphs) are preferred in order to avoid an unbroken density of type. This does not mean that all sentences must be short, just that shortness is an advantage to the scanning eye.

Short sentences mean generally less complicated sentences with fewer clauses and less punctuation. So shortness can be an advantage in comprehension, too.

Short sentences are also faster and more graphic for the telling of hard news stories.

Here is an example from the London Evening Standard:

'Police fought a gun battle with an arranged gang in an East London square today.

It happened as a team of police marksmen from the Central Robbery Squad were keeping watch on four men suspected of plotting an armed raid.

But the gang realized they were trapped and opened fire with shotguns. The police returned the fire.

Three shots were fired by police, but no one was hurt.

One of the officers, however, was taken to hospital suffering from shock.

A police motorcycle was damaged during the skirmish.

It happened soon after 9 -a.m. in Carlton Square, Stepney.

Later police recovered three shotguns from the scene of the shooting.

Four men were this afternoon being questioned.'

This shows how short sentence and paragraphs (and short words) give pace to a story. Of 117 words. 74 (or 63 per cent) are words of one syllable.

It would be boring, however, to have nothing but short sentences in news stories, and the sub-editor must decide when longer sentences are justifiable or when a sentence should be split-sometimes with a little recasting into two or more sentences. Here, from the Birmingham Post, is a story in which a slower pace is needed and into which longer sentences and paragraphs fit naturally.

'A Midland doctor investigating the outbreak of meningitis in Gloucestershire warned last night that an epidemic of the disease is likely to sweep Britain in the next few years.

His warning came as the world's leading expert on meningitis arrived in England to probe the outbreak which has killed two teenagers and affected 85 other people in the Stroud area of Gloucestershire.

Dr Carl Fresch, from Maryland in the US, is on a private visit, but will meet informally with doctors from Gloucestershire Health Authority who have been fighting the disease.

He will be working with another British expert on meningitis. Dr Dennis Jones, Director of Manchester's Public Health Laboratory.

Last night Dr Gareth Leyshon, Gloucestershire's district

medical officer, said: "Stroud has been singled out for attention rather unfairly-there has been a rising incidence of meningitis across Britain, as in Norway, over the last two years, and we have not been affected more badly here than other areas."

Meningitis, which particularly affects children, is spread by coughs and sneezes, and in its most serious forms inflames the lining of the brain.

No vaccine has yet been found for the B type of meningitis discovered in the Stroud victims, but it is hoped that Dr Fresch may be able to identify more accurately the particular strain involved.

Where the pace demands shorter sentences, or where the sentences are just unacceptably long, the sub-editor should avoid the easy option of splitting a sentence by turning its clauses into sentences by beginning each one with and or a but. Recasting will produce a better flow as well as better grammar.

It is acceptable in newspaper journalism to begin sentences with and but, it should be done sparingly to produce a particular effect of continuity within the context of sentence pauses, rather than as a device to break up a long sentence by replacing commas with full stops.

**Paragraphs** : This is a thorny subject in newspapers. H.W. Fowler (of *Modern English Usage*) is right when he says: 'The paragraph is essentially a unit of thought, not of length; it must be homogeneous in subject-matter and sequential in treatment'. But he also says; 'The purpose of a paragraph is to give the reader a rest'.

With narrow newspaper columns, editors tend to give more stress to the second function, and paragraphing has come to be used to break up the text into readable nuggets more than to mark thought and fact sequences.

With the increased use of display in newspapers in recent decades came a reaction against the old style of columns of unbroken reading matter with few paragraphs. This has become



exaggeratedly the case in the popular tabloids where it is assumed that readers are allergic to long paragraphs as they are to long words. Taken too far, paragraphing, on this premise, can finish up identifying with sentences, however short, and as a result, balance and continuity of thought and fact are abandoned and the text is read in a series of quick jumps. Here, the plethora of indented and broker-P lines becomes as big a handicap to the scanning eye as solid text is.

The middle way between the desiderata of Fowler and the projection requirements of modern newspapers is to try to relate the visual breaks as closely as possible to breaks in the sense of the text. This is not usually difficult in the economic style of news writing common to most newspapers, though bad breaks will still occur if excessively long paragraphs are always to be avoided.

What is worse than breaking a paragraph in mid-thought is connecting two ill-matched thoughts or sentences into one paragraph or ending a quotation and starting a description or a new quotation in the same paragraph. This can happen during editorial production when two paragraphs are run on together at page makeup stage so that a story carried in a number of 'legs' across the page can begin at the top of each leg with a full line and not a 'window' or jack line.

### **The Purpose**

The idea is to give a neat printed effect so that the eye does not turn to the top of the leg on to a broken line. Yet the yoking together of two unsequential paragraphs for this purpose frustrates the intention of the writer or sub-editor, and damages the sense of the text.

As shown in the examples above, the length of paragraphs can be varied to suit the text. Action-based stories can be given pace through the use of short paragraphs as well as short sentences, while more leisurely stories such as accounts of ceremonials, royal occasions, functions, etc., or those involving explanations, can have longer paragraphs to give descriptive writing scope.

## Art of Expression

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The two most acceptably works of reference on a sub-editor's table are an English dictionary and a gazetteer of place names, because of the need to get words and locations right only the foolhardy with however splendid a vocabulary would do without a dictionary since it gives not only spellings but meanings. It is important that the dictionary be the most up-to-date containing the very latest shifts and nuances in meaning or, better still, that there should be two dictionaries in order to compare definitions. Armed with these authorities, plus a lively and perceptive awareness of the spoken tongue, the sub-editor is ready to embark on the editing process.

### Chosen Words

*The Right Word* : The demands on space mean that there is no room in news stories for a long word where a shorter one can do the job as well. Ten long words excised in- the space of a story three column inches long can make room for an extra sentence, which might allow the sub-editor to bring in another useful fact. Yet where words are substituted, care must be taken to ensure that the writer's meaning has not been changed or frustrated.

The right word is one that is likely to be known to the reader and that makes have writer's meaning clear beyond doubt while at the same time being no longer than it has to be. A general guide is that foreign words should be avoided where there is an adequate English equivalent. It will be found that words of Anglo-Saxon origin such as house, bite, grip, flight, bold, sharp, bright and evil are shorter than their imported equivalent.

In news texts the sub-editor would do well to avoid words, that have more than one meaning, along with abstruse or academic words, circumlocutions and officials of all types.

**Technical Words** : Finance, computers, space weaponry, sociology-these are just some of the areas of science and commerce that have developed their own vocabularies. They are used and are acceptable in specialist publications but mean little to the general newspaper reader. Technical words should, be introduced sparingly on news pages an only in contexts where their meanings are clear.

Yet in each of these areas, and in other similar ones, there are words that begin infiltrating the general vocabulary to won growing acceptance among readers. The space programme has provided life-off, splashdown and hardware (a new use for an only word now meaning, the machines and equipment). Economics has provided upturn, downturn and throughput; industry, blueprint, bottleneck and spin-of; the forces, bombshell, blockbuster and broadside. The examples could be multiplied. Image, model, reading, programme, strategy and target have all taken on new meanings though their use in technical fields.

Should such new words and new uses for old words be accepted? Certainly, if the context makes their use clear and they extend the meaning of the text for the reader better than any other word. Bottleneck, blueprint, blockbuster and spin-off, for instance, are colourful, metaphorical, almost 'visual' words that project an immediate mental image; but guard against applying them to situations where they are not justified. Is plain really detailed and precise enough to be called a blueprint? Is a new book or film, really a blockbuster in the effect it will have on the public?

Novel technical words used in general writing in a metaphorical sense are always in danger of 'catching on' to such an extent that they crop up all over and become clichés. So beware of over-use. Beware, also, of using too many at once. A piece of writing peppered with downturns, upturns, spin-offs throughputs, lift-offs and 'go' situations has descended into jargon.

**Foreign Words :** There is little point in using foreign words which have obvious English equivalents such as; rendezvous (arranged meeting), carte blanche (blank cheque, free hand), melee (mix-up, skirmish), cul-de-sac (blind Alley, close), a infinitum (indefinitely) and per annum (yearly). The following words of foreign origin are generally acceptable on the ground that they are not easy to substitute:

Ad lib	Cortege	Fiance
Aide	Coupe	Fiancee
Aperitif	Crime passionel	Negligee
Attache	Debut	Nuance
Blase	De facto	Premiere
Bourgeois	De jure	Protege
Brochure	Elite	Regime
Carafe	Entree	Repertoire
Cliche	Expose	Status quo
Clientele	Facade	Sub judice
Corsage	Fait accompli	Venue

**Circumlocutions :** Journalists with any experience are not given to using ling-winded phrases. Many of the circumlocutions listed in grammars are speech props such as 'as I stand there before you today,' or 'in this day and age,' 'to all intents and purposes.' or are example of officialese. A sub-editor, while ever vigilant, would not normally expect to encounter such phrases in written copy, although some might enter via quotations, particularly from tape recorded material. Some quaintness of phrasing is reasonable in quoted speech to preserve the flavour of the speaker's words but

really space-wasting phrases should be removed, and usually can be without damage to the meaning.

Nevertheless, because of their lulling familiarity, some circumlocutions can tempt even sub-editors into a trap. Here are some examples, showing the recommended use on the right:

Adjacent to	Near
Prior to	Before
As yet	Yet
As a result of	Because
in consequence of	Because
Currently	Now
At this moment	Now, today
As to whether	Whether
He is man who	He
In order to	To
Tighten up	Tighten
Fill up	Fill
In the first instance	First
Owing to the fact that	Because
Sound out	Sound
Check out	Check
Rest up	Rest
Try out	Try
Start up	At the side of
Meet up with	Join together
Meet with	In terms of
Consult with	Acid test
Inside of	Each and every
He himself	Extra special

Personally, I	Face up top
All of	Horns of a dilemma
End result	Out and about
At the back of	True facts
In front of	
Absolute truth, lies etc.	Truth, lies etc.

**Synonyms** : In order to avoid long words or repetition of words within a sentence or paragraph, or when seeking words for a headline with a limited type count, the sub-editor searches for the alternative or shorter word which means the same. Beware here of the word that means almost the same but not quite. The main danger of this lies in headline writing but meanings are at risk in the text too.

To say a man claimed to he asserted is not the same as saying he said. A change of verb for the way in which things are said can give undesirable colour or emotion to speaker's words. To call a discussion or exchange of views a row in vests it with a suggestion of violence. An alibi is not the same as an excuse.

Study not only the spelling and number of letters in the synonym you choose but also its precise meaning.

**Cliches** : The term cliché is given to a wide range of hackneyed expressions, over-used phrases, tired adjectives, wornout metaphors and current vogue words. Any word, or combination of words, if used excessively, it seems, is in danger of becoming a cliché.

Under this general umbrella are a lot of words and phrases that are unlikely to come the way of a sub-editor since they remain in the limbo of their own environment. They are part of the jargon of their field, and consist of what, by newspaper standards, are tedious circumlocutions. Commerce has its own special ones- "in this connection", for your information, "it is considered that,, I've said it before and I say it again. 'At the end of the day'. Everyday conversation has its own matching verbal props: 'as I was saying', 'if you see what I mean', 'I mean to say', and so on.

The danger of contamination from these sources is instilled into young journalists at the very start. What is sometimes not instilled into them is the danger from journalist's own shifting world of cliches. Keith Waterhouse in his book *Daily Mirror Style*, has pointed out the changing fashion in newspaper cliches, some of them drawn from popular lore, others entirely invented by sub-editors.

In the 1950s and 1960s the favourites were:

burning issue	dropped a danger
cheer to the echo	and that's official
clutches of the law	the absolute gen
crying need	speculation was rife
fast and loose	monotonous regularity
red letter day	last but not least
just like the Blitz	out and about

By the 1980s a new raciness had begun to imbue cliches:

Alive and well and....

Billy Bunters

fashion stakes

knickers in a twist

purr-fect (of cats)

clown prince

writing on the wall

love child (nest etc.)

don't all rush!

tears of joy

using your loaf

pinta Cuppa taken to the cleaners fairytale wedding sweet  
smell of success the end of the road sir (for teacher) wait for it! to  
zero in the name of the game what it's all about

Commentators have a good chortle in pointing these out when

writing about the press. Yet there is, in my view, a case to be made for the cliché in certain controlled circumstances. In writing for a popular readership, the journalist can use the newspaper cliché, like its relation the proverb, as a way of addressing the reader in familiar terms, provided:

1. It is not wastefully wordy.
2. It does not gloss or misrepresent the facts
3. It is not used too frequently.

To refer to billy Bunters in a piece about overweight schoolboys, or to a love child for a baby born out of wedlock, or to knickers in a twist in a funny story about charwomen, can strike a rapport with the readers of a popular daily where words like obese, bastard and muddle-headed might fail.

The term fairytale wedding, provided it does not exaggerate the nuptial splendour, conjures up an instant picture to readers which any other two words would find it hard to equal.

‘The sweet smell of success’ and ‘the writing on the wall’ can sum up particular human situations evocatively, provided they fairly reflect what is in the text.

In fat, there are clichés and clichés. It the more specifically sub-editor’s gimmitks like ‘Don’t all rush!’ or ‘Wait for it!’, purrfect (in cat stories), pinta for milk and cuppa for tea that become most tedious by repetition.

The danger with clichés, in unthinking hands, is also that they can blur the facts of a situation by oversimplifying things for the reader, thus turning stories into stereotypes. They should be used only when they are apt within the context of the story and when they can make a point to the reader better than any other word or combination of words. In short, the odd cliché or two is acceptable, provided it earns its keep.

In using favourite metaphors, sub-editors should beware of mixed ones, as -in ‘She was an angle of mercy pouring oil on troubled waters/ or ‘He preferred to paddle his own canoe and cock a snook at authority.,



## Avoiding Over-use

Over-used adjectives are particularly objectionable in a language as rich as English. Stunning, staggering, sexy, super, sizzling, terrific, luscious and amazing could be consigned unthoughtfully to the waste bin along with superstar, megastar, zap! and phew!

Phew!

**Vogue Words :** Writers on the use of English generally devote some space to what they scornfully call 'vogue words'. There are new words or new uses for words which have taken the fancy of speakers and writers and are being used a lot. It is difficult to generalize about them. Some, like parameters and arguably have a lulling polysyllabic charm for speakers with academic pretensions.

Others like clinical, interface and syndrome have a scientific ring about them which makes the speaker or user feel up to date. Some are useful and new ways of saying things without the need for lots of words and appeal to the busy. Some seem to have no justification at all.

What should the sub-editor do about vogue words? The best advice is to accept them and use them where they help to clarify a meaning or communicate a point to the reader but not to overuse them. English is so rich and flexible a language that no word need be overused. Rather should one be looking for nuances of meaning that new words bring with them, thus accepting them as a broadening of the language rather than a restricting of it. One should be certain and united, however, about what they mean. If there is any doubt or ambiguity about their meaning, then they should be left alone until the grammarians have sorted them out.

Here are some examples of current vogue words, one or two of which will be found usefully deployed in the text of this book. They should be treated on their merits. Some of them could be the Queen's English of tomorrow.

- Accord** Agreement, Began popular life as a headline variant. Not much justification for it in the text.
- Aggravate** Has subtly added to its meaning to annoy, or cause trouble as well as to make worse. The usage dates back to the vogue of its abbreviated form *agro* during the Teddy body period in the 1950s and 1960s-hard to reverse a trend like this, but it is best left to quoted speech.
- Ambience** Once an encompassing circle or sphere, now aura or atmosphere. Useful for descriptive writers but not a good word in a hard news story.
- Arguably** 'Capable of being argued as, 'but mostly wrongly used as 'more than likely to be/ or 'almost certain to be'. A perfectly good word which is simply getting too much to do and deserves a rest.
- Axiomatic** Used to be used only in scientific proofs; now in vogue as conferring certainty on a statement or conclusion on the lines of 'it goes without saying'. A silly misuse.
- Basically** A tiresome prop with which to begin an explanation. A very expendable word.
- Charisma** Formerly a special or God-given grace or talent. More recently a special quality or aura displayed by someone. An overused word, but there is no other word that says precisely this. Use sparingly.
- Chauvinism** Exaggerated and bellicose patriotism; now adapted to mean glorification of the sex-e.g. male chauvinism-and seems to have taken root. It is -doing no harm used with the word 'male' and describes an attitude that is recognizable.

- Clinical** Pertaining to the sick-bed (as of clinics). Has mysteriously come to mean coldly and detachedly (as an action). Best avoided.
- Concept** Used a lot where the word idea used to be used. He a pseudo-scientific ring. Use idea-it is shorter and is mostly what the writer means.
- Contact** A useful noun-verb when one is not certain of means or methods. Otherwise say meet, telephone, write to or call on.
- Criteria** Necessary requirements upon which a judgement or decision is based. There seems to be a lot of criteria about these days but the word mostly does a good job.
- Dialogue** A vogue word from the international political scene. Strictly it is between two people and is wrongly used for discussions, meetings, talks, etc..' and could do with being aired less.
- Ecology** Is beginning to take over from environment, meaning the natural world in which we live. It is stretched to mean anything which is natural as opposed to man-made, though originally it meant simply the branch of biology which dealt with the relationship of plants and animals to their surroundings. No stopping this one.
- Escalation** Another bastard from the international political or war scene. Has developed in recent decades as a back formation from escalator, a moving staircase. It means to increase or develop by successive stages. The world's trouble spots are keeping it well employed and it has carved a patch for itself.
- Fruition** Plans everywhere are coming to fruition, yet the word has nothing to do with fruit or bearing fruit, but means the act of enjoyment or pleasurable possession. Often wrongly used.

- Hopefully** Means with hope, but is now worked to death meaning 'it is hoped that...' or 'I hope so'. Should be given a rest.
- Image** Not so much a copy of an original as a special, highly glossed version to present to the public; more a facade than a copy. But everyone who is anyone now seems to have one-or need one.
- Interface** A surface separating two portions of matter or space. Became in the 1960s a region or price of equipment where interaction occurs between tow systems. More loosely it has come to mean any form of joining together. Treat with caution.
- Line** A particular type of argument or set of explanations, e.g. the Marxist-Leninist line, or the line adopted. Argument is more descriptive, and preferred, despite being longer.
- Maximize** Meaning to work or pursue something to the maximum degree possible or feasible, has come to stay. Although one of the prolific new 'ize' verbs it is pithy and colourful and says it in a word.
- Meaningful** A much used invention of recent decades meaning full or replete with meaning. I can't bring myself to condemn it since it does a job-but beware of overuse.
- Minimize** Handy-as with maximize.
- Mix** A useful adman's word meaning the sum total of all the various ingredients. An insinuatingly useful word which has the extreme advantage of brevity.
- Normalize** Means to cause to return to normal, akin to regularize. There are handy verbs, though too many of them on a page can cast a blight.

- Ongoing** Very popular for continuing or never ending. Has its used but is often used unnecessarily like a verbal prop.
- Parameters** A scientific word meaning qualities or factors, which has achieved runaway vogue as a synonym for limits or boundaries. A snob word that has caught on. There seems to be no need for it in the prestige (it formerly meant practising juggling or cheating). It is now cheerfully bestowed upon people, jobs, property, businesses and sites. If only it were used a little less though it is clear there is a lot of prestige about.
- Proliferation** The endless development, formation and spread of things, is a useful word which does a job. One can live with its popularity.
- Scenario** The script-writer's word which describes something more detailed than just the scene. Is sometimes the right word, but is too exotic to stand much use.
- Situation** We are surrounded by situations. Every decision, development, spending programme, injection of funds, order and cancellation depends on a situation, new situations, bad situations, ongoings situations-too many of every sort of situation except situations vacant. Blame the politicians and the economists.
- Spectrum** A pseudo-scientific word for range. Use range.
- Symbiosis** A withdrawn cult word used a lot by those who think they know what it means. Strictly; living or involved together in mutual support. One - for newspapers to leave along.
- Syndrome** A set concurrent things or symptoms, now used for many conditions of the body, mind and imagination. Is becoming generally accepted and

- puts things in a nutshell, even if there are more syndromes about than we thought possible.
- Thematic** Having or pertaining to a theme (of art forms, philosophies, systems and instructions). A useful descriptive word that earns its keep. Thrust As of an argument or explanation. A nice phallic word much favoured by aware males. Does a job.
- To host** Meaning to preside over an invited gathering (of friends, visiting heads of state, teenage delegates, etc.). It does a useful job.
- Traumatic** Which once meant pertaining to, or cause by, injury or shock, has become almost a synonym for dramatic. Though it hardly deserves to, it sounds good.
- Trendy** Used for things that are going to be 'the thing' or that were 'the thing' and are no longer so. A word to bury.
- Update** As a verb or noun is a useful technical addition to the general vocabulary, it is brief and precise and no other word seems to mean this.

The use of 'ze' endings in words as organize and nationalize as against the 'ise; for merchandise, advertise, etc., (despite the advocacy of the Oxford English Dictionary and the Authors' and Printers' Dictionary) is losing ground and 'ise' is appearing in all cases. The differentiation was never popular in newspapers.

**American Words :** The use of American spelling is generally discouraged in British newspapers, even in quotes from documents. Sub-editors, in American-originated copy, should see that railroad is railway, that a car fender becomes bumper, and that speciality becomes speciality. Beware the use of the word subway. Color, honor, rigor, glamor, etc., should have their restored and defense should read, defence.

Yet peddler is often used in place of the English pedlar where

drug peddling s the subjected, and program allowed to stand in computer contexts.

**Anglicized Words :** Wide variation exists in the spelling of foreign names, with Russian composers and Chinese cities turning up in particularly bizarre forms. Chaikovsky can be rendered Chaikovaski and Scriabin Skyrabin. Peking can be Pekin or even Beijing, while Hangkow can turn up as Quanzhou.

Generally, the use of capitals in preparing copy is lessening, lower case being sufficient unless special significance requires a capital. In style sheets the aim is consistency, one way or the other.

**Capital Letters :** In the eighteenth and even the nineteenth century capital letters littered writing to denote qualities, word stress, people's titles and specific references to things. Now they are the introduced by name and continues to be referred to and where the title is part of the person's name, but a capital is not used where the word is simply the rank or appointment-judge, chairperson, secretary, etc. A country's President takes a capital, however. Some papers use capital when introducing an important official for the first time, as in 'Trevor Griffiths, General Secretary of the National Union of teachers," thereafter referring to him as Mr Griffiths. The Royal Family is capitalized but other used of royal tend to be lower case.

The seasons can be capitalised or lower case according to style, specific areas like the North, the West Country, etc., capitalized but points of the compass more frequently in lower case. The government takes a capital but government in general lower case. Left-wing and Right wing, or simply the Left and the Right, are usually capitalized to show a political meaning.

Capitals used in abbreviations are appearing more and more without points, as in USSR, UK, EEC, IBM, NCB, etc., but U.S. takes points so that it does not mean 'us'. Acronyms (combinations of initials pronounced as words) take no points and are often given lower case after an initial capital as in UNESCO. Mensa and Nato.

**Names :** The usual style is 'John Jones, aged 20: but sometimes

'aged' is missed out. Street names are occasionally hyphenated in '25 Church-street. Norwich'. People are referred to after the first mention as Mr. Mrs. Miss, except in criminal court cases where the style is usually by surname only.

**Numbers** : Most style sheets give one to ten in letters and eleven upwards in numbers. Fractions can be an exception. 5½ looking better than five-and-a-half. Figures are always used from mathematical formulae and a percentages. Sentences should ever being with a number given as figure" 'Three hundred years ago, a leading poet.... etc.' is better.

With dates, many style sheets go for the logical day, month, year methods 23 February, 1987, but some prefer the month first. Inclusive dates are best rendered 1986-87, 1915-16, rather than changing just the last digit.

With money, amount are mostly rounded down in headlines, 1509 becoming (5000 and with an 'm' used for million as in (35m. In copy, 135 million is mostly preferred to (35,000,000 with figures being used for more precise amounts. In smaller sums, say 149.07, but 49p. using `p'.

**Bans** : Look out for banned words especially diminutives such as kiddie, hubby and doggy. Every editor has his or her phobias and will sometimes put a much used headline word under total interdict.

**Cyphers** : The ampersand (&) is little used in newspapers despite its brevity. Accents are mostly missed out, the dollar sign not always in the type range, and the % percentage sign tending more and more to be written as P.C. or per cent.

**Abbreviations** : Most letter abbreviations are written without points (see under 'punctuation' above) with acronyms in lower case after the initial capital. In the case of common abbreviated titles as in Prof., Mr and Dr. many style sheets leave off the point if the last letter of the word is included. Headline abbreviations carry no points unless the meaning is in doubt without them. Organizations should be given fully 6 first mention so that the



abbreviation thereafter is understood form, to refresh the reader's memory.

With ranks there is wide divergence, as in Lieut-Cdr (Lt-Cdr), Flt-Lieut (F/Lt), Lt-Col (Lieut-Col), Constable (PC), Corpl (CPI) etc. The style sheet has to be studied. The use of country abbreviations such as Beds, Berks, Bucks. Oxon and Salop should also be checked, as should abbreviations for the longer months such as Agu., Sept. and Nov.

Weights and measurements, where giving precise amounts, are usually abbreviated thus: 10 k.g. 4 lb, 6 fl oz, and are not pluralized with a final 's' or given a full point. If written out in full, as in 5 kilograms, the normal plural 's' would apply.

Excessive use of a variety of abbreviations in the text is tiresome to the reader and should be avoided. The space saved is often more than counterbalanced by the loss in clarity.

Avoid using time-saving abbreviations in copy for keyboarding in case aftn (Afternoon), btwen, (between), yesty (yesterday), mng (morning) or chmn (chairman turn up like that in the paper.

**Typographical Style :** It is important to be consistent in the text in such things as film and book titles, quoted verse, the names of newspapers and popular songs and the style and title of MPs, church dignitaries, etc. Some newspapers give all titles of songs, books and even newspapers in italic. Others give them simply with initial caps. song titles are sometimes quoted. The use of quoted verse should be checked with the style card.

## Subbing Techniques

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In editing copy the sub-editor must ensure not only that a story is accurate and is clear and readable, and of the length, but that it is legally safe to print. Production delays caused by a late decision to take a story out of page because it might be libellous can cost money and lose sales.

All newspaper companies retain a trained lawyer or a senior journalist versed in the law, to read copy and advise the editor of potential legal traps. If a story is considered unsafe to use, the lawyer or legal reader, after consulting the editor or chief sub-editor, will issue a legal kill, which means that the story must be thrown away, or removed from the computer.

Any legal alterations to make a story safe are passed to the sub-editor who marks them 'set catch legal must' when re-entering the corrections into the system for typesetting. This catch-line, which is removed at make-up stage, is to remind the make-up person that the corrected part must not be cut or left out.

Electronic editing causes no particular problem to the legal reader. While security of text means that computer access is limited to particular areas for those performing editorial tasks, the legal

reader has access to all incoming texts, which can be called up, file by file, and read on screen. Even so, it is necessary for the legal overview to extend to the finished page and it is usual for photocopies, or 'proofs' of each one to be checked before being 'sent' to ensure that no legal danger has resulted from editing, captioning or headline writing.

The over-view by the lawyer, or legal reader, is a general one and varies in efficiency from office to office and it does not absolve the sub-editor from watching carefully for legal dangers in copy. If there are any doubts about a story that cannot be resolved in the editing the sub-editor should refer it in good time to the legal person before consigning the copy to typesetting, thus saving time. A decision can then be taken as to whether there is a danger or not and, if need be, the story can be made legally safe.

The difference between a safe story and action for damages can often turn on a phrase or the arrangement of the words at a critical point in the story.

### **Legal Aspects**

Two thoughts should be kept in mind by journalists when considering legal problems in editing: one, that a mistake or damaging statement gains much more currency with the public in a newspaper than by any other means of dissemination and therefore can cause greater harm; two, that newspaper companies are regarded as rich and a good target for litigation. Editors are thus sensitive to those laws of which newspapers are most liable to fall foul.

There are two sorts of laws that affect newspapers in Britain:

1. The general law of the land to which editors are liable in the same way as is the ordinary citizen. These include the laws covering defamation of character, or libel; contempt of court, trespass, confidentiality, and the various provisions of the Official Secrets Act, which restrict the passing on or circulating of certain information.
2. Laws aimed more specifically at the press and broadcasting

media to restrict the publicity given in court cases and which are, in effect, a type of censorship. These include the laws forbidding publication of evidence in divorce and other matrimonial cases, the identification of offenders in juvenile cases in the publication of evidence given at lower courts against people committed for trial to higher courts, the details (and names in some cases) of people involved in sex offences, and also some provisions contained in the race laws.

While all these laws worry editors and news editors since they restrict what a newspaper can say and do, not all of them concern the sub-editor engaged in the daily production of the paper. The laws restricting the coverage of court cases are accepted and applied. While a sub-editor should be aware of types of reporting restrictions, he or she is not likely to be presented with a detailed blow-by-blow account of the evidence in a steamy divorce case. The evidence is not covered because of the legal restrictions, and editors are aware that only the names and judge's summing up in such cases can be used.

Nor are the laws covering juvenile court cases flouted. Names and identification of juveniles can be given only if the magistrates direct that they should be published in the case of very serious offenders who put the public in danger. Here a magistrate's direction becomes an important part of the reporter's story.

The provisions of the Criminal Justice Acts of 1967, 1980 and 1981, which forbid the publication of evidence against people sent for trial from lower courts (except in special cases), though disliked by editors, are universally applied, as are those of the Sex Offences Acts.

Yet legal traps can still lurk in copy. Chief of these is the perennial danger of libel in which the threat of being sued can cause a timid editor to shelve a story which should have been published for the public good.

↳ **Libel** : A newspaper is guilty of libel when it can be proved that a person's character or livelihood has been damaged as a

result of statements made in the paper. A successful action can result in substantial damages being paid. While some well-known cases get much publicity, many more are settled unknown to the public by out-of-court arrangements in which quite large sums of money change hands, accompanied by a printed apology. This method at least avoids heavy court costs in cases where a newspaper feels the judgement might go against it.

Defence against libel is difficult. An editor might plead the truth of the statements or his or her defence might be that they are not defamatory or that the story was 'fair comment made in good faith and without malice about a matter of public interest'.

While the overall decision on whether or not to publish a story is the editor's, the sub-editor has to be careful in arrangements of words and facts in a story in which a known danger of libel lurks. This is particularly so in stories where the editor, having taken legal advice, is ignoring a letter threatening libel action if the story appears. Such threats can be devices used by desperate people to stop publication and are ignored only if the editor has good legal grounds (and a good legal adviser). In such a story the office lawyer should be allowed to see the edited version at an early stage to yet it in time to avoid production delays.

A persistent litigant or a wily lawyer can find libel in the most innocent statements and no paper is ever free of writs. Some, however, are just attempts to extract money out of the company by unscrupulous people, and a newspaper learns how to deal with these.

In stories of known legal danger, the sub-editor has to make sure that risky statements are checked and corroborated; that people against whom accusations are made are given space in the story to make their reply; and that background details for someone in the news are not chosen out of malice to make them look small or ridiculous. Any obvious danger points should be checked back with the reporter.

People with criminal records are particularly sensitive about having them mentioned in stories that have nothing to do with

their murky past. Actors can stand criticism of a particular role but could sue if their general professional competence were being questioned. A person in public life would expect to meet opposition and criticism, but it would be actionable to say they were not fit to be in public life. Likewise, suggestions that people are drunks or take drugs can be dangerous, or stories that suggest they have been less than honest in their handling of public or shareholders' money.

**Contempt of Court :** This means broadly any conduct or spoken or written words or printing of pictures which might impede the working of a court or bring justice into disrepute, and it is a law aimed at everyone, not just the press. Yet the press, because it publishes the proceedings of courts, is particularly exposed to the danger of being in contempt.

Here are some of the things that a sub-editor, and anyone else involved in editorial production, must watch for:

1. No picture should be published of a person accused or expected to be accused of a offence until he or she has been identified in court. An exception would be where the police have issued a picture of a wanted person. Even here the description attached to the picture must avoid accusing the person and must contain words such as 'is wanted by the police for questioning in connection with...' etc.
2. A newspaper must not publish new facts or evidence about people being tried before a court while the trial is in progress. The people charged are not in a position to refute them, the defence or prosecution case might be damaged by them and the jury influenced.
3. The newspaper must not try to interview any witness or person involved in a trial. The printing of such an interview can put the paper in contempt.
4. Any criticism of the judge or the court proceedings while a trial is in progress is considered serious contempt.

5. No attempt must be made by a newspaper to get in touch with a member of the jury during a trial.

These are the main points concerning news stories about court proceedings but there is a wide area beyond this which, at the decision of a judge, a newspaper might find itself in contempt of court (and open to the penalties of imprisonment and fines that go with it). For instance, journalists have gone to prison in Britain for refusing to disclose to a judge the sources of information contained in a story about an accused person printed before a trial began. Also, the proceedings of judicial tribunals, presided over by judges, into disasters and other situations have been deemed to be subject to the laws of contempt of court, thus restricting newspapers in which they can print in the same way as with court proceedings.

The idea of the laws of contempt of court is that the person. Once accused, should be able to get a fair trial in front of magistrates or a jury. For example, a persistent pattern of crime in an area, such as attacks on women or children, can produce in the public mind the shadowy figure of a marauder who becomes personalized as the Yorkshire Ripper or the Beast of Bournemouth. As long as the police search goes on and further attacks are reported the name Yorkshire Ripper or Beast of Bournemouth dominated the headlines. Once a person has been arrested and charged, however, or even if the person is being held for questioning and not yet named, the editor is in danger of being in contempt of court by associating the name of the marauder with the person held.

The matter has, in legal terms, become subjudice. It is subject to the due processes of the law, which must be allowed to proceed without outside interference. From this point a newspaper story can give only those details that are allowed under the law.

The sort of story that first appears after someone is arrested, might run like this:

A man was helping police with their inquiries at Ex town police station last night in connection with the deaths of two teenage girls from Extown whose bodies were found last Wednesday in the River Ex.

The next development of the story might be:

Charles Jinks, a labourer, of Caxton Street, Riverport, was charged in Extown Magistrates' Court this morning with the murder of Elsie Jones, of Privet Street, Extown, on or about October 8.

He was given legal aid and was remanded in custody for further inquiries. Bail was refused.

It would be wrong of the local newspaper to introduce the death of the second girl into the story at this stage, even though they might know that a further charge was pending. It has to wait.

Eventually Charles Jinks is charged in the Magistrates' Court with the murder of both girls and evidence is presented and plea taken. The paper can still publish only what is allowed under the Criminal Justice Acts, which means that, unless the magistrates direct otherwise, only Jinks's name and address, the charges against him, the names of the girls, his plea and the fact of his committal to a higher court can be given.

Not until the case comes before the Crown Court for the area and the prosecution and defence cases are given in full before a jury can the evidence be published in the press. Only after the trial has finished and judgement been given can the paper comment on the case, interview people involved and-if the evidence shows it to be justified-use once more the term Yorkshire Ripper or the Beast of Bournemouth. It can then if it wishes, even comment on the way proceedings were brought and on the police handling of the cases.

The job of the sub-editor is to check that the law has been observed by the reporter in his or her account of the hearings at the various stages and not to allow anything into the newspaper that will get it into trouble.

**Official Secrets Act :** This is a wide act which can be used to cover many aspects of Government business as well as security or state secrets. Controversial are spelt out to the press from time to time in D-notices which are requests to the press not to publish



certain things on threat of being guilty of breaching the Act. Punishment is not automatic for ignoring D-notices but an editor would have to have good grounds for doing so. The decision here, for editorial production, is whether to publish an item at all, and it is one for the editor.

Newspapers would be in trouble with litigants much more were it not that under British law the need for freedom of speech in the public interest is recognized and certain newspaper reports are protected by 'Privilege'. The law on privilege covers the reporting of court hearings and sittings of Parliament and public bodies where serious accusations can be made about people which, if made and reported elsewhere, could lead to actions for libel.

The application of privilege needs to be learnt by journalists during training for it is a valuable guide to the protection their reports have. It must be known by Sub-editors. Privilege comes in two sorts.

*Absolute Privilege* : Absolute privilege covers 'a fair and accurate report of judicial proceedings published contemporaneously' provided that legal restrictions on coverage in certain cases specified in law have been applied. However untrue in fact statements in court are, or however unfair, a newspaper who reports them and says who made them is safe from action for libel. An exception has been statements involving sedition, blasphemy and obscenity, though these have become increasingly hard to define.

Points to watch:

1. Fair and accurate means that the report must be fair to both sides.
2. The report is not covered by absolute privilege if it includes matter gleaned from documents that have not been read out in court.
3. Protection does not include anything not part of the proceedings, such as an outburst or scene in the courtroom.
4. The report must be 'contemporaneous'. This means it

should be carried in the next issue of the paper after the hearing.

5. The wording of the headline must not go beyond the story.
6. Beware of wording. 'A 'charge' of murder only become a 'case' of murder after the verdict. If a person at a lower court 'elects' to go for trial, do not say he or she was 'sent' for trial, which suggests the court has decided there is a case to answer. A statement made by a person is an 'alleged statement' until it has been agreed and accepted in court.
7. Descriptions of witnesses, their dress or behaviour, are not covered by privilege.

**Qualified Privilege** : This allows protection for reports of judicial proceedings that are non-contemporaneous, and to reports of Parliament and other public bodies over a wide field. Broadly, qualified privilege means that the reports are privileged in law provided there is not malice or other improper motive behind publication. Where these motives can be established in court, then the protection of qualified privilege is of no avail. This is an important distinction that needs to be kept in mind by sub-editors dealing with such reports.

The areas covered by qualified privilege include; Parliament, Commonwealth legislatures, International organizations and conferences to which the UK Government sends a representative, public inquires, bodies formed in the UK to promote the arts, science, religion or learning, or the interests of trade, business or industry; associations for promoting sport and pastimes to which members of the public are invited, public meetings held for a lawful purpose, meetings of local authorities, committees or tribunals appointed by Act of Parliament, and reports of notices or information issued to the public by the Government, local authority or the police.

Schedules listing these and other occasions of qualified privilege, and also spelling out some important exceptions, are published as part of the 1952 Defamation Act, and its successors.

For the sub-editor, danger can crop up with statements made

by some public bodies covered by qualified privilege in which the background material to which the newspaper might have access, is not so covered. The advice of the office lawyer, or legal person, is the only answer in some cases.

The publication of material not covered by qualified privilege does not mean that the newspaper is in trouble automatically-only that if a court action follows, qualified privilege cannot be used as a defence.

### **Copies Rewritten**

Sub-editors are generally thought by reporters to be keen to rewrite copy. It can be galling for a reporter who has taken care over writing up a difficult assignment to find that half the words in the published version, perhaps under his or her name, are unrecognizable.

It is wrong and unjustifiable for a sub-editor to alter and rewrite copy just for the sake of it. On a well run subs' table this does not happen. For one thing, sub-editors should be too busy editing to deadlines to devote time unnecessarily to a story. For another, the chief sub-editor would not stand for a well turned story which earned its space as written being pulled apart.

Yet rewriting is necessary just as heavy editing can be necessary for reasons that have nothing to do with, the way a reporter has written the story. The treatment of copy, as we have seen, is influenced by the volume and changing pattern of news on the day, and the availability of space. It is also governed by new developments that put a story in a different light, the use of governed by new developments that put a story in a different light, the use of other copy sources, a change of news angle to suit a night editor's or chief sub-editor's judgement, or simply a dash with editorial policy.

It can happen that the work which needs to be done on, a story for these reasons is so complex that rewriting is quicker and simpler than trying to produce a readable sequence from fragmented heavily edited sections.

The following examples show where rewriting would be the best means of editing.

**Angling** : There is nothing sinister about angling a story. It simply means deciding the viewpoint from which to tell it. The intro, in effect, nominates the angle. The fact sequence that follows supports and justifies it.

It can happen that the night editor or chief sub-editor, with more mature judgement, sees a story differently from the reporter, and the sub-editor is instructed to 'renose' it from a new angle. Here are some examples of what might result:

1. A simple account of a street accident becomes a 'death trap claims new victim' story where the reporter had failed to link the accident with previous ones at the same spot.
2. An important job appointment and a story about bequests in a will are brought alive with new angles through the eagle eye of the night editor following up obscure details that seemed to call for explanation.
3. A planning decision of the local council is found to have vital implications for the community that were not immediately apparent in the report of a council meeting.
4. A story about an old lady found dead in a flat in which she lived alone is built up and rewritten to exemplify a campaign the newspaper is running about the effects of urban loneliness.

Angling as demonstrated in these examples shows how the creative assessment of a story can result in a recasting of the material by the sub-editor and the working in of new copy.—

There is also more general angling of stories to suit the readership. Political stories, as we have seen, are sometimes presented in regional and town papers in terms of the local connections of the politician or the likely local effects of proposed legislation. A paper's political writers are aware of this and it does not often fall to the sub-editor to re-nose their copy.

Other jobs can entail a considerable amount of work to bring

out the local angle. The casualty figures in -a crash or disaster story might include local people and the story will be edited from that viewpoint. Trade and export stories might be angled to bring-out their connection with local industry and jobs.

### Various Sources

Sometimes a sub-editor has to handle a story which has copy form more than one source so that the editing becomes a merging of several texts into one story. It might be a story with several ends in which a main section by a staff reporter has legwork provided by correspondents.

For instance an air crash might have local interviews, or a rescue story might have materials from several areas. Sometimes agency copy, either from a home agency such as the Press Association or an international agency, has coverage part of which is relevant.

Some stories have foreign ends which have important links with the main story. File background has to be worked in and perhaps a financial angle from the City correspondent.

Keeping up with this amount of copy in a complicated, many-sided story requires an eye for vital detail, especially when extra copy arrives during the subbing of the story. The sub-editor cannot afford to miss anything of importance. Rewriting is often the answer.

Most newspapers prefer staff reporter's copy to be used where possible, and agency copy to fill in gaps, but the agency version might provide an important element of the story. Such stories should carry a combined staff and agency credit.

**Bad Copy** : A more obvious candidate for rewriting is the story that is badly written, either for lack of time by the reporter or through a wrongly-judged style or approach. Such copy might be sent back for the reporter to try again, but if time is short the sub-editor will be instructed to 'knock it into shape.' This could include 'cleaning it up', which means taking out explicit sex, obscenities,

excessive violence or things likely to offend the readers; I sharpening it up', getting rid of dull writing, tedious phrasing and wordiness; and 'toning it down', ridding it of extravagant or emotive language, excessive use of adjectives or gush.

Some reporters who are employed because they are brilliant news gathers are indifferent with the pen and rely upon the sub-editor for the final polish. In American practice this need is recognized by the use of rewrite people separate from sub-editors. In British practice it is found more useful, for page planning purposes, to keep rewriting within the sub-editing and production orbit, although under computerized systems more use is being made of newsroom rewrite staff. The precise boundary in rewriting between what should be done in the newsroom before submitting copy and what should be left to the sub-editors is a matter of house practice. There is no doubt that basic newsroom collating of source material simplifies the sub-editor's job, yet with imminent production deadlines the arrival of late or additional material is best dealt with by the sub-editor who is closer to the space requirements, and is already well into the editing of the story. Daily newspapers, especially town evenings, are much more sub-editor's papers than they are writers'.

*Electronic Aids* : Electronic editing, if used properly, should offer no insoluble handicap to editing jobs that involve a degree of collating and rewriting. The computer has a prodigious capacity for the storage and retrieval of material, and though split screen allows only two stories to be displayed a time, the main edited text can be displayed on one and materials from successive other sources worked in from the other. Equally, rewriting can be done on one screen for insertion in the adjoining edited text.

In the case of the more complex stories the copytaster can help by filtering through to the sub-editor only essential material so that the sub-editor does not have to do a secondary tasting job on an increasing flow of copy. If there is any need to go back to original copy later it can be stored intact in the computer, or left in 'note' form in the edited version of the story so that it is there to be seen when called up on the screen, even after typesetting.

Rewrite subbing from complex sources is a job for an experienced sub-editor. Such a person can sift through a varied input of copy, do the necessary fact checking by reference book or cuttings, and within minutes begin writing the story from intro onwards-or with the intro to follow-while the copy is being typeset a section at a time. On an evening paper, especially in the subbing of the splash or late stories on page one and page two, this is a valuable facility.

The following points should be watched with rewrites, particularly by subs new to the table:

1. Is the rewrite necessary? Is using part of the reporter's copy, with subbing adjustments, just as quick or quicker?
2. Have quotes, names, ages, addresses, etc. been checked against the original copy?
3. Have quotes been transcribed accurately or paraphrased fairly?
4. Has the style of the paper been followed in spellings, abbreviations, use of colloquialisms, etc.?
5. Where subbing is on hard copy, have hand-written names been capitalized and figures written clearly so that the keyboard operator will understand them, and has a note been kept of folio numbers, typesetting and measures?

**Revising and Editionizing** : National dailies in Britain publish usually in three or four editions during a production cycle lasting from about midday until 2.30 a.m. The first edition, for the circulation area further away, has a press time of about 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. with later editions printing at two or three-hour intervals up to about 12.30 a.m. to occupy a printing run finishing about 3 a.m. In dual centre production (say, London and Manchester), edition times are later since distance and travelling time for edition areas are shorter. This means that the first edition can contain later news, which is especially advantageous with regional sports fixtures.

Area changes in content in national paper editions are mainly concerned with sport, with full-length match reports in football and cricket being substituted on the sports pages for each readership area. One or two pages might be kept open for regional news, but the bulk of the edition news changes concern the updating of national stories in the light of later information or the substituting of later news and pictures. Stories that are likely to need updating are usually carried on Page One, the back page and on certain "edition" inside pages, with a number of pages (other than regional 'change' pages) remaining the same through all editions.

In the case of town evening papers and local weeklies the editions are arranged to give a much greater stress to area and community news, sometimes to the extent of varying the title of the paper to emphasize its local identity. Thus the Hoylake News and Advertiser becomes the Heswall and Neston News and Advertiser, and the Malton Gazette and Herald becomes the Pickering Gazette and Herald.

Some big town evening papers run as many as six or seven editions in a production cycle lasting from about 11.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. In both town evenings and weeklies the pagination is arranged (depending on whether the paper is tabloid or broadsheet) so that a number of pages of area news can be day goes onto fit in with the various edition times. The front and back pages change with every edition and contain the stories most likely to need updating. With tabloid-sized pages, the sub-editor would need to remember that pages are made up in pairs.

In cases of great urgency it is sometimes possible to slip' one page (or pair of pages) on its own between editions in order to change or update a story, thus creating a special or 'slip' edition. This is done if new facts or news have to be carried and the editor does not wish to wait until the next edition to get at the page.

In the case of edition area coverage the stories are marked with their edition when subbed, and are kept ready in type to be



used as the edition changes become due. Most changes on area pages involve stories destined for one edition only, but some stories are edited in different versions of different deadlines to bring out local angles for the different editions.

A story in one edition about a robbery in Bradford might be angled in another as "Huddersfield man accused". A story a Bristol bride can turn up in another edition as a story about a Swindon bridegroom.

It is used on a big evening paper to list the editions and their individual page press times on an information sheet so that sub-editors, especially new ones can refer quickly to the deadline for whatever story or edition they are working on.

*Rejigs* : The revised form a story is called a Rejig, or a redress. The sub-editor, either on proof or screen, works in later material to update the story for the next edition. Add matter will go conveniently at the end, and can be subbed and typeset as a separate item to be-picked up when the page is next made up. If the length allowed to the story is the same, the sub-editor would have to offer a 'cut' in the original story to allow for the new material. This is the simplest form of revision, with the headline and main body of the story remaining the same.

Where the later material is more important it can involve re-nosing and re-headlining the story for the next edition. This might involve reworking the story, beginning with the latest material and working in parts of the original story that are needed, depending on space and relevance. The copy is thus treated as new story and given a new catch-line, and is re-entered into the system as new, the original story being erased. Unless more space has been system as new, the original story being erased. Unless more space has been allowed for it-maybe a page lead instead of a single-column top-the sub-editor must be careful to cast if off to the same length as the version it replaces. Late rejigs that turn up too long on edition times can cause serious delays by jamming up the typesetter, unless the cuts are straightforward.

Late material can also be sent out for setting as inserts and marked into the story as 'insert A' or 'insert B', with cuts indicated so that the same length is preserved.

For the more complex problems of revision and edition changes.

**Captions** : Captions, the writing of which is part of the sub-editing function, are a world on their own. While a picture cannot stand without them, they should not stress the obvious but should try to extend what the picture they cover is saying by offering explanation and context. For instance, a caption to a picture of a man playing a golf shot would be banal if it said:

Trevino playing a long shot

It would be better if it told the reader:

Trevino : a record round

or

The Trevino style-today's picture which at least makes the point that the picture is 'hot from the camera. Likewise a rail crash picture would have to say something more creative than;

The crash scene at Extown junction

For instance it could inform the reader:

The upended coach in which ten survived.

Even stock pictures in TV, programmes can be brought to life and not give just names. For example.

Bruce Forsyth: a comedy comeback on BBC 1 (7p.m)

at least gives readers a vital piece of information which sends them looking into the programmes. And note the use of the name in capitals. This is a good ploy with all captions.

All these examples extended readers' awareness's of the accompanying text as well as explaining the picture and, by giving a tidbit of information, persuade them to read on.

While identification is paramount in a caption, time and location are not always necessary. There are also a few do's and don'ts about caption writing that can be rumbled by examining newspaper pages. For instance;

- The convention of writing caption in the present tense is well founded and worth sticking with. It can give even a stock head shot immediacy.
- They should be adjacent to the picture and preferably under it. A caption that has to be looked for has failed.
- Captions that cover a number of pictures, containing words such as below life, above, far right, etc., can exasperate the reader by driving him or her to search around to find which is which-especially if one of the references proves to be wrong.

Most captions appear alongside the story which the picture illustrates and therefore do not have to say very much other than to justify the picture, but some display pictures do not fit in with stories and depended on their own self-contained caption. The material usually still has a news point, even if it is just to announce that this is the newly issued official portrait of one of the Royal Family, or that this is the mayoress modelling her new chain of office.

A difficulty can arise in the popular tabloids, however, where a girlie picture appears on page Three because this is what the readers expect to find there, rather than because there is any other justification. It is here, in providing self-contained captions to primarily display pictures that the special art of the caption writer reaches its highest fulfillment; when, absolved almost from dealing in facts, the writer can use comment, whimsy and clever writing to bring the picture alive. Even so, the conventions of identification, justification and the use of the present tense should be applied. The reader has to be guided.

***Caption Typography*** : This is best kept simple. It should be different from the adjacent reading text, usually in bolder type and

a size bigger. In captions of more than one line the writer should try to aim at even lines, giving instructions to square or equalise the lines. It is usually sufficient to contain the lines in a ruled 'bucket' if emphasis is needed, and the use of stars, blobs, squares and other graphic decorations to draw attention to captions should not be overdone. There are cases in which captions at the side of a picture can be set ranged against the picture and ragged on the outside.

Some captions, where the material is self-contained, and even those used with a story where the picture content is exceptional, can be usefully given a headline. It is here that a label headline, usually banished from the news stories, can be effectively used to draw the readers' attention to the message in the picture, especially if there is already a main headline on the story.

For example, a sports caption headline might say:

HOWZAT!

or

YORKED!

or

GLORY NIGHT

the latter in the case of a Cup Final celebration.

On human interest pictures of strong content a headline might say:

THE GIRL HE

COULDN'T FORGET

or on a rescue picture:

THE MOMENT OF FREEDOM

Picture headlines, which sometimes consist of clusters of words perhaps in the form of a quotation, are not trying to tell you the essentials of the story. These are already given in the news headline

close by. They are trying to connect you with the fleeting moment in time caught by the picture. They are a rare example, as captions themselves sometimes are, of where comment is allowed to intrude into a news page, though intrude is not the right word. What the comment really does is to orchestrate and heighten what the picture is saying so that you are drawn to read the story.

## **News Bills**

One of the lesser-known jobs associated with sub-editing is the writing of news bills; usually called contents bill (posters in the US). Part of a newspaper's self-publicity is to display these bills outside news-stands and at strategic points in the circulation area to advertise its contents.

There are various types, Stock bills are those that remained readers that racing form cards or television programmes or 'latest sports news' can be found in the paper that night or that morning. These are usually preprinted. General bills are those that advertise an important story, and are placed at all display points in the circulation area. Thirdly, there are local bills, which emphasize the local connection of a story and which are placed in their own area.

On some papers a senior sub-editor writes all the bills, taking the material from page proofs as each page is made ready. In others, sub-editors are asked to write off bills for stories that are considered 'billable' while they sub-edit them.

The technique of writing a content bill is to disclose enough information to arouse the reader's interest without saying so much that the reader has no need to buy the paper—a legitimate advertising and publicity ruse. In this sense they are not explicit as headlines are, which are intended for the reader who has already bought the paper. For instance:

FLEET IN

STAND-BY

SENSATION

has urgency yet suggests an intriguing range of possibilities, and is typical wording for a general bill.

PRINCE IN

MARRIAGE

RIDDLE

likewise gives in general terms a story of wide-ranging possibilities, as does

MINERS'

STRIKE

DECISION

It would be self-defeating (and bad practice), however, if the wording deliberately misled the reader—for example, if the fleet turned out to be the Peruvian fleet or the prince a member of an obscure the passing reader.

With local bills the place name is all-important. A national paper which avoided the town's name in a headline would bill a story to its area as HALIFAX WIFE IN DEATH RIDDLE if it felt the story were good enough to garner a few extra local sales. A town evening paper could use suburban reference. The Newcastle Evening Chronicle, for example, might bill the same story as BLAYDON WIFE IN COURT RUMPUS and WIFE IN NEWCASTLE COURT RUMPUS. In cases of casualty figures or local election results, one story might yield a handful of local bills, each containing a different area name.

Bills can be 'local' in a different sense than in place names. A story about universities might produce bills for all university towns, or a council decision about housing be billed to all housing estates in an area. A story about theatre in general could be billed outside all London West End theatres.

Bills are unashamedly labels. While the active verb is not excluded, it is not vital. The wording thrives on evocative but very general terms like rumpus, riddle, sensation, row and drama,

which would be frowned upon in headlines by some chief sub-editors, but whose lack of precision is a virtue for the purpose of a bill. Long words should be avoided so that the words can be given maximum size for distant reading, with four or five words the maximum. The message should be simple, consisting of one thought. Bills that try to say too much fail in their purpose.

The usual system is that bills are sent, handwritten, to the circulation department who produce them by stencil or heavy hand lettering on standard headed for distribution to their sites.

## Significance of Punctuation

Many ambiguities and misunderstood sentence are cause by faults in punctuation, particularly in the use of commas, either wrongly placed or removed. To say, 'The people who arrived because of the rain wee accommodated in tents is not the same, for example, as saying, 'The people who arrived, because of the rain, were accommodated in tents'.

In the first sentence the arrival of the people was brought about by the rain. 'Because of the rain' is a defining clause. In the second sentence, 'because of the rain' is incidental. It is, therefore, called a commenting clause and is bounded by two commas. These commas make all the difference to the meaning of the sentence.

Take a sentence that might occur in a murder story: 'Jones killed his son because, he said, there was nothing to live for.' Then write it without the commas. Immediately the phrase 'there is nothing to lie or' is transferred from Jones to his son. The meaning has totally changed.

### **The Punctuation**

Punctuation in newspaper texts is more concerned with clarifying meanings and avoiding ambiguities than in providing



natural pauses, although the two purposes can coincide in longer sentences.

The old rule that commas should not precede the connections 'and' 'but' is generally worth keeping but the sub-editor should be on guard for cases where the sense of sentence requires a comma. In some cases 'but' introduces new information of a new thought and a comma pause can mark this helpfully as in: Yes, I think I ought to go, but I must be certain to get permission first.

'A comma is not needed in the sentences, 'It was not only the colour but the texture that turned her against it, /or, 'He reached the top of the step and turned to the left'.

Yet here is a case where the meaning hinges on the placing of a comma: 'They gave the prize to Jones, and his wife and the family were delighted. Without the comma the reader would be at a loss to know whether Jones or Jones and his wife and won the prize.

Commas can be used to give street to words and adverbial phrases, 'This was, evidently, the truth/given more stress to an important adverb than. 'This was evidently the truth'.

Commas are also used to separate items in a list, but their use to separate strings of adjectives is becoming less common and is not essential.

The best attitude is becoming less commas is to use them only if, without them, the meaning is in doubt. This will avoid an excess of them. A sentence with many commas marking out many clauses is a potential source of misunderstanding and the sub-editor would do well to split it.

The important thing is to know what the sentence is trying to say. If it contains and ambiguity because of bad use of commas (or for any other reason) that cannot be resolved by reference to the context, the sub-editor should refer it back to the writer. A guess could lead to trouble.

There, is not need of a comma between a house number and a street, as in 14 Coronation Street.

**Full Stop** : Its use to indicate abbreviation as in Feb. and the Rev. is generally accepted, but not abbreviations where the first

and last letters of the full word appear, as in Cpl, Mr. Dr. etc. (For abbreviations see under 'house style'). A full stop is not used at the end of captions or in headlines.

**Semi-colon** : It denotes a pause longer than a comma but not as long as a full stop. In books and in feature writing there is still room for the semicolon by stylists who know how to use it and have more scope for polishing a sentence, but in news writing there is not a lot of call for it. It is sometimes used when a comma or full stop would have been adequate and its presence is often a sign that a sentence is getting too long. It serves a useful purpose in subdividing lists as in; '... east wing: three bedrooms, two, two with bathrooms; three dressing rooms, one with balcony: two staircases, one at either end, and a staff rest room .....

**Colon** : This is a necessary but not often used punctuation mark in newspapers. It introduces lists of names, objects, qualities, etc... and precedes a quotation or explanation. It is pointless to use a colon followed by a dash for this purpose. Its use in a sentence to indicate a pause longer than a semi-colon but shorter than a full stop is now so rare, even outside newspapers, as to be extinct.

**Dashes and Brackets** : Dashes are much overused and misused in newspapers on the assumption that they jolly up the text, and their rise in favour is in contrast to the decline in punctuation use generally. Here are some actual examples from newspapers of how dashes appeared.

'A bungling bandit robbed a bank-and left his cheque book behinds.

'But after Princess Diana left the Old Bailey at 2.10 p.m.-she did not follow tradition and visit the famous Number One court where a rape trial was in progress-her remarks were the talk of the courts.'

'Tour operators are hoping to make up for the disastrous summer season-one of the worst on record-by picking up extra winter bookings.

'Three more were arrested at Blackpool-one of the seaside towns named in the IRA 'hits list". The new arrests-they bring the

total now detained to 16-came after a police swoop at a house in James Gray Street, Glasgowlless than a mile from the tenement raided at the week-end.'

The first examples shows the dash used to draw attention to the telling part of the sentence. This is the most justifiable use in these quoted.

In the second example the dashes are used to indicate a parenthesis, but the parenthesis is longer than the rest of the sentence and the result reads clumsily. The reader is also in doubt as whether the rape trail is part of the traditional fare at Number One court. This sentence should have been rewritten.

The third example shows another use of parenthetical dashes. Yet the effect is negated by tautology. Nothing would have been lost had the sentence said: "Tour operators are hoping to make for one of the worst summer seasons on record by picking up extra winter bookings.' The reader would have been saved the intrusive punctuation.

The worst misuse of dashes appears in the fourth example here the punctuation in two consecutive sentences consists of two full stops, a set of inverted commas, one comma and four dashes. The result is almost unreadable. The fist dash should have been a comma. The second pair encloses an unnecessary an unnecessary parenthesis. The words could have read '... arrests, which bring the total now detained to 16, came ..... without using any more words. The final dash in this sentence comes so quickly that the reader is in doubt which dash ends the parenthesis. Here a comma would have been sufficient, although of the four dashes used it is the one most justified by the sense.

Using dashes for commas is not only wrong, it is confusing to the eye, space-taking and devalues the dash as a significant text marks. It has resulted in the use of dashes being banned in some newspapers.

Using dashes to enclose a parenthesis is reasonable, though they are more space-taking than brackets. Grammarians are divided as to whether dashed or brackets signify the greater interruption.

Whichever is used, the words contained within the parenthesis should be a comment or fact outside the flow of the sentence, but which the reader needs in order to digest its full import. The attitude of sub-editor should be to stick to either dashes or brackets consistently for parentheses (many newspapers, in fact, shy off brackets, though they are shorter) but also to use parentheses sparingly. They impede the flow of the text and often indicate that the writer has not got his or her thoughts properly together.

**Ellipsis** : Another misused, punctuation mark. Its correct use is to indicate that letters or words are missing, as in, ' According to the gamekeeper the man shouted, "You f.... pig..." and vanished '. Another use would be, 'There could have been a different ending had Helen only... but that is another story.'

It might be deduced from these examples that there is little use for ellipses in newspaper practice, yet they are becoming as pervasive as dashes. Here are some actual examples:

'A pony runs free through a meadow... dramatically reprieved from death at the eleventh hour,'

"'Oh Gawd..." said Geldof when I cornered him.

A sports story in a popular tabloid adds to the confusing with these two examples:

'David Gower hit the jackpot at Trent Bridge yesterday... after working the "ten franc trick" on Australia in the third Cornhill Test. Allan didn't know what to call. There was no way of identifying heads or tails, so he shouted "francs"-and the other side came up".

The first example seems to show an ellipsis being used in place of a dash to point a sentence, since there is clearly nothing missing from it. The second example could mean that words are missing, judging by the context. The sports example show confusion reigning with both a dash and an ellipsis being used to point a sentence in the same story.

An even worse misuse occurs in some newspapers which use ellipses to enclose a parenthesis instead of dashes or brackets.

## Two Points

There are two points to be made here. One, it is inconsistent to use a dash and an ellipsis for pointing a sentence in stories in the same newspaper. In choosing one or the other for the sake of consistency the sub-editor should bear in mind that an ellipsis is not suitable for this purpose, in any case, since it denotes missing letters or words, and also that the dash does the job perfectly well. Second, ellipses print badly on long print runs and sometimes the dots disappear from the page altogether, leaving mysterious blanks. Third, and ellipsis is the most space-taking of all punctuation marks and should be avoided for this reason unless being necessary used for its correct purpose.

**Exclamation Mark** : Sometimes called a screamer, the exclamation mark is beloved of headline writers and blurb writers who seem to believe it to be the carrot that attracts the donkey. There is a simple rule about an exclamation mark which should save sub-editors a lot of trouble. It should be used only after an exclamation. It is unlikely that a phrase more than four or five words long could qualify it is an exclamation by reason of the simple mechanics of delivery. Generally it is couched as a warning, a demand, a brief instruction or are ejaculation.

Beware of using a screamer to draw the attention of the reader to a non-exclamatory phrase or headline. Here are two examples from the same newspaper:

'....the terrifying thought flashed through his mind: 'My God. I'm dead!:'

Kinnock's busted flush! (headline).

The first use is correct, the second without any justification. A truly justified third person exclamation phrase is hard to achieve.

The over-use of exclamation marks in newspapers devalues them and looks silly and messy in headlines and text. Some cynical editors have been known to limit them to one to a page.

**Apostrophe** : These should be used before the s in singular possessive and after the s in plural possessive ending in s.

boy's

boy's

A common mistake is to fail to add an s after the apostrophe in proper noun possessives of names ending in s.

James's	Peebles's
Francis's	Lagos's

Note that the plural form of James and Jones and similar proper names adds es as a in Jameses and Joneses.

Some well known place names containing possessive drop the apostrophe, for example St Albans and Earls court. A gazetteer should be checked for these.

The apostrophe's original purpose of denoting missing letters is show in is use in don't. Won't can't it's (it is) In the case of possessive pronouns it has fallen out of use in his, hers, yours, theirs and ours, but is retained in one's.

There is no justification for using an apostrophe in plurals such as MP's, all the three's or in expressions such as ten years' imprisonment or three weeks 'leave, which are best regarded as adjectival phrases. On the whole, if there is doubt as to whether an apostrophe is needed, a sub-editor should be guided by the sense. If the meaning is intact without it, leave it out.

**Quotation Marks :** Inverted commas used to include quotations can be single or double but must be consistently one or the other. Most newspapers use double, which means they should be double in headlines too. The usual style is to have double inverted commas for main quotes, single ones for quotes within s, and double again for quotes within quotes within quotes (an extremity to avoid, if possible).

Quotation marks should be checked carefully on copy so that statements once begun, ends. This is especially important in quotes within a quotes. Main quotations should be introduced by a colon. For short ones in the run of a sentence or paragraph a comma is sufficient at the beginning and end. For example; The constable said he heard a voice say, 'Come quickly as he walked past the building.

**Question Mark :** A fault to look for is a misplaced question mark in a sentence containing a quoted passage. If the quotation

itself is a question, the question mark must come inside the closing inverted commas. If the question lies in the main sentence, then the question mark must come outside the inverted commas as in: Do you think it wrong to say, "No children ill be admitted:?" ' The correct position can make a difference to the sense.

**Hyphen** : This much maligned punctuation mark that the should be used sparingly but can sometimes be crucial to the sense. In line with the move towards less punctuation in newspapers it is discarded in familiar compounded words such as overuse, boyfriend, checklist, wartime, gasfilled, nosebag, handbag, and lowline, but kept in words such as cooperative, copilot, coordinate, and ill-used where its absence would confuse the eye.

Important uses to remember:

To avoid ambiguity in certain adjectival phrases as between 'a model-manufacturing technique' and 'a model manufacturing technique or 'lost-business file 'and 'a lost business file'.

To indicate a compound adjective as in 'an up-to-date method', or 'an away-from-it-all holiday/ but not, 'the method was up to date'.

To distinguish different meanings of words as in reformed and reformed, and in re-creation and recreation.

Hyphens, as with other punctuation marks, are discouraged in headlines to preserve visual neatness, but have an important use in typesetting systems to break words at the end of lines when justifying setting widths, or measures. It is not typographical style (or easy to read) to break a word in mid-syllable or to break proper nouns at all if avoidable.

**Stresses** : Accents are little used in newspaper printing systems to denote stressed syllables but italic is a common way of giving stress to a word beyond that contained in the punctuation. Italic was once used to denote foreign words but this is not now practised in newspapers where, in any case, most foreign words used have been acceptably anglicized.

## Editing the News

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In journalism, editing the news is a very important function in journalism. But there is a lot of ignorance among the public regarding the importance of editing the news. Some laymen may just think that the newspaper reporters simply have to gather enough news material to fill the columns of their newspapers. Some others may think that all the newspaper reporters write the headlines over the news stories filed by them. Sometimes even the working newsmen may not realise the importance of editing the news.

There have been examples of some small papers functioning without sufficient editing operations but generally, the news stories offered by them are very weak and unimpressive. In fact, those who edit the news enjoy the same importance in good newspapers as the reporters of the news. Those who edit the news are called copy-editors in America or sub-editors in Europe and other countries. Generally sub-editors are graduate reporters and they get good salaries. Some reporters may have certain complaints against the editors that they have spoiled their good stories, by interfering with their original prose or by cutting the important parts of their stories or by giving misleading headlines to their



stories. Some reporter may even nurse a feeling in his heart that an editor has run other stories instead of his highly deserving story.

But there are also many experienced reporters who would accept the fact that the editors have improved their stories by correcting the errors and properly trimming them. It is the duty of the editors to offer the readers only the best stories in their newspapers by rejecting the less deserving ones. There is no doubt that a bad editor can even ruin the news value of a good story by miswriting the headlines or by cutting the essential parts of the story. On the other hand, good editing by an experienced editor can enhance the news value of the stories. The good editors will not only make a wide choice of stories which are available on their desks but also improve greatly their effect and language by then-editing.

Thus we see that good editing is very necessary for a good report. The editor tries his level best to improve on the original effort made by his reporter. He would like to give it a good headline and also improve the phraseology of the report to enhance its effect. No editor worth his salt would like to spoil intentionally the good work done by a reporter. Rather he would do his utmost to fill up the holes in the story and give it a dress up to make it presentable.

The editors not only have to decide which story should reach their readers and with what emphasis but they have also the final responsibility for the maintenance of accuracy and clarity in their news items. They also try to see that the story conforms to their style as well as it is understood correctly.

Good editing means scrupulous attention to the spellings and grammar of everything which appears in the newspaper. Correct spellings are not only necessary for accuracy but they are also necessary for maintaining the good image of the newspaper.

A good copy editor or a sub-editor is expected to improve the phrasing of the stories. To make the stories read better, he may shorten or lengthen the sentences, improve the vocabulary or

even rearrange the paragraphs. The sub-editor may improve the story and remove the flaws in it. In fact, the sub-editor's desk is the last chance for repairing and improving the news items.

### **Choice of News**

Now-a-days, the editors are bombarded with a tremendous flow of news. The newspapers can hardly publish a very small part of the total news which they receive. In fact, some of the big news agencies are in a position to supply more copies than an average daily newspaper is able to print in its papers. A newspaper also gets copies from its own local reporters, correspondents and other sources. Then, the newspaper has also to give the local news to satisfy its city readership. Besides all this, there are foreign news services like Associated Press, Reuters etc. which supply the foreign news. Still, there are some photographers and picture services who supply photographs and pictures for the newspapers.

In this way, we see that selecting the important news of the day is a very taxing job for the news editor. Every newspaper has to spend a lot in getting news from the news agencies as well as from its reporters and correspondents. No newspaper can perform its functions properly without getting news from the big news agencies. Not only the selection of the news is important but giving the proper emphasis to a news is equally important. The problem of judging a news is also complicated by many other considerations like fair play, proper emphasis, the space problem and equal treatment.

Another important factor in the selection of a news is its total accuracy. The stating of simple facts does not mean total accuracy, because usually the news stories are seldom based upon all the true facts. Sometimes, even over-emphasis on some particular event can blow it out of all proportions. The facts should be stated in a highly balanced manner, so that the truth is not twisted by a little slant this way or that way. For example, when some riot takes place in a small part of a big city, not only the story of the

riot should be given but the normalcy prevailing in the other parts of the city should also be mentioned in the news reports.

Of course, the editors who have access to the news reports from various sources are able to separate the grain from the chaff. An experienced editor can make final checks against such a twisting of the truth. Supposing an editor gets two contradictory reports from two separate news services, he must try to learn the truth and publish a balanced report. In fact, he must try to learn the context of the original event to measure the facts of a copy.

An editor must trust a good reporter and should not make big changes in his copy on the basis of his own prejudices without any valid reasons. Sometimes, a very good reporter can also be swayed by his prejudices and he may give only one side of the report. Whenever there are conflicting reports concerning one event, one sided news given by only one source should not be played up. On the other hand, an objective story on the basis of all the conflicting news should be prepared and published accordingly, because if some imbalanced news is published, then the press will lose its credibility among customers by giving only one sided news. It also amounts to misinforming the public by printing partially true stories.

A responsible editor will also consider greatly the factor of timing, because how long the readers might have to live with a news story about which there are certain doubts. Sometimes, an erroneous news story published in the afternoon paper can create a lot of bad effect on the minds of the people till a correction can reach them the next morning. Even withholding the important facts can damage the public trust in the press, which may lead to the weakening of the mass media's ability to keep wild rumour-mongers at bay.

**Preparing Headlines :** Writing of headlines for the news stories is also an art. In fact, writing headlines is a very important work. It is not as simple as it may seem to be. Proper headlines are very essential for the proper display of news. By writing headlines a story can be made or marred. Sometimes, even a very good story

may fail to catch the attention of the people if the headline is not good. Even a very competent sub-editor may falter in writing the headlines. Some people are in the habit of reading the newspaper headlines only. They make their judgement about the news stories only on the basis of the catchy headlines. Sometimes, attracted by the headline itself they may go through the whole story. In this way we can see that headlines play a very important role in influencing the public opinion. They also play an important part in creating the image of the newspaper.

The writing of headlines is a very peculiar problem of the print media. As we have seen above, many newspaper-readers are in the habit of reading the stories on the basis of headlines only. Thus, inadequate or indifferent headlines which lack clarity or interesting points deprive many good stories the importance and readership which they deserve. In reality, many readers try to get their facts just from the headlines alone. Sometimes, inaccurate and misleading headlines can be much more dangerous than even the printing of an inaccurate story.

In some crisis like a communal riot or some other emergency, sensational type of inaccurate headlines can incite and instigate the people to commit lawlessness. A sensational headline may help a paper to sell its edition quickly, but it will have a very bad effect on the public opinion as well as on the paper's permanent image. The main objective of the headlines should be to tell the readers as to what the report is about. A good headline will give the most important and interesting part of a news item. A good headline must be able to draw the attention of even a casual reader. There is no doubt that for giving catchy headlines to the newspaper the relative importance of the different news stories has to be kept in mind. It is also necessary to give relative importance to the different news items so that the space for their headlines can be found as per the layout of the newspaper. The most important news stories have to be printed on the first page itself and out of that the topmost story is given the pride of the place and its headline is splashed on the front page.

Only those can realise the problems faced by the sub-editors

regarding the composition of headlines, who have themselves composed headlines for some newspapers, because it is a very tiring time for the sub-editors to fit interest and accuracy into the allotted headlines. They have to find the proper words for the headlines which can be fitted into the available space. Even a small change in the wording may run the risk of either misunderstanding or no understanding at all. Even the type cannot be squeezed. Of course, the modern trend in some newspapers towards horizontal page make-up—multi column headlines with stories spread horizontally beneath them—has to some extent alleviated the problem of some newspapers. Some newspapers in foreign countries have changed from eight to six-column format. They have also added a third to one-column counts in a given type size. There is no doubt that a majority of newspapers still use formats and type sizes that really demand a lot of skill in writing headlines. The fitting difficulties are such that copy-desks or sub-editors have devised elaborate counting systems to estimate whether lines will fit.

There is no doubt that in writing the headlines the sub-editor has to work not only effectively but very quickly. In fact, the work of writing headlines is a very demanding work. The main problem is that telegraphic words are used to put the maximum meaning in a very short space, because the area that a headline can occupy, is very limited and the short heading or headlines must also convey a complete sense. The deskman who is responsible for writing headlines must have a very good vocabulary and command over various words and phrases. He must know the exact meaning of every phrase and word that he uses. He should also have a good knowledge of synonyms, so that when it is difficult to use a lengthier word, he is able to use some smaller substitute without in any way changing the original sense.

**Main Objectives :** In a headline the main objective is to convey the maximum meaning of the story in the shortest possible space. For this purpose, every single word must be used to convey some definite idea. The deskman has also to follow the house style of the headlines of his particular paper. The main problem is to

ensure that all the letters of the headlines fit within the limited space that is allotted to them. This depends a lot on the words which are used. That again depends on the fact if the total number of letters used in the words of the headline can be accommodated within the width of one column or the columns which are allotted to it according to the importance of the news and also the planning of the page.

In writing the headlines you should remember the following points :

- (i) Writing of headlines is a very important work of the sub-editor, because the reporter gives the news story whereas the sub-editor makes it appear interesting by giving it a headline.
- (ii) You should read the stories given by the reporter carefully and try to understand the main points quickly. The headlines are generally developed out of the main points of a story.
- (iii) You should write the headline in such a manner that it can be fitted into the limited space allotted.
- (iv) Avoid the use of is, are, was, were, to be etc.
- (v) Do use active verbs, because they are quite necessary.
- (vi) Avoid the use of articles like a, an, the.
- (vii) A headline should be preferably specific and in a direct form.
- (viii) Only well known abbreviations should be used in the headlines. Sometimes, in the case of and a comma can be used.

As far as the writing of good headlines and fitting them into the limited space allotted to them is concerned, you must also learn something about the units of letters and the type sizes. For proper count of units of letters you should know the sizes of the various letters in terms of units in a given type of setting:

If the headline is composed of all capital letters then M and

W are allotted one and one half units; I and in some types L and T are considered equal to half unit, whereas all other letters are allotted one unit. On the other hand, when the headline is in capital and lower case letters then capital M and W are allotted two units ; Capital I is considered equal to half unit. Sometimes, in some type capital I is equal to one unit also and the same applies sometimes to capital L and T also.

All other capital letters are considered equal to one and one half units. The lower case m and w are considered equal to one and one half units. The lower case f, l, i, r and t are equal to half a unit whereas all other lower case letters are equal to one unit each. In numerals 0 and 8 in some types are equal to one and one half units, whereas all others are equal to one unit each. The space between letters is counted as half a unit and symbols like £, \$, +, ? and % are equal to one unit whereas Rs equal to one and a half units. Generally, for punctuation mark half unit is allotted. For a single quotation mark (') half a unit is counted whereas for a double quotation mark (") a full unit is counted.

Usually, the practice is to make use of less units in a line than the total number of units which can be fitted into it, for example, if in a line sixteen units can be accommodated then it is better to have a headline that has only 14 units to avoid overcrowding. Of course, the above count cannot be considered in isolation. On the other hand, it is always more in correlation to the size which is used in the newspaper. You can write a headline in a variety of types. It is called Roman when the ordinary type is used. It is called Bold or Black when thick and dark types are used. When the type is neither so dark nor so thick then it is called Condensed. Although the space which is occupied by a type is greatly dependent on the family of the type used, yet the Roman type occupies the least space whereas the Bold or Black occupies the maximum space.

The unit for the measurement of type sizes is called the point. A point is approximately equal to 1/72 of an inch. For writing headlines 12 point, 14 point, 18 point, 24 point, 30 point, 36 point, 48 point, 60 point and 72 point type sizes are used.

Comparatively fewer letters can be used in a large type, because the larger the type size, the more will be the points. The different type sizes are used for writing the headlines according to their importance, grading, size and layout of the page. Every newspaper follows certain definite patterns for writing headlines according to its house style.

## The Principles

In a news organisation, editing plays a vital role. A news item or a news story, as it is called, is written by hurried reporters, and is rough-edged like raw diamond. Hence, the copy is polished and honed by a team of editors, who form the Editorial Desk. The team, also called the desk persons, works under tremendous pressure and severe time constraint. The desk persons work well past midnight, and ensure that your newspaper reaches you on time in the morning

A newspaper office or news agency receives a large assortment of news items. These originate from different sources, mainly local sources and wires (Teleprinter and telex). The news copy is written by experienced and inexperienced people, and, hence, lack readability.

The news reporters are the main news writers. They are in a hurry, especially in the evenings, when the news development gathers momentum. The copy written by them under pressure is bound to carry errors of all types. In any newspapers, there is always a shortage of space for all news items, which are received in the office. The newspaper's advertisement department is ever eager to grab the valuable but limited space. Moreover, newsprint and means production cost a lot of money. Ultimately, a newspaper's success largely depends on the space and its most efficient, judicious and economic use. Hence, within the space set aside for news, as much news as possible need to be packed to serve a divergent readership. Considering these factors, editing of the news copy becomes essential.

**The Definition :** All incoming news items, collectively called copy, is sifted, before being processed, to achieve a balance of



news between that originating within the organisation and that pouring in from outside. Sorting out and sifting also helps induce parity between the well-written articles and those written by the inexperienced reporters. In the process, the unwanted matter gets weeded out. Only the newsworthy stories are finally selected. These are checked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures, and sense, and also clarified for betterment, and are condensed for economy of space.

News editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size, using the right kind of expressions and symbols. A copy is edited to highlight the “news sense” in a story, and to bring uniformity of language and style in an issue of newspaper. The newsroom in a newspaper or a news agency office is the hub of the entire activity in a news organisation. The Editorial Desk (also known as the Editorial Department or Copy Desk or News Desk) is the nerve centre of a newsroom. It is here that everyday the newspaper issues are planned and made.

However, in a news agency, the news desk is the final stop before a story is sent to the transmission room or creed room for transmission on the wires. In news agencies, there news operations are computerised, such as the Press Trust of India (PTI) or the united News of India (UNI), the edited copy is transmitted directly to the newspapers by the News Desk itself. The newsroom is headed by an editor or a chief editor or an editor-in-chief or a chief news editor. The designation varies according to the choice of the organization. He plans and directs the day’s news operations. He is supported by a team consisting of the news editors, chief sub-editors (chief sub), senior sub-editors and sub-editors (sub).

**Shift System :** The news desk usually operates in three shifts: morning, afternoon and night (till late in the evening, even up to 2.30 a.m.). In between, there are two link shifts-morning and evening-which are headed by the news editors and or chief subs. They are also called ‘slot’ men. Ideally, in a newspaper, it is the news editor who plans and directs page-making, while the chief sub helps and implements it.

In a news agency, news editors and chief subs look after the smooth functioning of the news desk.

They plan and write "leads" (updated versions of developing stories). Here, there is an additional shift called "Extra Night" (from 2 a.m. to 8 a.m.), which is managed by a senior sub-editor.

News has a number of characteristic elements. Five conventional determinants of the news values are:

**Proximity:** The nearer the origin of news, i.e., the closer it is to home, the more is its impact. For example, on a particular day, there may be 45 deaths in a boat tragedy in Bangladesh. But, on the same day, a local bomb blast that kills five people is sure to have more impact on the readers.

**Timeliness:** News grows old quickly. It decays and perishes fast. The more recent its occurrence, the more worthy it is. On the contrary, an event that happened six months back, but is discovered and reported now could grab the front page. For example, the bank securities' scam involving Harshad Mehta and others, or the Bofors gun deal.

**Prominence:** Names make news and the newspapers like to use as many local names as possible. For example, if the Vice-chancellor of a university gets hurt while playing cricket, few people will take note of the incident. But, if a public figure like a minister is injured in a game, we have a more interesting story. When the film celebrity, Satyajit Ray, and the Nobel Laureate, Mother Teresa, were hospitalised, most papers carried everyday reports on their health.

**Consequence:** A reader's interest is aroused in a large measure if an event or occurrence affects him, and more so, if he participates in the event. He is eager to know what will this mean to him in the long run. How will it affect him and his family. For example, weather stories attract consistently high readership. A brief storm that leaves behind some casualties, and causes heavy damage in a town or city, will receive better coverage, will be given a good display, and attract large readership. A steep hike in the prices of

petrol, cooking gas, milk or an increase in water and electricity tariffs will have widespread consequences.

**Human Interest:** Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities, and their infinite variety, make for wider readership. The human interest stories are pure identification. These are the little things that have happened, or could happen to yourself or to your neighbours or friends. These stories are worth little or nothing as news in any strict sense. Yet these are worth telling. For example, a 30-year-old women with a baby in her arms is trapped in belittling on fire. Such a story interests the readers.

The five elements cited above, generally, have a direct bearing on a majority of news stories. In addition, there are various other elements that could come into play in judging the news:

- (i) To be newsworthy, a story must interest a large number of the readers.
- (ii) A story's worth is determined by its impact on the readers. That's why the functioning of the government and the politicians receive a lot of coverage. On the contrary, lack of impact sometimes makes news; and also, the unusual, odd, provocative, intriguing, moving and educative make news.

Scientific discoveries, even the hints of some, find space in the newspapers. For example, any seeming step towards the cure of cancer or AIDS is sure to generate headlines, even though the scientists might not have discovered the drug or vaccine. But the hint will be newsworthy. Archaeological events relating the present to the past, could make headlines. The state and local news always rank as the major focal points in the newspapers. These are followed by (the order or selection depends on the Desk) accidents, accords, agreements or pacts, announcements, business, the common people's interest (rise in milk or sugar prices), crime, cultural events disasters, education, elections, environment, fashion, health, labour, obituaries, and tragedies.

**Managing Editorship :** Under the managing editor in most organizational lineups are two or three people with whom you

will have most of your dealings. One is the news editor (or in some instances there are both an executive news editor and a news editor), who supervises the placement of your stories in the newspaper and, dictates the typography or "layout" of the pages.

However, the news editor often is a distant figure in your daily work concerns. Most of your dealings will be with the city editor (called metro editor on some newspapers). The city editor selects your daily assignments, determines to a large degree who does what, and controls any number of assistants who carry out directions. The city editor usually is the authority figure whom you, as a reporter, are most responsible to. However, his or her assistants generally carry much authority in editing your stories. Especially on big projects-series and such-the city editor usually assumes direct command in doing the planning and resolving confusions.

Organizational structures, of course, vary from one newspaper to the next. Some of the largest papers have national editors, in control of a national desk-a collection of reporters and assistant editors charged with covering the nation. Some newspapers also have a state desk responsible for state news coverage. Also, there are special feature sections with special editors-feature editors, life-style editors, people editors, fashion editors, women's editors (a position of growing obsolescence in feminist times), special assignment editors, ad infinitum. In the sports department, the sports editor usually is very much like the editor in that he or she is charged primarily with opinion in taking. The overseer of the daily sports news flow is the executive sports editor, who is to the sports department what the city editor is to the news operation.

Unless you move into a specialized area, you usually will be assigned to the city desk and will be controlled by the city editor. "City editor" on most newspapers actually is a euphemism of sorts, since the person carrying that title often has responsibility for state and national coverage as well. Such papers may also have a national and state editor, but often as not their function is strictly that of reviewing wire copy, which comes from various national news agencies, for placement in the newspaper.

Once you have carried out an assignment, having conducted the interview, taken all the necessary notes and written the story, you encounter the classic editing process.

On smaller, less technologically advanced newspapers, editors may use the old pencil technique, drawing lines on your copy through stuff they do not like, and inserting by pencil stuff they want added.

More likely, you will relate to your editor through some sort of computer network. At most dailies, you will have written your story by either of two means: (1) on scanner ready paper, or (2) directly into a Video Display Terminal (VDT), tied to a computer that remembers your story and holds it ready for transmission to the newspaper. The scanner ready copy is typed on an electric typewriter using various codes that can be read by an optical scanner that records the story on computer tape. Increasingly, the scanner is becoming an unnecessary step, with reporters being trained to write their stories directly into the computer via the VDT. What is on the VDT is what is being fed into the all-important computer. The computer is capable of setting the material in type ready to be pasted into a page that then can be photographed and transferred to a plate that can be put on the presses for printing.

Often as not, the editor who checks a story uses the same kind of VDT the reporter uses to write the story. However, ancient rules and techniques apply to editing, regardless of the method used. The editor basically looks for two things: (1) Does the story make sense? and (2) What mistakes has the reporter made? then, your version is either altered or accepted as is.

More than likely, as a novice reporter, you will not have to concern yourself with the finer points of editing, but it does help to know what the editor is doing. In fact, it helps to be an editor of your own copy. The more problems you eliminate, the more impressed the editors are by your skills. Review everything you write, and insert or delete that which appears necessary to insert or delete. To help you be able to do that, let us offer a few hints as to what the editor is doing and looking for:

- Does the story really make sense? First, the editor reads through the whole story. If he or she is confused, the logical assumption is that the reader will be confused. Sometimes, the editor will try to fix the story; other times, you may get it back for repair.
- Is all the pertinent information high up in the story? If not, the editor may move buried details toward the top. More likely, it will be handed back to you with such put-downs as “lacks focus” or “get to the point” or “I think your lead is in the 13th graph.”
- Do you have a working knowledge of English grammar? For every sentence you write, there are rules that some editor has memorized. Split modifiers, mixed metaphors, and just plain poor.
- Syntax are hazards of deadline pressure. A merciful editor will patch these up with nary a word. A wise teacher will draw them to your attention-if time permits-and tell you never to do that again.
- Can you spell? F. Scott Fitzgerald had a problem with spelling. Unless you have a novel such as *The Great Gatsby* to your credit, learn to spell. Newspaper editors expect you to know how to spell and are apt to ridicule your slightest lapse, especially if you misspell the name of somebody important. An otherwise excellent reporter we know once spelled a recent Georgia governor’s last name “Busby.” Unfortunately, his name was Busbee.
- Is the story too long? Ever more frequently, newspapers are faced with space shortages-the so-called “shrinking news hole”-because of newsprint-paper shortages and increasing cost. In addition, readership surveys tell editors that people really don’t like to read long stories. If the story is, say, 18 inches long, and the editor thinks it,would be fine if it were 12 inches long, he or she may cut it, which is the editor’s prerogative. Hardly anyone is immune from being cut. Even Ralph McGill, the Pulitzer

Prize-winning editor and publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, used to complain that his front-page columns were cut.

**Art of Elimination :** What can be eliminated? To cut a story, the editor may whack out (or blip off the VDT screen) whole paragraphs deemed superfluous. In the enthusiasm for detail, some reporters are inclined to repeat certain facts and ideas. To an editor, these repetitions are readily obvious and easily cut out. After that, the process becomes more tedious and arbitrary. After lopping off paragraphs, the editor may begin cutting sentences within paragraphs, with the constant question: "Do we really need that?" Then, the individual words are scrutinized. Could a shorter, perhaps simpler word do better? (*Obfuscate* might be changed to *confuse*.) Is the wording as accurate as possible? (A "gutted" house may replace one the reporter has "burned to the ground except for the walls.") Is the reporter relying too heavily on the words of the interviewee? (Rules that have been "promulgated" may become merely "made public.") Some nonessential words often can be eliminated at first glance. (The mayor related to the press that he is of the opinion that ice cream tastes quite good" can be written simply as, "The mayor says he likes ice cream.")

Editors, of course, have their quirks that can cause a reporter misery. Some editors, for instance, think that said is the very best word you can use when somebody had said something. Others like variety: "he declared" or "she commented" or "he related" or even "she opined." (However, do not confuse merely saying and commenting with words that lend slightly different meaning to the qualifier, such as "he guessed" or "he implied" or "she hinted" or "she gurgled.") Some editors like to draw fine lines of distinction. Slay or kill, they argue, is not the same as murder, which is a criminal act of homicide. (Homicide, in fact, may not be a murder.) But chances are pretty good that a slain person who died under suspicious circumstances has been murdered as well. Some editors also insist that who rather than that should be the pronoun of choice in modifying a reference to a person. (The man who, rather than the man that.)

Other editors prefer that for almost everything, arguing correctly that is a “neutral” pronoun. The safest way to walk across such deep waters is to find out what your editors like and try to do it their way.

There are definite regional quirks that are not the editors’ fault. In the South, Particularly, there seems to be a grander tolerance of colloquialisms, slang, and, most definitely, dialect. Because of the South’s rich and disparate dialects, you find editors letting pass such quotes.

In the editing process, each newspaper has its set of rules that generally are strictly enforced. These are contained in something called a stylebook. At some smaller newspapers, this may be no more than a mimeographed sheet of paper. At larger newspapers, the stylebook may consist of up to two hundred pages and resembled a dictionary in format. Most commonly, newspapers rely on the stylebooks adopted by the associated Press and United Press International, which vary slightly. Top editors also add their personal idiosyncrasies. In Atlanta, for instance, Atlanta Hartsfied International Airport abruptly became just Hartsfield Airport. There was a brief move on one newspaper to use no middle initials in identifying people in stories. This presented a problem when Robert E. Brown ran against Robert H. Brown in a municipal election. Middle initials quickly were reinstated.

The chief keepers of the stylebook rules are the newspaper’s copy editors. The copy desk is something of a court of last resort in the news-room, providing a final check to the balancing act of the city desk. In the modern newsroom, copy editing is done via the VDT. Once a city-desk editor has finished reviewing a story on the VDT, he or she presses a few magic buttons, and the story blips from the screen into the computer memory bank, from which the copy editor can summon it onto his *or* her VDT screen by pushing another set of magic buttons. It is this last reading by the copy editor, with rare exceptions, that renders the story ready for putting on the presses in the form that readers will see in that day’s newspaper.



By the time story reaches the copy desk at most dailies, the basic wording of the story is considered approved and will be tampered with only sparingly. The copy editors function much as quality controllers in an auto plant. The reporter and the city desk have built the car. The copy editors make sure nobody has left a screwdriver stuck in the fan belt. They look primarily for errors that jump out at them: any glaring grammatical stupidity, misspelled words, or inaccurate street addresses. Copy-desk veterans often are old-timers who know the city and thus know that at a certain point Peachtree Street becomes Peachtree Road. Names are given particular scrutiny, since printing a misspelled name is a cardinal sin.

The copy editor handling a particular story also usually is the one to write a headline for it. That is not an easy job. Countless periodicals thrive on reprinting the worst faux pas of headline writers, and headline ridiculing is a favorite pastime of reporters. An example of an amusing and misleading headline was: Murderer sentenced to life in Washington, D.C.

Such misplaced modification occurs because it is very difficult to summarize an entire story in a few words, and occasionally headline writers goof, the Columbia Journalism Review's editors contend that their most popular feature is the reprinting of hilarious clubs and bloopers. Gloria Cooper, the Review's managing editor, compiled some of the best examples in a book, *Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim* and other clubs from the nation's press. The reporters themselves often get criticized unfairly by readers for "that dumb title you put on the story." At major dailies, reporters have absolutely nothing to do with what headline appears over their stories. One reporter we know was chastised by a reader for a headline mentioning ham radio operators over a story about citizens-band-radio operators. The reporter had made no reference to ham operators, but the headline writer erroneously assumed that the terms were synonymous. (Ham operators, who must undergo a battery of tests before getting a Federal Communications commission license for long-range broadcasting, consider CB operators rank amateurs who merely toy with their short-range equipment.)

The headline writer is like the football lineman who gets attention only when he misses a tackle. However, filling the big hole above the story with something that will draw a reader's attention to it takes a special skill. Writing headlines is not simply a matter of attaching a "title" to the story. For one thing, the headline must fit. Only so many letters can be stuffed into the space reserved for the headline without having them fall off the page or extend past the column. The headline count, as it is called, varies according to the size of type and how many columns the headline is to cover. Newspapers also have various other rules that make headline writing even ore trying-such as requiring that a preposition and its object be on the same line. The headline is expected to capture in five or six words the essence of a story that may run thirty or forty inches long. This is another reason for the inverted pyramid mid in that it helps the copy editor who is pressed for time sum up the essence of the story.

Puns are fun for copy editors and sometimes catch the mood of a story. Over a sports story about the Atlanta/Braves baseball team losing a third straight game to the Cincinnati Reds, one copy editor wrote: BRAVES BLUE AFTER REDS, 3-0. Sometimes, however, puns can be misleading. Over a story about the new popularity of row housing in the city, a feature section copy editor wrote: A "ROW" OVER HOUSING. Actually, there was no "row" in the sense of an argument; the copy editor thought the pun could be used by putting' the word in quotes, but he misled some readers into thinking there was something along the line of a zoning dispute. Double meanings and bad taste have to be guarded against.

The story and headline are parts of a puzzle the copy editor helps put together for the news editor and assistant news editors, who control the page layout. These editors call themselves line drawers, and they basically are that. They draw lines on a dummy-a blank, miniature page that serves as a guide for printers who will compose the plate for actual printing. What the news editors, or layout editors, do is measure the length of a story (by counting characters) and then draw in the appropriate space on the dummy

along with the desired space for a headline. Space also is mapped out for photographs, charts, logos, and anything else that is to greet the reader in the first edition. (On some newspapers, the news editors decide only priority play for stories, with separate makeup editors designing the layout accordingly.) The space allotted for a particular headline usually includes a code to tell the copy-editor what size type to specify and what the letter count will be. At this point, stories also are sometimes cut, usually from the bottom of the story (which is another argument for the old inverted pyramid), in order to fit the space.

Headline writing and type sizing are handled by computers at most large modern dailies. Into the VDT is sent the typed story and headline with all the necessary codes to help it pop out magically ready for paste-up in the composing room, or backshop, as it often is called in the trade. From typewriter-size letters on the VDT may come a two-inch-high banner headline.

Problems do not end in the backshop. Therefore, the news desk normally has a representative in the composing room to stomp on any news bugs. The makeup editor has to make hasty and sometimes arbitrary decisions. A story that was supposed to fit often doesn't. The bottom is sliced again. The headline comes out with a 72-point error: "Mr. Dinnan" has been made into "Mr. Drinnan." Editors scream. The makeup editor calls for hurried changes to save embarrassment before the presses roll.

*The Playup* : A news story must play upon the event reported therein. Ideally, read every story, preferably thrice-once for familiarisation, once while you edit, and the third time to check your work. If the story, has no glaring problems, and if you fully understand it, you would be ready to edit it. Now, you are concerned with spelling, punctuation, grammar, consciousness of expression, smoothness of writing, general accuracy and comprehensibility.

*The Format* : A news story is divided in to two parts-the opening para called the "intro" (introduction) or the "lead", and the body. The lead describes, simply and briefly, what happened. The body documents and elaborates the lead.

Adequate attention should be paid to the lead, the most vital part of the story. Written in a single sentence, it should grab the reader and compel him to read the body. Normally, the lead is in about 25 words, or may be less. At the maximum, it should be limited to 40 words. The intro should be concise and crisp. At the maximum, it should be limited to 40 words. It should not meander or puzzle the reader, but summarise the story. Details should be dispersed and blended in the subsequent paragraphs.

There is a famous example of any eye-catching intro. "James Wilson lit a cigarette while bathing his feet in gasoline. He may live."

This is a masterpiece of economy of words in writing. It tells the whole story at once: the careless stupidity of the act, the swift of retribution and the grisly consequences, all conjured up in our minds in vivid detail.

In sense, we do not need to read on. But, we all would. We would want to know more about James Wilson, why he was soaking his feet in gasoline, where he was performing this act; and so on. And, all this would be told in subsequent paragraphs, in a logical order.

This particular example is what is called a "teasing" intro, for it arouses our curiosity and makes us read on.

**Opening Para :** Conventionally, the news story has followed the "inverted pyramid" structure. The most significant information is placed at the top, the story's beginning and other details follow in their order of importance. Thus, the story tapers to smaller and smaller details, until it disappears. It may begin with the five Ws and one H, i.e., the who-what-why-when-where and low lead. Basically, a news story should answer what, when and where. The answers should find place in the opening para. The three other questions-who, why and how-do not necessarily arise in all the news copy. In case they do, the answers are accommodated in the subsequent paras. Each succeeding para should add an essential detail without being dependent in content or style on what follows.

The inverted pyramid style enables :

- (i) A new story, to be self-contained, even if paras are deleted at the bottom due to space; shortage [consequently, a coherent story is left at each point where it could be cut].
- (ii) A hurried reader to skip over many stories in a short time by just reading the opening paras [those with greater interest could read a story completely];
- (iii) A sub-editor, to write the headline gets in the gist in the gist in the first few paras; and
- (iv) A sub-editor, to change the order of paras or insert news material, even after the matter has been sent to the press for composing.

If the news is not in the opening para, trace out where it is buried. Bring it to the top, and also locate its supporting details. If there are two important news points or angles that vie for the top spot, assess and evaluate which one is better and more catchy. This could call for rewriting the entire news item.

Next, see if the second para supports the lead. It should deliver the promise made in the opening para. The third para should continue the development implicit in the lead and in the second para. The paras should preferably be of one sentence, and not more than two. This helps a lot while trimming the story, and makes for easy comprehension by the reader, if there are any direct quotes, ascertain if these should be retained. Find out if there are opinions, and if there are, make sure these are suitably attributed, i.e., given within quotes.

**Rewriting Matter :** While editing a story, the sub-editor should, as far as possible, look for errors in spelling, grammar and syntax, and correct these and 'pass' the copy, But an instant second look might sometimes compel him/her to rewrite it. The opening para may lack the punch, or the copy may seem confusing, or the news may be hidden below. Hence, rewriting may become necessary for the sake of clarity. Highlight the news point, taking care to avoid distortion and respect the facts produced by the reporter. Sometimes', the reports obtain the information but fail to exploit

it. This could happen particularly when reporting the press conferences and disasters.

**Headlines** : Every morning, when a reader looks for something interesting in a newspaper, it is the heading which catches his eyes. After scanning the headings, he settles down to read the story in detail.

A story, howsoever well-edited, would not attract him unless it is given a heading or headline, the most vulnerable spot in a newspaper. The headline attracts the reader to go through the story. It tells him what the story is about. Thus, a headline sells the story. Besides, a headline serves the reader in several ways.

The size of the headline determines the importance of a story: the larger or bolder the headlines, the most important is the news story. Writing a headline is like applying the finishing polish on a well-crafted piece of furniture. While writing headlines, you should keep the following points in mind:

- (i) A headline should speak. It should say something which educates and entertains the reader. Avoid headlines like, Lok Sabha, S.D. Sharma.
- (ii) A headline should stimulate the readership, and lead you to reading the story under it. The news items with bad headline do not get read.
- (iii) A headline should be sharp, and convey the essence of a story.
- (iv) A headline should be active and positive.
- (v) The best headline is written in the present tense, because it provides a sense of immediacy. The use of the present tense verbs lends an air of urgency and freshness to the news, making it up-to-date. The past tense headlines make it seem that the publication is reporting history.
- (vi) Use commonly-known abbreviations.
- (vii) Never split names between lines of a headline.

- (viii) Single quotation marks ( ' ' ) should be used in headlines, since double quotation ( " " ) marks consume more space. Single quotation marks are more attractive.
- (ix) Articles such as 'the' 'an' and 'a' are generally not used in headlines.
- (x) Above all, common sense should remain the primary rule in determining clarity.

**Kicker:** Kicker is another conventional headline, usually a one-line heading with a second line (Kicker) above it in a different style and half the type size. It extends no more than midway above the main line. Kicker headlines are used to dress up a page by lending variety.

**Hammer:** Hammer is the reverse of kicker, but, usually, in all capital letters. The big type is the kicker and the smaller type the main headline. One word, or two at the most, will suffice of the hammer. By virtue of their size, hammers impress the readers with their importance. But too many hammers on one page may dilute that significance, and destroy the look of the page.

**Leads :** This lead is different from the one we have already talked about above. Suppose there is a train accident at Aarah, about 60 km. from Patna. Just an hour before the first edition of a newspaper goes to the press. The first information reports from the Railways, or any other sources, convey the news about the accident but give scanty details. There is no precise mention about casualties. It will take about two hours for a reporter to reach the scene to get the first hand details. But we cannot wait till the reporter telephones from the spot or comes back to file the story. We must cover the story in the first edition. The story may be written thus:

Patna, Oct, 15-at least five passengers were killed and several wounded when three bogies of the Magadh Express derailed tonight at Aarah, about 60 km. from here, the railway sources said.

**Details Awaited:** Details will pour in once the reporter reaches the site, and a composite story would crystallise, besides, the Railway Ministry, in New Delhi, will give the official version. There shall also be eyewitness accounts. Hence, many news items are bound to flow in on the same event. All these are tied together, highlighting the major facts, and the Lead is written for the newspaper's city edition. A Lead is a device, used mostly in the case of developing stories, for updating the top or changing the story's emphasis in the light of new information of facts as these unfold.

Such stories include a strike, a 24-hour bundh, a river flood, an air crash or a train accident or other mishaps, a conference or a political meeting, an election, a visit to a state by a VIP such as the Prime Minister or the President. As the story advances with the day, all these may require one or more Leads, like the Second lead, Third Lead and finally a Lead all.

Besides, a Lead is used to tighten loose ends of a dispersed story. A tie-up will provide a combined top for different items relating to a single subject or related development, namely, the Independence Day or Republic Day celebrations, religious festivals, etc.

**Copy Editing :** A copy editor or sub-editor is a bridge between a reporter and the reader. He/she need not execute all these functions simultaneously. But, on any given day, he/she will be required to play all these Toles.

A copy editor, generally know as the sub-editor or desk person, is a gatekeeper and image builder who protects a newspaper's reputation. He/she is a surgeon who performs surgery, and a priest who conducts a happy marriage between speed and efficiency. He/she is a tailor, too. He/she is an unglamorous backroom worker, who does a thankless but stupedendous job, and represents the last stage. No one can see his/her edited copy except the proof readers, who, if smart and vigilant, may detect faults with subbing (editing). A desk person takes all the blame; he/she rarely gets any credit, and remains anonymous.



**Duties of a Copy Editor:** A copy editor or a sub-editor receives, sifts, processes and issues news items after giving them a final shape.

A copy editor:

- (i) removes rough edges from the copy and polishes it to make it presentable; (Any story that comes into the newsroom is often raw, blunt, and rough edged. The first task or a sub is to remove rough edges so that the copy makes sense. This will make the copy pleasing and presentable to the readers.)
- (ii) adjusts the copy to the style of his newspaper; [Style is essential, particularly, to a newspaper, and every news organisation follows its own style. It is a device to maintain consistency and, thus, the credibility of a newspaper.]

You may ask what difference would it make if "P" is parliament" is written in the capital letter at some places and in small letter at other. It does make, for at least two reasons: style lends a sense of craftsmanship, and it affects the reader at two levels -consciously simplifies, and clarifies and corrects the language.

Hong Kong      Hongkong

Fertiliser      Fertilizer

Only one of the above should be followed consistently.

- (iii) A reader who scans through his morning, newspaper is in a great hurry. Hence, a copy editor should carve out each story in a familiar language so that it runs smoothly through the average reader's mind. Smooth writing ensures smooth reading. Simple, direct sentences are more directive. Also, he/she should delete cliches, extraneous words, jargon, ambiguities, non-descript adjectives and adverbs..

As far as possible, the predicate should be close to the subject. If an intervening clause removes the verb too far from the subject, the reader could lose track of the sentence and its meaning.

- (iv) Tailors story length to space requirements.
- (v) Detects and corrects errors of fact.
- (vi) Simplifies, clarifies and verifies meanings.
- (vii) Adjusts stories to 'make them objective and fair.

If a controversial matter is reported, then there are bound to be two sides or different points of view. Hence, all the points of view must be fairly presented. Carrying only one version and ignoring others in the coverage will amount to taking sides.

- (viii) Adjusts stories to make these legally safe.

You should avoid using adjectives of pejorative nature with respect to persons. However, unpopular a person might be the law will protect him against defamation.

In matters before the courts, the cases of both the petitioners and defendants must be given space in the report.

For example : When reporting an accident between a car and a bus, avoid writing who hit whom, unless it is established through a judicial inquiry. It should be described as a "collision".

- (ix) Rewrites and restructures stories extensively, where necessary. As far as possible, the sub (editor) should look for errors in spelling, grammar and syntax, and clear the copy. But, an instant second look may sometimes compel him/her to rewrite it. The opening para may lack the punch, the copy may seem confusing, or the news may be hidden below. Hence, rewriting may become necessary for the sake of clarity.

Highlight the news-point, taking care to avoid distortion and respect the facts produced by the reporter. In case the copy is badly written, show it to the reporter. Sometimes, the reporters obtain the information, and fail to exploit it. This could happen while reporting the press conferences and major tragedies such as plane or train accidents.

- (x) Follows the policy of the newspaper.

Sometimes a newspaper may support the policies of a particular political party, and, hence, would avoid criticising it. Even though you have a different opinion, you shall have to follow the paper's policy.

- (xi) Corrects copy in the interest of good taste.
- (xii) Avoids sensation.
- (xiii) Removes those points that could be called undue publicity or puff.
- (xiv) Deletes doubtful words and sentence, following the thumb rule "when in doubt, leave out". Every story does not require all these treatment. But, every day, some story or the other will require any or most of these operations; a sub frequently performs these functions.

A copy editor/sub-editor should make sure that words are spelt correctly. A spelling error is a major effort, and reflects badly on the credibility of a newspaper. A few moments spent on checking the spelling of a word will keep the reader's mind at ease.

**The Qualities :** The production of a newspaper calls for undivided attention of 200 to 300 people in different departments, as it is delicate and complex process. There is tension since a deadline is to be met. In a news agency, the deadline is 'now'. Amidst this tense atmosphere, the sub-editor has to perform his job meticulously. He should possess certain qualities to discharge his functions efficiently.

The sources of the essential qualities of a copy editor/ sub-editor are:

**Calmness:** Be calm and composed, come what may.

You should not get excited when a big story breaks-be it a disaster, calamity, the assassination of a big political leader or the collapse of a government.

**Decisive:** Take quick and correct decisions. The editorial department has no place for indecisives.

**Non-partisan:** Never take sides; be non-partisan.

**Memory:** Have a sharp memory for counter-checking facts, if necessary.

**Grasp:** Size up the situation as it unfolds, and estimate its relevance.

**Know Your Reader:** Know the particular readership.

This means you should engage one hand with subbing, and the other with the pulse of the reader.

**Self-confidence:** Have confidence enough to correct a bad copy written by anyone, even the senior most reporter or the paper's editor.

**Mature:** Be mature enough to correct only bad copy, and not just make changes for the sake of changing.

**Sceptical:** Do not accept anything at face value. You should approach everything as a source of potential error.

**Knowledge:** Be a jack of all trades, because a sub handles a wide range of stories (from killings to oil prices to satellite launch). You are required to have some knowledge about these, including how these compared with the past events, how the names of different nationalities are spelt. A good editor should store most of the information as it comes across, and search for more.

**Stability:** Have enough stability to work under pressure.

**The Tools :** The copy editor will require-a set of tools, the lack of which may lead to loss valuable time while subbing the copy. These aids are indispensable. Often, you may come across problems of spellings and facts, arising out of an average day's handling of the news. You should focus on the errors, and correct the name.

## Style and Words

The basic building blocks of journalism are words. You should respect the words, and follow the way these are arranged and strung together. Any misplacement of words could twist the

meaning. Hence, you should pay attention to punctuation marks, grammar and syntax. All these are important in the sentence construction.

**Punctuation Marks:** Punctuation problems start and almost end with a comma. This little mark causes more trouble than the rest put together. Consider these examples:

Ram says Raj is an idiot.

Ram, says Raj, is an idiot.

Observe how the placement of the comma has changed the meaning. Remember that commas define relationships within a sentence.

Punctuation marks bring in clarity and better readability. At the same time, too many of these clutter a story.

There should be no comma after a verb unless it is immediately followed by a parenthesis.

One of the areas of punctuation in which mistakes are often made is the dash and the hyphen. These serve two nearly opposite purposes, but are often mixed up.

A dash is used to create a pause for emphasis, or to provide an abrupt change of thought, or to introduce a phrase or clause in parenthesis. Thus, a dash separates, and is spaced; the whereas, a hyphen joins the two, often unconnected, ideas. It is not spaced, and is half the size of a dash.

### ***Editing Marks and Symbols***

**Slug:** A news item or story may run into several paras, and also exceed one page. If running into pages, a news story has to be kept track of from amongst various stories, and chronologically arranged. Hence, these' paras, in a page, are divided into two of three parts. Then, these parts are 'slugged' and numbered, i.e., given a label, which identifies that story for that particular day, and helps the editor on duty to bring different parts together. Related stories are slugged to make the relationship clear.

Slug is an identification mark or tag. It is often the key word in a story and written on top left or right of a page. For example: On a day like 15th August, 26th January, festivals, disasters and press conferences, there are bound to be several stories related to the same subject. So, 'Day' will become the Master Slug'. And for each story a "Subslug" shall be used. e.g., 'Day-PM' will be the slug for the story relating to the Prime Minister's speech on the occasion. Thus, PM is the 'Sub-slug', with 'Day' serving as the 'Master Slug'.

**Editing Symbols:** As soon as you start editing a copy, the first symbol you use is for paragraph indentation. Even if every para is indented, you should mark this symbol on every para. This would help the typesetter in knowing that you want paragraph to begin at that spot.

Pictures submitted for publication in the newspapers and magazines have to be edited to fit into the layout of the page, and also the unnecessary portions cut off, which the photographer might have added in the actual composition. The competent photo editor's job is to see to it that he does not waste space, and trims a picture keeping the main essence of the subject intact. This reduction process, keeping the essential parts of the photographs intact, is called cropping. Since the photographers are emotionally involved in shooting their pictures, they might think whatever they have added in a picture would be published. This aspect is left to the judgment of the photo editor, when the final composition of the photograph for publication is made.

For example, a photographer might have given a group picture of the newly appointed ministers. The clever photo editor might use only the heads of the ministers and cut off the rest of the portion in order to economize on space. A narrow strip of the faces of the newly elected ministers is certainly of more interest for the readers, and definitely not the dress they are wearing! Just as the editor edits a story by cutting the irrelevant portions, the photo editor also crops the picture, bringing out the emphasis of the photographic message as effectively as possible. To improve the look of the newspaper or a magazine, the photo editor might

opt for vertical or horizontal pictures depending on the lay-out of the page make up, and, in the process, mar a picture drastically, keeping the main subject in focus. Unless he has the freedom to crop the pictures, he will not be able to introduce new ideas far' improving the look of the page.

A good photographer must be able to handle every assignment the editor gives him to his own satisfaction. Pictures are in everything around us.

Each one of us sees different pictures in the same object and situations, owing to the different background and experience each of us have. You must have seen a lot of photographers which have won prizes. The subjects of these pictures must have been very ordinary or common. But, the way the photographers composed them, and brought forth the essence, made a difference. Didn't they? Probably, you might have tried a picture or two on the same subject. But the judges were not excited. Why? It is not that you are wrong, and they are right; it is just that your vision is different. There could be as many photographs on a particular subject as there are journalists. You will be most successful when your vision is in tune with that of your editor. It does not mean that you will have to suppress your creativity. It is only to channel your creativity to achieve certain goals.

One has to work with great speed on a location. This is significant. On location, no one will wait while you try to figure out your shutter speed and lens aperture adjustment in your camera. Even as you get out of your vehicle, you should be setting your aperture for the type of lighting available on the location or what you intend to use (like an electronic flash), and be ready to focus to an average distance. You should actually shoot a news event from several different angles, and let your photo editor decide which picture to use. But when everything starts happening, at the same time, you must be quick enough to do your own editing on the spot. Your grasping power must be like quick silver. You must decide which picture from what angle would be the best, and then get yourself in position to shoot it.

The newspaper photographs are based on factual situation. The photographs illustrates an event, bring depth into it, and probably comment on it. Usually, the photographer is given only an idea to work with, and is expected to create an appropriate photograph to illustrate it. This is where a good memory or a notebook will come in handy. The photographic techniques involved in shooting for magazines are not much different from those in newspapers. The technical skill is again taken for granted, and your primary concern is to illustrate the story clearly and completely.

**Captions :** Is a caption a must for a picture? Yes. Even though the news picture is supposed to tell a story on its own, one should say where and when the incident took place. Caption writing is an art by itself, and it comes with experience and aptitude. It is, generally, the job of the new editor. The picture and its caption are complementary to each other, and it is very essential to mention when and where the picture was taken, and who the persons seen in the picture are. When a pix shows a VIP getting down from a car, the caption instead of saying that such and such a person is 'getting down' from the car should rather say so and so is 'arriving' at the particular venue or place for doing a particular activity, as the case might be. There is, for example, no need to say that a person is eating when the picture is showing it. One should say why, where and what he is eating, and on what occasion. A caption reading 'under the clutches of a monster,' showing the picture of a scooter trapped under a huge lorry, is a good one.

If photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the pix could hang in between the paragraphs.

Sometimes the News Editor might prefer to box a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to brighten the page. A really good picture could express the equivalent of a thousand words! Captions for the sports pictures are very important, and most of the photographers simply prefer to say something like 'a melee in the goal mouth,' which should actually say who is doing what. For example, it should read as 'Mr. X, who scored a hatrick,



scoring his third goal in a row beating the defender Mr. Y'. This applies to all games. Sometimes the news editors prefer to give no captions, and the pictures simply hang under the headline, which itself serves as the caption. 'Queen Ann wins the Derby', 'Kapil clean bowled for a duck' and 'Mr. X takes over as Chairman', are some examples.

In most news coverages, the photographer reaches the spot only after the incident takes place, and is able to take only the result of what had already happened. In such special cases the newspaper or magazine might have to depend upon graphic illustrations to detail the activities that had taken place on a particular spot earlier.

From the information available, the entire incident in the original sequence could be sketched out so as to give the reader a clear idea of what the news story is about. Such graphic illustrations have been used time and again of depicting incidents of varying degrees. For most of the mountaineering expeditions, the routes taken by the mountaineers could be sketched out, adding all the necessary information regarding the routes. In an assassination case, a graphic illustration could show the position of the assassinator, the victim and others in the vicinity.

The graphics come in handy for the tabloids and magazines, where detailed stories are published with lots of illustrations-pictorially and graphically. With limited space, the newspapers go in for graphics, but not as a routine.

Though the newspapers and magazines we read today have gone through several stages of developments, more changes are taking place as new techniques and technologies are introduced. The first newspaper in India was published on January 29, 1780. It was called the Bengal Gazette. Later, it also came to be known as Calcutta General advertiser or Ricky's Gazette. James Augusts Ricky was its founder, editor, printer and promoter all in one. The Bengal Gazette was a weekly. It consisted of two pages, measuring 12" x 8".

The Bengal Gazette of 1780 was a one-man show. Large

newspaper establishments today employ thousands of workers, and use most modern equipment worth crores of rupees. Skills and inputs from many specialists in different areas are essential to produce a newspaper today. In India, we have over 27,000 publications, in this field, in more than 90 languages. The newspaper composing and printing methods have gone through major changes during the past few decades. However, the basic function remains the same, to convert the printing matter into printable format.

An understanding of the printing-matter composing methods would help in better understanding the limitations as well as advantages of each composing process, in designing the page.

To create the desired amount of leading or space between lines, he/she inserts metal strips called leads. When the composing stick is full, the lines of type are transferred to a long shallow tray, called a "galley".

After taking out proofs and carrying out the necessary corrections, the next step is to make up the page. i.e., to assemble various elements such as the text type, display type, picture blocks, according to the designed layout. Since the composed matter consists of hundreds of individual pieces, it is essential that it is held together securely or locked up. This may be done by tying up the type with a string, or by surrounding it with furniture strips of wood, metal or-plastic.

These, in turn, may be held firmly in place with metal strips. The type may be locked up on the galley in a metal frame, called a "chase" or directly on the bed of the press.

Collectively, type and other printed matter locked up and ready to be proofed or printed is called a "forme".

**Machine Setting:** This method involves casting type from molten metal. For this reason, machine-set type is also referred to as hot type. There are four popular type casting machines Linotype, Intertype, Monotype and Ludlow.

**Linotype and Intertype:** These are mechanical methods of

composing and casting type in one piece lines called "slugs". Since these machines cast lines of type rather than individual characters, these are called "linecasting" machines.

The name Linotype is derived from casting a line-of-type. In both systems, the operator sits at a keyboard, not unlike that of a typewriter. The machine is adjusted to set type to the desired pica.

Sometimes the News Editor might prefer to box a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to brighten the page. A really good picture could express the equivalent of a thousand words. Captions for the sports pictures are very important, and most of the photographers simply prefer to say something like 'a melee in the goal mouth,' which should actually say who is doing what. For example, it should read as 'Mr. X, who scored a hatrick, scoring his third goal in a row beating the defender Mr. Y'. This applies to all games. Sometimes the news editors prefer to give no captions, and the pictures simply hang under the headline, which itself serves as the caption. 'Queen Ann wins the Derby', 'Kapil clean bowled for a duck' and 'Mr. X takes over as Chairman', are some examples.

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The upper front section of the machine carries a magazine, a slotted metal container, which holds the "matrices", or letter moulds, of the type to be set.

When the operator strikes the keys, the matrices fall into positions to form a line-of-type. The operator sets as many characters and wedge-shaped space bands as possible within the given line measure. The space bands are used for the word spacing. When the operator is ready to cast a line, he/she pulls a lever which sets off a series of events. The line, made up of matrices and

space bands, is transferred to the casting mechanism. The wedge-shaped space bands are driven up between the words to justify the line. Molten metal is forced into the matrices, and the trimmed line of type or slug is ejected onto a pan or galley tray. As soon as the type is cast, the matrices are returned to the magazine with the help of a mechanical distributor, and the space bands to the space-band box, ready for the next line.

After the matter is composed, the type is locked up on a galley. Line-casting machines can set type and-leading as one piece. For this reason, it is impossible to reduce the amount of leading, the space between lines and words, once the type has been cast. However, leasing can be increased by inserting leads between lines by hand. The cost of corrections is reasonable. Any change a within a line mean that the entire line, or even all the succeeding lines in a paragraph, have to be reset. The basic difference between linotype and intertype is that the intertype of matrices. They can be used for casting headlines as well as body matter.

**Monotype:** As the name suggests, “monotype” casts the characters one by one rather than as a complete line. It is a combination of two machines, a keyboard or perforator and a typecaster. It is a two-step or two-machine method of casting individual type characters, mechanically.

To set type, the machine is adjusted to the required pica measure and leading. As the copy is typed, it produces a perforated paper roll, which is used to drive the typecaster. A combination of holes dictates the letters, spaces and punctuation marks to be set. Normal spacing is punched into the roll between words. A calculator, measures the amount of unused space at the end of the line, and the operator then punches the holes to indicate the amount of additional space to be given between words to justify the line. When the roll is fed into the casting machine, it is fed in backwards so that the machine “memorizes” the amount of space to be added between words, as the letters are cast.

To set type, the perforated roll is fitted on the typecaster,

where it directs the casting mechanism by means of compressed air. The air passing through the perforations brings the matrix holder and the specific matrix ready to be filled with molten metal into proper position. Once the type has been cast it is ejected onto a galley, one character at a time.

**Ludlow:** This is a combination of handsetting and machine-casting operations. Like linotype, it produces a slug, but in a different way. The operator sets the type matrices and leading in a composing stick by hand. The composed matrices are then locked into a casting machine, where they are filled with molten lead to produce the slug. Ludlow was designed primarily to cast display type from 12 to 72 points, but it is mostly used for the newspaper headlines.

**Phototypesetting:** It is also known as photocomposing, or cold type setting. All the other methods stated above involve hot type. That is, they require the use of molten metal. Since photocomposing does not involve metal casting, it is also called a cold type-process.

The first phase of photocomposing resembles that of monotype setting. Unless the perforator is attached to a video display unit (VDU), the operation is limited to conversion of copy matter into a coded perforated tape. This perforated tape is then fed into a programmed computerised unit, which projects the desired images of type characters onto photosensitive film or paper. This paper is then made up in mechanicals or photomechanicals from which printing plates can be produced. Photocomposing provides a fast, flexible and reasonably economical method of setting type. This method offers several advantages over other methods. In handsetting and casting, type is to be inked in order to print. The pressure of the metal type against the paper causes ink squeeze, which tends to make the edges of the printed forms irregular. Offset plates produced from art pulls tend to have rough edges. In phototypesetting, on the other hand, individual letters are projected and exposed directly on to photosensitive paper or film, resulting in the sharpest possible letter forms.

As long as type is on a piece of metal, there is a limit to just how close the letters can be set. With phototype setting, it is merely a question of projecting the letters, where one wants. Letters can be set touching, overlapping, in fact, in any way one wishes. Another advantage of phototypesetting is that type can be set and matter made up directly on photosensitised film or paper. This means that it is possible to go directly from film to plate-making. This process saves time for the designer as well as the printer. A phototypesetting unit with a visual display terminal (VDT) offers the additional advantage of providing a visual display of the composed matter.

Phototypesetting is done through the computers, which are essentially electronic equipments capable of logic functions, according to predetermined programmes. The computers can carry out programmed decisions and eliminate errors caused by human judgement. The programmed decision-making process can be used advantageously to reduce pre-press time. This is one of the major crisis areas in newspaper production. In hand or machine setting, the speed of compositors is restricted because of the requirements of proper word-spacing and the line alignment process. In computer setting, these functions can also be programmed to carry on predetermined page make-up. You will study this in greater details in the next unit.

The computer input is text set on tape, and the output is a coded tape, including format and typographical instructions. Just as the compositor, composing by hand or by machine, has to think of the text as type in a specified type face of a certain size, of a certain line length with all the spacing, word breaks italics, capital letters, and other textual conventions, the computer programmer has to design his programmes to convert straight input tape ("idiot tape", as the computer experts picturesquely call it) in to the typographically stylised output.

The computer contains, within its stored programme, all or most of the typographical decisions an experienced compositor takes as a result of his knowledge and experience in typesetting. The programme may be written to produce the required kind of

text-setting. The output of the computer-coded paper tape can be used to control the actual typesetting equipment, including the conventional automatic composing machines using hot metal or any phototypesetting system. The outcome of the total system is dependent on the computer programme employed.

The programmes used in computer typesetting do not differ in principle from those used for many other computer operations. That is to say the computer obeys the programmer's instructions by performing a series of calculations, in accordance with the needs of the output, which in this case is the tape used to operate a typesetting machine. A computer can be programmed to carry out all the calculation needed to establish word-spacing within acceptable limits, and, beyond these, a word-break is required to break up a word and place part of it in the next line. Photo editing and page designing can also be done on the computers. Now-a-days, almost all big newspapers in India are using the computers for composing purposes.

As you know, different editorial components of a daily newspaper or a magazine are generally news reports, special reports, photographs, book reviews, are reviews, are reviews, film reviews, feature articles, interview stories, investigative and interpretative reports. Along with these, newspapers also publish advertisements, with display and classified public information, notices and jobs/employment advertisements. In addition, newspapers also publish the stock market information, weather reports, radio, television, cinema and theatre charts.

The newspapers operate in a competitive world. In addition, these have to compete with the radio and television.

Also, as living styles and product consumption patterns of the readers improve, the newspaper editors and proprietors have to improve the quality of their product.

Therefore, to keep up with the times, there has been a marked improvement in the use of the typography and newspaper design in the newspapers during the last few years. More improvements are bound to take place with innovations in newspaper

production. If you take a closer look at the newspapers being published from different centers in India, you will notice many differences in their use of typography, design and production techniques. Several newspapers have started using colour printing for improving their appeal to the advertisers and readers.

At any newspaper stall or shop, you will notice a large variety of newspapers and magazines.

Newspapers come in different shapes and sizes. There are newspapers that provide general public interest news to the readers. There are other with cater to the needs of the specialists. Every newspaper has its own way of presenting news, views and features. In a competitive market, it is essential for each product to have “uniqueness” or an individual identity. By appropriate use of typography and layout design, each newspaper attempts to require and perpetuate its unique identity.

Even if the contents of two papers are similar, the use of different typography and design can given the newspaper two distinct identities. For example, take a dally English language newspaper published from Delhi, and compare it with a newspaper published from Patna, Jaipur, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkatta, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Lucknow or Bangalore. The page one design, layout of the news items, pictures, box items type faces, even display of news items will stand out prominently. Besides, the newspapers from Delhi will carry more national and international news. Others will emphasis more local state, regional, national and international stories in that order. Almost the same criteria apply on other pages, including the edit page. The reasons for these varied emphasisisms are the needs of the readership.

The front page of a newspaper is like the face of a beautiful woman. If it is attractive, it will hold the attention. You may have heard the expression; “the front page news”. For a newspaper, to report news is normal function, but there is something special about the fact that the news is printed on its front page. The front page is the “face” of a newspaper. Let us take a closer look.



Carefully, read the news items printed on the front page of your daily newspaper, and try to find reasons for these items being printed on the front page, of your daily newspaper, and try to find reasons for these items being printed on the front page. Remember, front page is normally the page that is read first, or, at least, looked at first.

We all acquire a unique identity by our own name. The uniqueness gets reinforced by the unique way we write our names, i.e., the signatures. Many other distinct features add to our individual identity.

Similarly, newspapers have a name. If you observe the front page of a newspaper closely, you will see that the masthead of a newspaper is much more than just the name of the newspaper. To understand the significance of masthead, you should take as many different newspapers and magazines as you can, and see how newspapers and magazines try to acquire a unique identity by their mastheads or names.

Newspapers sell news, Headlines are a means to attract the readers towards the news items. For a page designer, each headline is a new and unique challenge. For him/her, the headlines of the news items are much more than just a set of words. It is the responsibility of the page designer to make each headline as distinctive as possible within the given newspaper format and its policies with regard to the use of type faces and type sizes. These policies evolve over a period of time.

To get a better understanding of the concept, let us again go back to our newspapers, and examine how the headlines are made distinctive and used to provide an eye-appeal or an attractive page design. The task of the page designer or make-up person is to decide whether he/she wants to give more news items and shorter coverage of each, or less news items and emphasise them with greater details. A headline can be made bold (big typeface), a single line and run horizontally across columns, or short with width small typeface two lines and one column. Carefully notice these variations in the headlines in your paper. Each page

designer uses his/her own experience and creative genius to make the page attractive and give each news item an appropriate placement on the page.

Headlines are given generally by the sub-editors/ copy editors. The page make-up person cannot change them, but he/she can increase or decrease the display value, readability or importance of the news item by using different techniques at his/her disposal such as type face and size, placement, making it run horizontally across more columns of less. You will find that most newspapers every day give a four or five column bottom-spread on their front page; it is down to give a solid base to the whole page.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. On the same basis, it can be extrapolated that a good cartoon is worth at least two thousand words. From a page designer's point of view, it is important to realise that photographs, cartoons and graphic have a special significance. Placing a picture or cartoon at wrong place may not only reduce its utility, but also reduce the design appeal of the total page.

A page designer has to examine whether the picture, cartoon, graphic, chart, has an independent value or it has to be juxtaposed with a particular news story. The size may have to be adjusted due to placement or space considerations. Having closely examined some of the major components of the front page of your newspaper, individually, let us now take a look at the architecture of the page or the overall page design. For this, we have look at the page from some distance. One way is to do a comparative study of two or more papers.

Hang two or more papers of the same date on the wall, and stand at a distance to take a critical look at these. As you look at these pages, study the structural outline of the news stories, bold headlines, pictures, cartoons, placement of box items, etc. Take a look at the whole page from the masthead to the bottom line. Look at the page, as if you were trying to study a painting or a sculpture. You will notice that there is a design in the page, a form and a structure. Each page designer has his/her own concept of beauty

and page structure. To bring it out, he/she uses different type sizes, white spaces, placement of pictures, graphs, charts, cartoons, etc. Inside pages of a daily newspaper differ from the front page in their format, structure, and presentation of contents. If you open a daily newspaper, you will see that on top of the page, there may be indications about the topic covered on that page—international news, national news, state news, sports news, city news, business and economy news, etc.

Even if there is no indication on the top, you will notice that the news items on that page have a common link. It helps the readers in their search for a news item. Also by grouping news items on specific pages we are able to give the newspaper a structure. The inside pages under one group often tend to cover as many news items as possible. Hence, often these pages may seem cluttered.

One common feature in all daily newspapers is the editorial page. The format of this page looks similar in many newspapers in India and abroad. On this page, you will notice that there is a section where the editor (s) write their analysis of the major national and international news items. These are often referred to as the “newspaper’s point of view”. Along with that, there may be one or two articles written by prominent people on current topics. Also, a demarcated section devoted to “letters to the editor”, giving reaction of the readers to the news/views, which might have appeared in the newspaper, or items, of concern to the readers but not covered in the paper.

Each newspaper has, usually, a fixed spot for general information items such as the weather forecast, entertainment, cinema, radio, television, etc. The design of the inside pages of a newspaper is relatively much more structured than the front page, which is dependent on the major happenings during the past few hours. Advertisements have special significance for commercial publications. The very existence of newspapers and magazines depends on the revenue from advertisements. Hence, special care must be taken with regard to placement of advertisements along with the news stories on the pages.

There are some important factors, which influence the effectiveness of advertisements in a newspaper. Therefore, in many cases, advertisements are placed on these pages according to the product or services to be advertised. For example, advertisements of sports goods such as shoes, wear, equipment or sports programme are generally placed on the sports pages.

The advertisers often request for such placements, and even pay extra for such favours. Advertisements, in a way, are paid for news items. Large colour advertisements have special significance in page design. Page design can be made more attractive with colour advertisements.

Newspapers are meant to be read. Anything that obstructs or reduces the convenience of the reader must be avoided. As far as possible, the news item should be contained in a neatly defined area. Look at the page of a newspaper as a reader, and ask yourself:

Are the news items displayed in a nice, readable manner? Could you suggest any improvements? Each letter, each word and each story has special significance. Headlines, photographs, cartoons, box items, charts and graphics-all these are important ingredients of the newspaper page design. Readability for a page-designer has a different meaning than that for a reporter, sub-editor or proof reader. Readability for a page-designer has more to do with its visibility and the convenience of its reading for a reader than the actual contents. Readability from a page designer's point of view depends on placement of the news stories, typography and the overall page layout.

Daily newspapers and periodicals differ in their size, format, page layout, overall design, and printing techniques. While pages of most daily newspapers measure 41 cms x 56 cms, magazines or periodicals tend to be around 27cms x 20 cms. However, there are weeklies such as the Sunday Mail, the Sunday Observer or even the weekly editions of daily newspapers, which are registered as weeklies. They are also of similar size, look and design as the daily newspapers.

The cover pages of periodicals have special significance from the editorial and newspaper's policy. While about 85 per cent dailies are subscribed to and delivered at homes or offices, more than 50 per cent magazines are looked at before being bought. Hence, the magazine covers have special significance. Next time you go to a magazine stall, take a critical look at the arrangement or display of magazines. You will see how each magazine tries to attract attention. It is the cover of a magazine that holds your eyes, makes you pick it up and compels you to purchase it. Generally, the magazine covers have photographs of women. It is said that the readers like pictures of women on the cover of a magazine, but no cover on the women.

Now, if you take a few magazines of the same kind such as Business India, Business World and Business Today or India Today, Sunday and The Week; put them side by side, you could examine the difference in cover contents, price and design strategy to attract readers' attention. Limits of imagination of a page-designer determine the limits of page design for a magazine. However, there are a few factors that make some designs more suitable than others.

Every magazine has history behind it, which gives in a tradition in cover-design. This tradition or the past pattern of the cover-page design tends to set the standard for selection of the alternatives, which may or may not be suitable for particular magazine.

To attract the new readers, a magazine will need to adopt unconventional designs, but too much variation from the past may also tend to alienate the regular readers.

To study the design-pattern trends, take a look/at three or four' issues of the same magazine. You will see some common or regular features in the designs. Study the format and the items displayed on the cover,page.

The final test for a magazine is at the newspaper or magazine sales stalls. The success is measured by the number of readers willing to pay for it, and that determines its paid circulation.

To understand the sales promotion strategy, we have to find out first the readership profile that an editor and publisher of a magazine have in mind. The readership profile is defined in terms of age group, educational level, marital status, disposable income, \nature of job, quality and place of residence, consumption pattern, etc. Most general interest magazines are read by a wide spectrum of people in different age groups, income levels, educational standards, etc. The readership profile is defined in terms of groups and percentages.

Another factor that tends to influence the price and cover design of a magazine is the long term sales promotion strategy of the newspaper management, editor and publisher. The most important question can be: Is the management trying to build a long-term (one to three or five years) subscription and distribute the magazine through mail, as is done by the Reader's Digest, or, is the main emphasis on sales promotion through newspaper and magazine stalls. In case the management adopts the sales promotion policy of promoting newspaper through open sales, i.e., through newspaper stalls, the magazine cover design acquires strategic sales promotion importance. The cover designs, in this case, should be critically evaluated with the cover of other magazines in the same genre.

**Consistency and Change :** Change is a way of life in journalism. No two editions of a newspaper or magazine are alike. Whenever a reader picks up a newspaper or magazine, he/she—expects to find something new in it. However, in newspapers and magazines, changes take place within the predetermined format. Formats provide a sense of continuity. Format, may be viewed as a rough outline of the newspaper or magazine, its shape and size, placement of its masthead, and the typeface used for it; placement and presentation of the news, views and other contents. Presently change in a continuous manner is the skill that makes design layout a challenge for each item, on each page, of each publication.

At the first glance it may seem obvious that the change is inevitable, so the question of “need” may seem redundant. However, it is essential that we understand the areas of change

that influence the very existence of a newspaper or a magazine and also determine its readership growth pattern. While incorporating changes in page make-up or design layout we must keep in mind a few factors:

- (a) While bulk of the readers will remain the same, some new readers, however small, may be added with each new edition.
- (b) Some readers dropout and thus change the overall readership profile.
- (c) Newspapers and magazines operate in a competitive environment, hence new challenges from competitions have to be met.
- (d) Tastes, information requirements and entertainment requirements of readers keep changing.

To respond to change one must understand the compelling reasons for change to incorporate meaningful and effective changes. The Readership in newspapers and magazines is built up slowly. It is a painfully slow marketing and editorial effort.

With passage of time most readers get “addicted” to the nature and quality of presentation of the news, the views and the format in which the newspapers and magazines present their contents. Yet as we saw in the previous section there is a need for change.

Hence, the question crops up “how much and how” the change should be incorporated in each issue? Since each publication is a unique entity, there can be no simple clear cut answer. However, generally, it would very much depend on the subject matter of the topics to be covered. In most cases the change would be reflected in the treatment of topics, language, the quality of illustrations, allotment of space, positioning of articles, typographic changes etc.

With the common observation that a picture is worth a thousand words-the nature of pictures is elected to accompany the composed matter often indicates the degree of change. Pictures

or illustrations used indicate the degree of change. Pictures or illustrations are usually the first to be noticed and often draw relatively strong reaction from readers. Hence it is important that the quality and contents of pictures or illustrations selected should not have to vary from the earlier issues. However, on the other hand, it may also be necessary to keep up with the competing in publications.

A cautious approach may be to stay within the bounds of past practices of the publication and the standards of lead publication in that genre of publications. Some leaders, tend to lead in bold ways and later make amends under pressure from readers.

It is not uncommon in the newspaper industry that changes have to be incorporated when the total publication is almost ready or at times under print. In daily newspapers it is almost a way of life. Whenever last minute changes have to be incorporated- the effort is to incorporate the required changes or include the new items with minimum disturbance to the overall page layout. However, some sudden events may warrant total change in the front page layout or cover design of a magazine. Even in case of the most drastic situation, the important factors to be taken note are the time required to bring about the change and the impact of changes on the printing process and schedule. Each printing process and schedule, has its own advantages and limitations. While bringing about changes in the editorial matter their impact on the printing time should also be considered. Events, which demand last minute changes usually require prominent display.

For an editor or reporters of an English newspaper there are only twenty six alphabets with only two symbols each-one as a capital letter and the other in its small form, for he page make-up man the choices are almost unlimited. Today with the help of computers one can develop new type faces by incorporating variations in size, form and shape of each letter. It is the size, form and shape that determine and distinguish the type face of a letter.

For a page layout designer, letters become a visual framework that gives readers their first overall impression of a printed page.



As page designers, we must select type by analysing its visual appearance as well as readability of its type face.

While the choices may be many, editors of daily newspapers for the sake of economy, workability and convenience to its readers, make deliberate attempt to limit the variations of type faces used in their page make-up. Many newspapers adopt just one type face in different sizes throughout the newspaper.

However, magazines and advertisers tend to experiment with typography to give their pages and messages an eye catching quality.

**Newspaper Industry** : Speedy transmission of news is as important as the actual news gathering. It has been made possible by the advanced electronic equipment. Increasingly, apart from the speed of the delivery of the information, serious thought is being given to the aesthetic presentation of the textual and visual material on a printed page. This is being treated on par with the editing of information, for both content and language.

The computers and word processors are being used in page make-up. The painstaking manual typesetting and page layouts are a thing of the past. The expertise of the graphic designers and the options made available by the computers have together provided a variety of page designs to choose from.

The facsimile machines, popularly called the 'fax machines,' have proven themselves to be indispensable in reporting back to a newspaper office from the location of an event. These facilitate faster despatch of news from the newspaper office too. Let us now see what functions the electronic equipment must perform to meet the requirements of the newspaper office

**Newsroom Requirements** : The newsroom is a place in the newspaper office, where the news items arrive, and are sorted out. The faster the incoming flow of news, the greater the speed of production of the various pages of the newspaper.

The photographs and illustrations need to be quickly located or prepared to supplement the information in the text.

News is a perishable commodity. The newspaper staff have to be on their toes to ensure that important news items are processed quickly, to meet the deadlines of publication. Speed is a prerequisite of the newsroom, and its importance in the production of a daily newspaper could not be emphasized enough.

Speed is essential in the following aspects of the newspaper production: in communicating information; in processing information; in page-designing and layout; in printing and production; and in packing and distribution. Rapid transmission of news becomes meaningless, if information being imparted is inaccurate. This might even affect the paper's credibility. In this context, the accuracy of the data and apparently minor details of spellings and language, assume importance. Such correction work is done with the help of the computers and 'fax' machines.

Sometimes, to give in-depth treatment to an issue, complete information might have to be provided in the form of the historical data or facts about the events preceding the current ones. The computers are an ideal system for storing data in their memory and this data could be retrieved at a later stage. The computers act as the data banks, and are very useful sources of reference for the newspapers.

The computers permit data maneuverability to suit the needs of the page designers. This might become necessary in the presentation of the same news item in a different format. The computers could even be programmed for an unlimited supply of type faces. Software for a variety of page designs exist and continue to be invented. The typography, thus, is another requirement of the newsrooms.

**Page Designing :** The arrangement of captions, photographs and graphic on a page would have to facilitate easy reading, besides being visually appealing. Certain parameters of format are fixed for any newspaper, such as those of the page size, print area, number of columns, positions of mast-head, allotment of articles according to their categories and page titles. The page make-up artist works both independently and with the software packages

to give a variety of options for the design of pages or their layout. The Desktop Publishing, the DTP for short refers to both hardware and software that are involved in preparing high quality prints of pages, once these are composed satisfactorily. The prints are used as artwork, and the actual duplication is done by offset printing, owing to the high costs involved in the DTP operations. The hardware of a DTP includes a large-sized colour monitor of the VDU and a laser printer apart from the CPU which is programmed to suit the DTP software. The laser printer involves a high-speed, high-quality printer technology. The DTP software consist of programmes to compose pages and their layout. These perform the function of the word-processing and automatic margin alignment, providing a variety of type-faces, page-numbering, etc. address the traditional forms and discuss some of the constants. In the following two chapters, we will take you over the edge into stylistic writing, with some tips, examples, and appropriate warnings.

The one thing we can assure you of is that writing is incredibly important at any newspaper. Gone are the days when big-city newspapers had “leg men” who merely collected facts and fed them to a “rewrite man” who wrote the stories with flair and, sometimes, exaggeration. Some newspapers still use rewrite people to help rework stories that others have written or have dictated by phone. Some newspapers also have a kind of writing-by-committee system for special projects, whereby several reporters collect information, which is then handed over to one or more writers on the team. But once the project is finished, those people who have done the leg work return to being writer-reporters again. At today’s newspapers, a reporter must also be a writer. And it has been our experience that the better you write, the better you will do in this business. Increasingly, editors seek talented writers, grudgingly admitting that the public can, indeed, get its basic news from TV but not in the substantive, interpretive way good newspaper writers can present it.

## Script Preparation

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Technical editing, the detailed preparation of manuscripts for the printer's information and for the reader's ultimate benefit, is often done at the same time as substantive editing and by the same person—usually a copy-editor but sometimes an editor.

### Technical Editing

Technical editing includes checking that the form of each part of the manuscript matches the detailed requirements of the instructions to authors; that the nomenclature, abbreviations, units and symbols follow internationally accepted systems or are explained at first mention; and that small capital letters, Greek, Cyrillic or other alphabets, italics and bold type, rank of headings, and a host of other typographical details are marked clearly for the typesetter. It also includes seeing that all necessary parts of each manuscript and each book or journal issue are present, properly identified and assembled in the right order for the printer.

Substantive and technical editing together constitute copy-editing and if some authors question editing itself, they and the business managers of some journals cavil even more at copy-editing, which they regard, respectively, as an necessary and

irritating exercise or an expensive luxury. It is true that if authors consistently supplied ideal typescripts completely ready for the typesetter, copy-editing might not be needed. And when printing has to be done from authors' camera ready copy, certainly no copy-editing can be done on the final typescript; standards may then have to be sacrificed and the effect on the reader ignored. But whenever papers are typeset or retyped before printing, the copy editor's preparatory work saves an enormous amount of the typesetter's time and the publisher's money, as well as improving the article for the reader-always provided that the copy-editor or editor aims at clarification rather than at fussy tidying or an unrealistic level of consistency and perfection.

An indispensable book for copy-editors is Judith Butcher's detailed account of the copy-editing practices of Cambridge University Press. In the USA, Chicago University Press's Manual of style is the most widely used reference book for general points but scientific copy-editing is more specifically dealt with in the CBE Style manual. As only a general picture of copy-editing is given here, every editor/copy editor new to the job should consult one or more of those books.

Most editorial offices have a 'house style'-a collection of decisions on spellings, capitals, italics, hyphens, and so on, for use when a choice is permissible. The collected decisions can be card indexed for easy reference. If this collection is kept within sensible limits it helps the copy-editor to deal quickly with certain trivial but potentially time-wasting questions of form. For many minor points, however, it may be better to follow the author's usage, provided the author has been consistent. For consistency throughout a publication, copy editors should list the decisions they make, or that authors have made, and note where the words or terms first appear, in case a different style later becomes the preferred one. Sets of rules on nomenclature should be collected and filed alphabetically or in some other retrievable way. Instead of a simple card index or file, some large editorial offices, for example that of the American Psychological Association, publish their own style manuals, providing useful guidance for both editors and authors.

One point that the editor or copy-editor has to settle with the printer is whether manuscripts will be fully copy-edited or only partly copy-edited in the editorial office, or whether-when such a service is available-the printer's staff is to undertake copy-editing. If the printer is to make no changes at all but should follow the copy exactly, this must be stated; the copy-editor/editor works accordingly.

Marking the type fount and size and giving other purely typographic instructions for the text, headings, tables, legends etc., is usually known as 'printer's mark-up' and is indeed often done by the printer's staff, but practices vary in different countries. For an established journal, however, or in a book forming one of a series, many of these items conform to a standard pattern and little marking is needed. For other books and for new journals the editor or sponsoring body and the publisher or printer agree on these typographical points at an early stage.

Editors must know, or decide, exactly what their copy editors or other assistants will do and when they will do it. The copy-editor/ editor deals with the items as discussed below.

**Tables and Illustrations :** Although the editor or referees should already have examined the titles of tables, the copy-editor checks whether the titles in each article are consistent in wording and terminology. The legends for the illustrations are examined from the same point of view. For the tables and illustrations themselves, the copy-editor asks. Are column headings. Like titles, consistent in style and terminology? Would tables be easier to read (and typeset) if they were turned through 90°, so that lengthy column headings fit into the left-hand column (the 'stub') instead of being crowded across the top? Are all tables and illustrations numbered in the order they will appear in the text, and is their approximate position in the text marked in the margin? If any have been taken from previously published work, has the author obtained permission for them to be reproduced? Are all symbols and abbreviations explained? Are axes on graphs intelligibly and consistently labelled? Should photographs be dropped to remove irrelevant areas? Does the author's name and the title of the paper appear on the back of each illustration and is 'Top' marked where

necessary? Are scale bars included or magnifications given where necessary?

**Headings and Sub-headings :** A simple system for headings, sub-headings and sub-sub-headings helps readers to find their way quickly in a chapter or article. Headings can be designated A,B,C etc., and marked accordingly for the printer. Three levels of headings are enough in most cases; it is best to avoid having more as it is difficult to distinguish them typographically. The typeface, type size and placement of the different levels of heading are part of the agreed design for journals, or are decided at the specification stage for books. The editor or copy-editor may have to decide on the author's behalf what is the logical ranking of the headings provided and, sometimes, insert headings when the author has changed the theme without warning.

The conventional first-order (A) headings for the main sections of a journal article are Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and References, but this order and these terms may be inappropriate for a given article and are almost certainly inappropriate for a chapter in a book. Within the main sections the B and C headings may need to be reordered. The copy-editor/editor may find it useful to make a list of the headings, aligning the A headings at the left-hand margin and indenting the others appropriately, to see whether the listing looks logical. A list like this also shows whether there should be more or fewer headings to guide the reader to each topic.

**Nomenclature :** Nomenclature begins to evolve rather haphazardly in each new field. After a while it becomes standardized and begins to evolve again, this time in a more orderly fashion, since certain principles are laid down and agreed during the standardization process. Journal editors and copy editors usually learn from their predecessors which standard authorities for nomenclature are used by the journal and where to look for new developments as they occur. Book editors can refer to the guidelines for authors in relevant journals or consult the journal editors themselves about nomenclature authorities and developments. A journal's guidelines ought to cite the main reference works but a letter to the journal editor usually elicits

more up-to-date information, for example on nomenclature changes that are about to be introduced since journal editors are often members of nomenclature committees. Editors should neither invent systems of nomenclature nor allow authors to do so; there is plenty of guidance available and editors should steer authors towards the most recent forms put forward in internationally agreed systems.

**Abbreviations, Units and Symbols:** Abbreviations are shortened versions of terms that are too cumbersome for easy intelligibility; deoxyribonucleic acid, for example, is more easily understood when abbreviated to DNA. Units of measure are nearly always abbreviated too. Symbols are usually single letters, or combinations of letters and digits, that succinctly convey a concept, e.g. V for volume or Q for a change of rate for every 10-degree rise in temperature (Kelvin scale).

Abbreviations, units and symbols obviously increase readability if they are deployed skilfully, but overuse has the opposite effect: 'Following an ECG and a BUN, the patient was found to have NSAP' is an incomprehensible code to most non-medical people. The names of units should always be abbreviated when they are preceded by a number but not when they appear in such phrases as 'concentration is expressed in milligrams per litre. The Systems International (SI) method of expressing measurements is obligatory in many journals and includes standard abbreviations for the recommended units. This method is used in all countries and all disciplines. Only members of a few professions now resist using certain SI units, on the grounds that during the period of transition there is dangerous confusion. The answer to this objection is to make the period of transition as short as possible. SI units will displace 'conventional' units as certainly as those units once displaced the dram, the scruple and the pennyweight in England, or their equivalents in other countries. Older units may still, if necessary, be given in parentheses after SI units, or even the other way round if the actual measurements were made in the older units.

Abbreviation of other words is less obviously desirable than abbreviation of cumbersome terms and units. Some editors forbid



it entirely; others also permissive that abbreviations flourish like weeds on the pages of their publications. The ideal lies somewhere in between. A good rule of thumb is that if an unwieldy word or phrase has to be used more than 10 times per 500 words a standard or sensible abbreviation (often three capital letters without stops) can be allowed if it is used consistently. It may, in fact, be unnecessary to repeat such phrases: if only one kind of treatment is being investigated, for example, it need not be specified by name each time. The mono-amine-diarrhoeic (MAD) dogs can be replaced by the 'experimental' or the 'treated' dogs; or 'the mineral' and 'the particle' can be used if only one of each is being discussed.

Abbreviations of words fall into three categories; internationally agreed by standards committees, arbitrary but preferred by leading journals, and newly coined for the occasion. Editors should make sure that authors have not invented new abbreviations where acceptable ones already exist. For recognized abbreviations in the life sciences the European Journal of Biochemistry, the CBE or O'Connor & Woodfor can be consulted. The CBE Style manual draws a neat distinction between unequivocally acceptable, arbitrary but recommended (though obligatorily defined at first mention), and unacceptable abbreviations.

## Other Items

**Footnotes** : Footnotes have become anathema to many editors and printers, though computer photo-composition can remove the objections to them. Traditionally footnotes have often been used on the opening page of an article or chapter to give information about an author's previous or present affiliation, if different from that in the by-line; to gather together all abbreviations used in the article or chapter, with their explanations or definitions; or to refer to any comments or criticisms by other authors elsewhere in the book or journal issue, especially if these concern ethical matters. They are also used to provide supporting evidence that would interrupt the argument if inserted in the text, or to make an editorial comment or cross-reference to a passage elsewhere in the publication which contradicts the author's argument. Whenever possible all these

kinds of footnotes should be incorporated into the text or added at the end of the text as a 'Note Added in Proof or an 'Editor's Note'.

'Footnotes' are sometimes used for bibliographical references. Useful though this may be for readers using microfiche or microfilm, reference details should normally be given in an alphabetic or numbered list at the end of the article, chapter or book, as described in the section on references below.

Footnotes to tables are considered part of the table, since they are often needed to supply information for which there is no room in the main body of the table. Authors should be asked to place them below the table or on a page immediately after it, not with any (unavoidable) footnotes to the text; and they should be asked to keep them short

The rare footnotes whose use can be usually typed separately from the pages to which they refer, on a separate sheet in order of mention, and with identifying marks (superscript letters or symbols) to link them to the text. They may be printed separately from, and in a smaller type size than, the main text. Some printers prefer footnotes in typescripts to be placed immediately after the lines where they are referred to, set off from the text by line ruled above and below the footnote. This point should be settled with the printer when style guides or guidelines for authors are drawn up.

**Acknowledgements** : The way acknowledgments are to be printed should also be agreed with the printer. To avoid a footnote on the opening page they can be printed with or without a heading, and perhaps in smaller type, at the end of the text.

Authors tend to be over-generous with acknowledgements. If typists, technicians, illustrators and others have only been doing their normal work, their help does not necessarily have to be acknowledged. But authors should certainly be allowed to acknowledge any special help received if they wish to do so. Authors should be encouraged to show the proposed acknowledgement to the persons being thanked and to obtain their permission for the wording. Grants and other support for the work described should be acknowledged briefly.

**Appendixes** : Complex calculations, derivations of formulae, checklists and other items that would disrupt the text if inserted at the point where they are referred to can usefully be placed in appendixes. In journal articles, appendixes are refereed along with the rest of the manuscript; this distinguishes them from Note Added in Proof, although both are often placed after the Acknowledgements and before the References. For mathematical work special typesetting may be necessary. The whole appendix may be set in smaller type of the main text and should be so marked for the printer if there are no standing instructions on this point.

**References** : In journal articles references are usually confined strictly to publications cited in the text and listed at the end of the article under the heading 'References' or 'References Cited'. In review articles or chapters in multi-author books, 'Further' or 'Additional Reading' is sometimes added as a separate list. A 'Bibliography' refers to a full list of sources from which the authors have drawn ideas and inspiration but for which no specific citations are given in the text. If the term is used in this way, a Bibliography is obviously not appropriate for a journal article.

For chapters or articles with lists of references cited, the copy editor/editor checks that every citation in the text has a corresponding reference in the reference list, that every reference in the list is indeed cited, and that where names and dates are given in the text these match the names and dates given in the list. This cross-check is done separately from reading the text and in about 95% of papers it shows up at least one or two discrepancies. Queries about the discrepancies in dates and spelling of names, and about incomplete, missing or redundant references, are listed for the author or copy-editor to sort out before the paper is printed; minor points may be marked on the typescript for the author to deal with in proof. The copy-editor then marks the author's reference list so that it is in the form required for the book or journal.

The form of references in reference lists has still not been standardized despite many years of discussion and many anguished pleas from authors that editors should agree on a single form for

all scientific publications. An international and multi-disciplinary Workshop on references has now put forward as simple and uniform system designed to benefit authors, editors, readers, typists and typesetters. The main suggestions from the Workshop are that the same sequence and form of elements should be used for references in reference lists in all scientific publications, no matter which system (names/dates or numbers) is used for citations in the text, and that any extra punctuation and typographical instructions that the editor or publisher feels are essential for asserting a publication's individual style should be added as required.

The standard layout recommended for a reference to a journal article is as follows:

Smith A B, Schmidt Y Z 1978 Iron bars are getting tougher. *International Metals Journal* 12:18-38.

Once one of the key recommendations—that the date should be placed immediately after the authors' names—has been accepted, the chances that authors and authors' typists will prepare references correctly increase, because the sequence and form of other reference elements can then be kept the same for every publication for which the authors prepare papers. This utopian state of affairs depends, of course, on editors either agreeing to have references printed in the form suggested by the Workshop or accepting that if their publications insist on special forms for references, they themselves, or their copy editors, will have to mark authors' reference lists accordingly. The rationale for this is that it is many times easier for copy-editors or editors to mark reference lists to conform to one particular style with which they are familiar than it is for authors and their typists to cope with the myriad systems now in use.

Another key suggestion put forward by the Workshop is that a 'master typescript' of 'final draft' system should be used in which names and dates, not numbers, are typed for citations in the text. If a paper originally prepared for a publication that uses names/dates is rejected and then submitted to a publication using numbers, the author simply deletes the names and dates neatly

and inserts numbers instead of having to have the whole text retyped. Conversely, if authors submitting papers to 'numeric journals' make a copy of the name/date text before deleting the names and dates, they can then submit the copy to a 'name/date journal' if the paper is rejected by the numeric journal. Reference lists, however-unless the second journal follows the same system as the first-have to be typed according to each journal's requirements, though this is much easier with the recommended standard layout than where every element may be in a different sequence and form.

Many editors already ask for titles of journal articles to be included in reference lists, as in the example shown. In most disciplines the advantages to readers of the titles of journal articles being included in the list of references outweigh any extra trouble caused to the author, editor and publisher-except, perhaps, the extra typesetting costs. The title gives readers a great deal of information and often tells them whether they need to spend time finding and reading the article; it may help them to track down the article if there are errors elsewhere in the reference; and it shows them in what language the article was published. Until authors make a practice of noting titles with the rest of the bibliographical information about their sources, they may protest at having to consult the cited article again to obtain the title, but his chore may also benefit them because they may discover that memory has played them false about what the article contained; or they may find that it was not the article they meant to cite at all.

Another recommendation already widely observed is that first and last page numbers of articles should be given in references. Inclusive pagination indicates to readers whether the article cited is on a grand scale or is merely a short note. Knowing the length is helpful, too, when photocopies are ordered from a distant library and the cost has to be calculated. Again, the information may assist readers or librarians in identifying an article if other elements in the reference are wrong.

The only other Workshop suggestion that needs to be discussed here is the one stating that journal titles may be either

unabbreviated, or abbreviated according to the 'International List' system. Provided that each reference list follows one style only, there is no good reason why these two ways of trading journal titles should not be allowed in the same book or journal issue. As this would lead to savings in time and money, and as both methods give readers and librarians sufficient information for retrieving articles, it seems reasonable to suggest that on this point inconsistency between chapters or articles but not within them might be allowed to creep in. (The International List System, incidentally, is very simple and much quicker to use than the 'World List' system still used by many journals.)

The Workshop made no recommendation on whether names and dates or numbers should be preferred in the text, or on whether numbers should be sequential (with a non-alphabetic reference list) or non-sequential (with an alphabetic list). Again, one solution would be to allow inconsistency between chapters or articles but not within them. Many editors, and some publishers, however, have very strong feelings on how references should be cited in the text and it is highly unlikely that a single system will ever be universally acceptable in scientific publications.

Numbers in the text take less space, are less distracting in mid sentence, and -if they are sequential numbers-ease the chore of finding a citation which the reader identifies in the reference list as being of special interest. The arguments against numbers are that they supply no immediate information to the reader, that in long reference lists it is difficult to find whether a particular author has been cited, that the numbers can be confused with other numbers in highly numerical texts, and that it is difficult to add or delete citations during revision without making mistakes. With the name/date system the author and editor can identify citations which are added or deleted during revision and readers know just what work is being cited as they read the text. Against the name/date system are the extra space taken, the disruption to sentences, and the fact that it is not easy for readers who see an interesting reference in the reference list to find where that reference appears in the text (but the Workshop describes a solution to this problem).

Most editors find that the number versus name/date question has already been settled for them by the traditions of their journals or the house style of the publisher. Editor who are free to choose a system must decide what their authors can cope with and what their readers will find most useful. Most readers seem to want alphabetical lists, and many find they adapt easily to seeing names/dates in the text. If alphabetical lists are preferred but if numbers are needed for economy, the non-sequential numbering system can be used-but this is perhaps the most difficult system for authors. With both the name/date and the non-sequential numbering systems, if the editor wants readers to know where in a lengthy text a reference seen in the reference list, can be found, it is possible—though laborious—to add to the reference list the pages on which each reference is cited.

**Verification of References :** Authors are asked to supply accurate references but the responsibility is one that many take lightly. Editors rarely have time to verify references and the same is true of copy editors. If an editor decides that references ought to be verified a technician or secretary may be happy to do the work for pocket-money. A six-month or 1000-reference experiment will show whether the cost of checking is justified (it is not usually very great).

The reference verifier should be given a copy of the reference list either when copy-editing begins or earlier, so that verification is complete before the copy-edited manuscript is ready for printing. Primary sources, if available, should be used for verifying references; otherwise, secondary (abstracting) services may be consulted.

**Dates Received and Accepted :** Depending on the policy of the journal concerning printing the dates of receipt and/or acceptance, the copy-editor inserts these dates on the manuscripts in the preferred position-usually after, or immediately before, the references.

When editorial work on individual chapters or articles is complete, the copy-editor may send photocopies to the authors for checking.

## The Processes

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Manuscript editing can be separated into three processes creative, substantive and technical—each of which shades into the next. One person, We editor may do all three types of work; or a copy editor (sometimes called a sub-editor, a manuscript editor or a technical editor), may be responsible for substantive and technical editing after the editor and referees have finished their creative editing work. This chapter is mainly about creative and substantive editing, which call for either the active cooperation of authors or their passive approval. Other editorial responsibilities dealt with here concern the ethics of experimentation, multiple publication and writing to authors.

### Creative Editing

Creative editing itself consists of three aspects, two of which are not strictly manuscript editing. The third aspect consists of pointing out to authors how and where they might reorganize, expand or condense their manuscripts to produce a more logical progression of ideas or give a more effective account of their work. In this educational part of their calling editors may have the help of referees.



## Substantive Editing

Substantive editing means ensuring that authors have said what they want to say as clearly and correctly as possible. It is usually done at the same time as technical editing and includes correcting the grammar and spelling, making minor suggestions about the reorganization, expansion or condensation of the text, and suggesting how titles, key terms, abstracts, statistics, tables and illustrations might be better presented and how style might be revised to give greater clarity and precision.

## The Rationale

The rationale for some of these aspects of revision is to be found in the way the scientific information system works. Most scientists keep in touch with new developments by browsing through journals or recently acquired books in libraries, scanning current-awareness publications or comprehensive abstracting journals, talking or writing to colleagues, and attending scientific meetings. Few people subscribe to many journals or buy many books for their own shelves. The current awareness services rely heavily on the titles of papers, and abstracting services take over, verbatim if possible, the author's abstract printed at the head of the article. Unfortunately, few authors seem aware of the uses to which their titles and abstracts will be put. They visualize readers who scan titles and abstracts and who can immediately read the papers that interest them, which is rarely what happens in practice. Editors therefore have to guide authors to produce informative titles and abstracts.

*Responsibility for Revision* : After editors have examined manuscripts and considered any comments from referees, they decide how much revision should be done, who should do it, and when. If major revision is needed, the manuscript is usually returned to the author with a letter saying whether the paper is likely to be accepted after revision or merely reconsidered for publication. Major revision is heavy work and some authors may prefer to offer their manuscripts to less exacting editors.

If the revision requested is minor, one question is whether

copy-editing (that is, substantive and technical editing) should be done before or after the author revises the paper. When copy-editing is done in a central office serving several publications, editors may prefer to return manuscripts to the authors for revision before copy-editing. Other editors may choose to have copy-editing done first, saving both postage and the authors' time.

Editors who do all their own copy-editing may read each chapter or article three times or more after the selection process is complete. The first reading is a general one to see whether and where any major changes in content or structure are needed. References, and sometimes other items are checked separately. The third run-through is for checking the correctness and consistency of the editorial changes to the typescript.

Copy editors deal with the work covered by the second and third readings and with the aspects of technical editing.

Editorial changes, normally made in ink for the printer, are better made clearly in pencil on the typescript if the author is going to see the changes. A reasonably legible photocopy can then be sent to the author for checking and revision. Changes are explained in the manuscript margin if the reason for making them is unlikely to be clear. The editor can draw attention to doubtful points with a marginal note: 'Author please check.' In a covering letter the editor may say that some changes are merely suggestions which are not binding on the author but are intended to clarify the meaning for readers unfamiliar with the author's subject.

Where copy-editing is done after the author's revision, major changes made by a copy-editor should be either approved by the editor or checked by the author, and queries should be settled before a paper goes forward for printing. This principle of clearing all except trivial changes with authors should be a feature of editorial procedures whenever time and the budget allow. For one thing, if any further changes are needed it is much cheaper if authors make them before typesetting than after. For another, it is the authors who carry responsibility for the content of their papers: editors or copy-editors who alter manuscripts can easily falsify the authors' intended message.

There are editors who contend that allowing authors to comment on editorial changes in this way is a dangerous kindness. They regard authors as morally ruthless characters who will stop at nothing to get papers printed in reputable publications. These editors, who protect their readers by being very strict with authors, may be right about workers in their particular fields. Other fields may boast authors of a higher calibre.

Editors also have different opinions about how much work should be done on papers they have accepted for publication. Some editors argue that authors must do all the revision, especially of the style and that their own part is to give authors general guidance on what changes to make. Other editors, realizing that some authors are either incapable of following general instructions or genuinely have no time to do so, prefer to have papers thoroughly revised in the editorial office. The two points of view have been debated by DeBakey and Woodford., The solution to the dilemma probably lies between the two extremes of no editing and full editing, but all editors must formulate policies on the aspects of revision discussed below.

**Structural Reorganization** : Reorganizing a whole chapter, argument or section ought to be the author's responsibility, but the editor or referees must have good reasons for asking for major reorganization, and they should suggest how it should be done. Afterwards, tables and illustrations may have to be remunerated and references rearranged, or at least checked to see whether they still apply.

**Expansion** : If a step in the argument is missing, or if further experimental evidence is needed, only the author can supply the missing material

**Shortening** : Shortening an article to a given length may be done by the author but is often better done in the editorial office. If the author is asked to do the work the editor must indicate how it might be done: which sections, paragraphs, tables of illustrations could be deleted, which parts could be condensed, and which marginally relevant theme might be cut out. 'Cut your article by a third and we'll have another look at it' is not very helpful advice

for authors. A piece entitled 'The craft of shortening in The Lancet' gives useful tips, some of which I borrow and adapt here, with apologies and acknowledgements to the anonymous author:

- (1) Shorten the Introduction by cutting out all references to previous work that are not directly related to the work described; citing a review articles will probably cover most of them.
- (2) Omit details of methods described in other publications. The principles on which the methods are based are often more significant; on the other hand, major modifications must be described exactly.
- (3) Do not repeat in the text information provided in tables or legends to illustrations.
- (4) Reduce speculation in the Discussion to reasonable, testable hypotheses.
- (5) Use the active voice and first person whenever appropriate; they are usually more succinct.
- (6) Cut out all flabby introductory phrases such as 'It is interesting that...'- and all woolly words of uncertain meaning.

**The Title :** A title that conveys the main subject or message or of chapter or article in as few words as possible is important for easy retrieval. Yet many titles are imprecise or uninformative, and referees comment on them surprisingly seldom. Since editors know more about the use of titles in information retrieval than most author, editors should have a major say in re-titling chapters or articles where necessary, only if authors produce good arguments to back up their preferences should they be allowed to keep the original version. It is worth remembering that a title in the form of a question or statement has more impact and is easier to understand than a title built around an abstract noun. For example, the titles 'Activities of enzymes in plasma should be measured at 37°C' and 'Is Dextran 70 a lymphocyte mitogen?' are simple, direct and clear, conveying the authors' meaning far better than alternative forms that lack verbs.

**The Abstract :** Like titles, abstracts too often go unscrutinized by referees and must be carefully edited to make the paper as widely useful and retrievable as possible. Abstracts written in English, for example, are read by thousands of scientists whose mother tongue is not English, or they may be translated by linguists unfamiliar with the scientific content (but see below). For the sake of those users, as well as for English-speaking readers, editors should make sure that abstracts are written in plain and simple terms. The same principle naturally applies to abstracts in any language. Above all, jargon—that is, short-cut phraseology intelligible to only a select few—and unexplained abbreviations should be eliminated. And, in contrast to other parts of the text, in an abstract first-person constructions should be changed to the third person, which is considered more appropriate for secondary service usage.

Abstracts were not commonly printed at the beginning of chapters in multi-author books until recently, but the practice is useful for readers. Even in a book in which each chapter reviews a particular area, a descriptive abstract saying what subjects are covered can be extremely valuable. In some books, especially textbooks, a table of contents may be more useful than an abstract at the head of the chapter, through abstracting services do not reproduce these tables.

For most research articles in journals or books informative abstracts are preferable to descriptive abstracts. Descriptive abstracts are the kind that say, for example, 'Experiments on reactions to nicotine are described and the results are discussed'; informative abstracts are defined as follows.

An informative abstract states the purpose of the article and of the investigation(s) on which it is based, indicates the methods used, and summarizes the results reported and the conclusions drawn. The editor should look at the article in as broad a context as possible, on behalf of readers. The abstract should say, for example, in what species of animal, or what part of the world, the work was done, as appropriate—authors often leave out essential information of this kind. Editors should, however, be flexible about the length and other details of abstracts. For example, even though

it may be preferable for most abstracts to describe the purpose, methods, results and conclusions of an investigation in that order, editors should not automatically change the form of an abstract which starts with the conclusions, then fills in the background and provides the supporting facts. There is much to be said in favour of the second form, although, again, it would not be sensible to impose it on every abstract.

Landau & Weiss have produced two useful sets of guidelines for preparing abstracts—a brief set which can be included in the guidelines for authors and a back-up set giving more information. If an author's abstract fails to sum up the paper satisfactorily the editor should add facts and figures as necessary and tell the author what has been done.

Editors are often asked to print abstracts, or summaries, in three languages, one of them English, the most widely understood language in science. The nationality of the publication and the geographical distribution of readers determine which other languages will be used. For European publications the most popular combination is English, French (or Spanish) and German. Ideally, Russian, Chinese and Japanese might be included too but these all pose problems of translation and typesetting as well as cost.

Some of the few journals which print abstracts in more than one language arrange to pay for translations to be made, others ask authors to provide translations. Whoever is responsible, the translation should be done either by someone whose mother tongue is the language of the translation or by a translator who has lived for many years in the country of the language of translation. If the translator is not a scientist in the same discipline as the author, the translation must be checked by someone who knows both the language and the discipline. Linguists unfamiliar with a speciality rarely produce satisfactory translations of technical work.

The text of each abstract should begin with the 'article bibliid' and end with the author's name and address, so that full information is available for abstracting services.

**Keywords :** Conventionally, keywords characterizing

information elements in articles are added to the end of abstracts as an aid to indexing and retrieval systems. They often include words already in the title and abstract, which is wasteful. A richer way of using keywords is to add them below the title in parentheses. This should help to prevent words in the title from being repeated, while telling readers that the paper includes methods or ideas subsidiary to the main theme. If a journal also prints keywords under the titles on its contents page, readers who look first at titles only will see the terms as they scan either the journals itself or the fide-listing publication, Current Contents.

Keywords may be supplied by either the authors or the editor. If authors are asked to supply them the editor can then edit each list of words to make them uniformly useful to readers and the current awareness services. Professional indexers will make their own decisions about using or ignoring keywords.

A 'free vocabulary' is probably better for key phrases than a thesaurus of permitted terms, though if a short private thesaurus covers the field adequately it may be very useful. A lengthy thesaurus that is brought up to date only at long intervals, however, may oblige authors and editors in rapidly developing fields to use obsolete terminology. For example, the term 'micelle', which had been important in gastroenterology for over 15 years, did not appear in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) published by Index Medicus until 1975. Even now, only a well-informed editor would permit its use: it is still only a sub-heading listed under the main heading 'colloid', a term with a fine but antiquated flavour.

*Presentation of Statistics and Accuracy of Computation* : For papers relying on statistics, a suitably qualified referee should comment on the statistical method but should not have to recalculate all the values given. Authors may be asked to supply their raw data if the referee doubts the methods or the conclusions based on the data. Editors should sport-check one or two computed values or ask a referee to do so. Where there appear to be mistakes, authors must be asked to re-check all values.

In papers where statistics form only a small part of the work, authors are not always careful about how they indicate variability

in a sample or imprecision in a measurement, and many referees fail to notice this kind of fault. Values given simply as  $x \pm y$  without explanation are examples of scientific illiteracy. Editors should familiarize themselves with the principles of correct presentation and bring them to the attention of authors. Editing is not concerned with words alone.

***Contents and Design of Tables, Illustrations and Legends :*** Authors often need guidance in designing tables (including titles and footnotes) and illustration (including legends) that the readers can understand without reference to the text.

It has been proposed that titles and footnotes for tables and the legends to illustrations should, like abstracts, be in three languages. This suggestion may not be very practicable (though some Scandinavia journals insist on English captions for tables and illustrations) but it underlines the fact that many readers look at tables and figures before deciding whether a paper is worth reading. It is perhaps unfortunate that tables, figures and legends are usually placed after the text and references when manuscripts are assembled for the editor. This order is the one most convenient for the printer but it seems to discourage referees from criticizing tables and illustrations in detail. As an experiment, before manuscripts go to referees, the tables, legends and illustrations could be placed immediately after the abstract, to test whether they make sense on their own.

Lengthy protocols for experiments should not be placed in legends or in footnotes to where they are often printed in type too small for comfortable reading. If authors ignore this requirement, the editor has to decide whether it is worth asking them to insert the material in the text, whether to do the job in the editorial office, or whether to accept the material as presented. If space permits, protocols can be printed in the legends in ordinary type, but many readers would still prefer the material to be included in the text under the heading of Methods.

***Improvement of Style :*** Most authors write not simply to be read but to be understood. Scientists in particular should always write comprehensibly for their readers. Though specialized



technical terms are unavoidable (and are not classified as jargon), there is no need for the meaning of any chapter or article to remain hidden behind lem thickets of poor prose. Confused writing is indicative of confused thinking, not of superior knowledge of esoteric subjects. Yet editors are divided about how much they should do to improve the prose style of authors whose papers they have accepted for publication.

Some editors maintain that each author has a personal style and that editing destroys that style, generating a book or journal that is tedious to read because it lacks variety. These editors acknowledge that many scientific authors use language clumsily and express themselves in a pseudo-impersonal way that is sporadic and obscures meaning; but they refuse to revise, this kind of prose, saying that if they do so authors will never try to improve their writing, and that the authors will be made to sound like better scientists than they really are. Ibis school of editors may educate authors by proxy—that is, by directing them to consult books on scientific writing—or by editing one or two paragraphs as a model.

The experience of interventionist editors, on the other hand, is that most scientific authors have only mannerisms, not style. They conclude that the best medium for transmitting scientific information is a transparent style that draws no attention to itself but presents the facts and the argument simply, clearly and unambiguously. These editors tend to transform as much prose as possible into this simple style though they try to leave untouched any writing that has a personal flavour but is neither verbose nor imprecise.

Scientific writing has suffered much from editors who mistakenly demanded impersonality in the name of objectivity, but many journals now encourage a more direct and personal style. The Bio-chemical Journal added this brave sentence to its Instructions to Authors in 1977; 'Authors are encouraged to employ their own style, although papers must be concise and should conform to normal English usage.

Some editors think that style is of no importance either way

and should not concern them at all. But, if good scientific style is defined as being clear, logical and precise, it lies at the very centre of scientific thought and endeavour.

One point of style that is of growing importance, especially in the USA, is the use of sexist language. Science is based on accurate observation but it is hardly accurate to use masculine nouns or pronouns when the sex of the person or animal is not specified or is not known. There are several ways round the problem, most of them more elegant than using 'his or her' 'instead of 'his' when pronouns are concerned. For example, the plural 'they' can often be used instead of the singular, sentences, can be reworded so that the problem does not arise, or neutral words can be chosen instead of words that apparently refer only to the male sex. Authors should be encouraged to solve the problems for themselves but editors may have to make changes for them.

Whoever revises the style, revision should be done with the less knowledgeable reader in mind. Ambiguous or misleading passages, pompous circumlocution, unnecessary verbiage, passive constructions, heavy attempts at humour or irony, and the clichés of scientific writing should all be cleared away not to economize on typesetting, ink and paper but to save readers time and keep them awake. Most scientists, after reading poorly written papers for most of their working lives, reproduce certain patterns of writing without thinking what they are saying. Editors should sweep these patterns out of their own minds and translate authors ritualistic phrases into simple language: 'Restrictions on ambulation are often favourable to inhibition of edema is easier to understand if it becomes Rest prevents swelling', as the book reviewer who quoted this sentence in the *Lancet* point out. However, if authors say what they apparently want to say clearly enough, editors must resist the temptation to go on polishing for ever.

It is useless for editors to advise authors to improve their style by reading Hoyle, Asimov, Julian Huxley or any other great scientific stylist: authors who follow this advice will simply submit mannered imitations of these writers. But editors should somehow

find time to read the best modern writers, to remind themselves what good style can be like.

On the whole a discreetly interventionist approach to editing an author's style is the best to aim at. But how is a personnel style to be distinguished from a mannered one? Fortunately there are many books which provide editors and authors with good advice on style. In English, the classic text on the plain, unadorned style is Struck's *The Elements of Style*. Gowers *Plain Words* preaches the same message. Trelease has written a superb book specifically about scientific writing, while Barzim & Dunbar's *Simple and Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers* is highly recommended for experienced authors. Many other guides have been written for particular fields for example, Thorne's *Better Medical Writing* and Booth's *Writing a Scientific Paper* the latter being a booklet written for biochemists but useful to many others. The essentials of scientific style are discussed at some length by Woodford and Tichy and are summarized by O'Connor & Woodford. Authors can be directed to these books if they are doing their own revision. Alternatively, editors should make sure that at least one of these authorities supports any changes they suggest.

If individual authorities on style are not enough, there is a short and sensible section on principles of style in the American National Standard for the preparation of scientific papers for written or oral presentation. Far from imposing too much standardization in a field where individuality is to be encouraged rather than suppressed, this Standard is concerned with minimum basic requirements. Splendid advice on editing an author's style is also to be found in a study by Norman Howard-Jones of editing in the World Health Organization. For general point of style Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is the ultimate authority, though American editors may prefer Follett's *Modern American Usage*. A good general dictionary is needed too, as well as specialized dictionaries for particular fields. The Random House College dictionary is excellent as a general dictionary for English-language publications since it gives both American and British spelling.

*Papers from Foreign-language Authors* : Whichever school of

editing they belong to, editors should give special consideration to authors writing in a language not their own. These papers must be made fully comprehensible and acceptable to readers, but at the same time editors must beware of discouraging the authors from writing more papers in that language. Needless stylistic changes are even more disheartening for foreign authors than for those writing in their mother tongue.

Many foreign authors writing in English will have picked up the pompositives and circumlocution common to British-American scientific publications, and proudly imitated them. These can be eliminated along with errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation. The editor or copy-editor has to look out for English words that have counterparts in other languages but have been wrongly used in their English context. Examples are remarkable (better rendered worthy of note or interesting, or omitted altogether), respectively (English usage requires pairs or lists to be given in parallel when this word is used; one cannot write sensitive respectively insensitive'),  $\pm$  (which means approximately in many European languages, but only plus or minus in English), already (often redundant, but sometimes meaning previously, and to control (meaning to check or monitor rather than to keep within bounds).

If a paper is in such fractured English that its meaning is obscure, someone who understands the content will have to spend a considerable amount of time revising it. This may be the editor, a member of the editorial board or other adviser, or the author, who should be advised to ask an English-speaking scientist for help (not a professional translator or interpreter), though in this case the editor must take into account which country an author works in and the likely availability of appropriate scientists there. Whichever alternative is adopted, authors should be given credit for their attempts to express difficult concepts in a foreign tongue.

**Spelling** : The differences between American and British spelling produce problem in these days of international journals largely in English. If the editor, publisher or printer cannot accept inconsistency between chapters or articles, the editor or copy-editor should change the spelling, where necessary, to whichever version is more common in the country of publication.

**References :** Many articles and chapters are over-reference, perhaps because authors imagine that a long list of references displays erudition. If the list seems too long, authors should be asked to consider whether all the references are really necessary. They should also be asked to check the accuracy of references and to compare the details given in the final typescript directly with the original sources or photocopies of them. Whether the editorial office will check references independently is for the editor to decide. Editors who take their duties to readers seriously will have references verified if it is at all feasible to do so. F.P. Woodford (personal communication) found that even in the 'best' journals among those that do not check references, at least 10% of entries were so fully of errors that they could not be retrieved. But if references are verified in the editorial office, the work should not be allowed to hold up publication.

For books, the editor decides whether reference lists will follow each chapter or appear at the end of the book. If the chapters have little overlap, the first is the best choice, and is certainly the most common in multi-author scientific books. If there is much repetition of references in different chapters it is sometimes better to consolidate them in one list at the end of the book. This saves space and typesetting time but may take a lot of editorial time, and it poses a problem about reference lists for reprints of individual chapters. A third method is to place the references at the end of the book but list them separately for each chapter. The deciding factor should be what is most convenient for readers.

**Ethics of Experimentation: The Editor's Responsibilities :** In biological or behavioural fields, editors have to decide how to handle papers that are scientifically sound but apparently based on unethical or ethically dubious investigations. Journal editors sometimes sidestep this problem by instructing referees to consider only scientific merit, leaving readers to judge whether the work was ethical. Editors who adopt this solution argue that the investigations cannot be undone and that the conclusions might as well be made public. But publication of a paper of this kind without comment, especially in a prestigious journal, encourages

other investigators to do similar experiment. Committees of the Council of Biology Editors (USA) and of ELSE have come to the same conclusion.

Both these committees recommend that the editor should first determine from the author whether work that appears unethical was in fact unethically conducted. If it has merely been inadequately described the editor can ask the author to rewrite the manuscript more clearly. The ELSE Working Group recommends that if the editor is not satisfied about the way the work was done, the paper should be rejected, with a clear statement that it is being rejected purely on ethical grounds. But the author can easily have the paper published by less high-minded editor and almost the same damage will be done as if the paper had been accepted by the first publication. The editor's and referees' doubts could instead be openly but tactfully expressed in an editorial published simultaneously with the paper. Editors, however, should neither launch outright attacks on the views expressed in papers they accept for publication nor evade responsibility for publication of those views by failing to comment on them at all. A reference to the editorial should appear on the first page of the paper, so that people reading reprints or copies of the article are alerted to the editor's reservations. Since there are often sincere differences of opinion on the ethical nature of certain experiments or investigations in animals or people, authors should always be shown editorials of this kind and allowed to reply. Open discussion of the matter is best in this as in other questions of editorial policy.

Research in discipline other than the life sciences also gives rise to ethical problems of various kinds for journal editors and authors, but I shall do not more here than draw attention to the existence of such problems.

Authors of chapters in books or review papers at conferences can course record their ethical criticisms of tower people's work, just as they can express any other criticism and editors may add their own criticisms, in square brackets in the text or at the end of the text, if authors have not done so.

## **Duplicate Articles**

Editors are unanimous in condemning publication of the same article, or the same article slightly reworked, in two or more books or journals. The main arguments against duplicate or multiple submission and publication are that much time and money are spent on refereeing, editing, producing, circulating, abstracting and retrieving each piece of information, and that editors naturally do not like publishing stale news or infringing copyright. It is also very annoying for readers who have gone to some trouble to track down a reference only to find that they have already read the article elsewhere. Duplicate publication is acceptable only when articles are intended for two different language areas, especially if secondary services do not provide good coverage from one to the other, or when articles are intended for widely separated disciplines, e.g. geology and clinical science, where journals in one discipline would rarely be seen by workers in the other, and when even a large abstracting service would not include both journals in its coverage. Even then the editors of the two journals should agree beforehand to the dual publication and include cross-references for the reader's benefit.

At one time authors universally observed the code of good practice which requires them to submit their papers to one journal at a time, but in the last decade duplicate submission has become more frequent. Most journals now protect themselves by explicitly forbidding duplicate submission in their guidelines for authors. An even better protection is for editors to make prompt decisions to accept or reject papers. The assumption that an editor will take a long time to make a decision is often what makes authors submit papers to several journals at once.

Editors of books face a more complex problem over duplicate publication than journal editors. Contributors to multi-author books may be justified in describing their published work again in some detail, but the descriptions should be completely rewritten for the book and each chapter ought to be related to other chapters in the book as well as to later work by the same author or by others. Similarly, a short paper for a conference may reasonably contain

the same material as a journal article, provided that it is presented differently. Ibis should ensure that the conference paper is worth reading as well as the corresponding journal article. A paper usefully presented at a conference may nevertheless be omitted from the published proceedings if a journal article has appeared and if the proceedings would not suffer from its absence. The editor should insert a reference to the journal article for the sake of conference participants who might look for the article in the published proceedings.

**Writing to Authors :** Editors should write individually and sympathetically to authors, especially if a paper is being rejected or major revision is requested. The authors may feel that their life's blood was poured into the papers that are being returned to them. They will not be grateful for a few impersonal words in a form letter suggesting that their papers are useless or that they must tear them apart and put them together again before any editor could approve publication. Editors can contribute much to the harmony of the scientific community with their letters and comments on manuscripts, if their approach is right. One author's picture of how a great editor worked with his authors has already been quoted another author recalls his correspondence with Dr. J. T Edsall as follows:

One of the finest editors I've known was John Edsall of Harvard who edited the Journal of Biological Chemistry for years [1958-1967]. He spent untold hours writing lengthy and detailed comments to authors. His letters were of inestimable value in improving the quality of papers. If every editor were as diligent, scientific literature would improve greatly.

The preceding paragraph of the same article shows how disruptive some editing and referring can be:

When I was younger and a manuscript was returned to me with rather strong criticism, I would be furious. Took me several days to settle down and give the reviewer's comments serious attention. Nearly every paper I've published has been improved by comments from reviewers and editors.



Editors should ask authors to return revised papers within a stated time. Delay may put the editor in a dilemma, as this case history shows (J.T Edsall, personal communication):

‘Author A submitted an interesting and quite original paper. It was sent back for suggested revisions; not very drastic. For some reason A held the paper for many months before submitting a revised version. In the meantime author B, clearly quite independently, discovered essentially the same phenomenon; and his paper was accepted by another member of the Editorial Board (who knew nothing of A’s work; but presumable it would have made little difference if he had). When A finally submitted his paper again, was the journal to decline it on the ground that it now duplicated work by another researcher that had been accepted and was in process of publication ... ?

The best course in such a case is for the editor to telephone A as soon as B’s paper is accepted, and explain what has happened. If A then submits the revised paper immediately, the two papers can be published in the same issue.

Editors sometimes receive excellent papers that are unsuitable for their particular journals. They should tell the authors that the wrong target has been chosen and encourage them to submit their work elsewhere. But when papers are really not worth publishing editors should not hide behind statements such as ‘The work lies outside the scope of this journal’ or ‘The journal is very pressed for space’. Euphemisms of this sort raise authors’ hopes that their work will be accepted if they restyle their manuscripts to match another journal’s requirements. The authors’ time and that of other creditors is then wasted. Instead, editors should say as gently as possible that the findings are internally inconsistent, the methods unsatisfactory or the data incomplete, according to what they or the referees have found.

The theme running through this chapter could be taken as the editor’s golden rule: work with authors, not against them. Be firm when editorial knowledge is clearly superior to an author’s, but remember that the secret of good editing lies in the use of a velvet glove as well as—occasionally—an iron hand.

## Editing a Journal

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In scientific journals sections of the scientific community are talking to themselves, much as a nation talks to itself in its newspapers. But the relationship between journal editors and their readers is a more intimate affair than national newspaper editors could ever achieve with their readers. Journal editors need their readers in a unique way, because those readers are also authors who supply all, or nearly all, the material published in the journals. Journal editors should therefore conduct the relationship with their reader-authors as carefully as they would conduct any personal relationship that they hope will continue and grow into something valuable, enjoyable and of lasting significance to both parties.

A new journal, in particular, depends enormously on how skilful its editor proves to be in shaping, balancing and developing the contents so that people not only read the journal but also subscribe to it. Eventually the journal will gather its own momentum and will be able to maintain its individuality when a new editor takes over. But however well established the journal may be, the editor should at all times exercise firm but flexible control over what goes into it and how the material is processed and presented to readers.

Many questions specific to these aspects of journal editing have so far been touched on only lightly, if at all. This chapter therefore considers editorial responsibilities in general; the mix-of contents; archival information; and the journal as a forum. Under these main headings the points covered include rapid publication, the structure of research articles and priority dates for them, Letters to the editor, editorials and book reviews, anonymity (or otherwise) for the writers of these items, and the time lag in the appearance of book reviews are also discussed, together with society business/professional news, and corrections.

### **The Autonomy**

Most sponsors endow editors of their journals with considerable autonomy and the responsibility for observing scholarly traditions as they apply to publication. Autonomy allows or stimulates editors to produce successful journals; it also leaves room for the occasional failure. With an eye on success rather than failure the wise editor takes an active interest in helping to define or redefine the journal's aims, policies and editorial coverage, and in recruiting members for the editorial board or for the regular panel of referees. Associate editors and board members should be chosen for their ability to provide support and seasoned advice. For society-sponsored journals the editorial committee should meet regularly and have clear responsibilities in decision-making on general policy matters. This also makes it easier to find a natural successor when an editor resigns or retires.

For any journal to succeed, the editor must aim to publish research articles of exceptional quality. The publisher of a new journal will probably press they editor to accept papers that are rather less than excellent at first, in order to fill the pages of the early issues. Non-descript or third-rate papers should nevertheless be rejected: better a slim journal of reasonable quality than a sub-standard, fat one.

Of course, the more successful a journal is in attracting papers, the higher its rejection rate will be: 80% is typical for weekly

medical periodicals, falling to 45-60% for specialist biomedical periodicals though rates differ in different disciplines. Some well-regarded journals in fact accept only those articles rated as outstanding by referees—a policy well worth considering.

To attract large numbers of papers from which the best can be selected for publication, a journal needs a wide scope. On the other hand, if the scope is too wide, it will be difficult to identify the readers and promote the journal to them; and readers will not subscribe to a journal for the sake of one or two articles in each issue that might interest them. The right balance has to be found for this as well as for other aspects of editorial work.

**Rapid Publication** : One of the editor's main responsibilities to authors and readers is to arrange for papers to be published as promptly as possible. Many journals build up a backlog of accepted articles to give the editor and publisher some leeway in filling issues of a standard size and to allow the editor to balance topics in each issue it is journal policy to do this. Although extra articles that are ready for publication can usefully go to proof stage, forming an emergency reservoir for each issue, the manuscript backlog should not be allowed to grow to an unhealthy size. Most authors would prefer immediate rejection to acceptance if there is to be a year-long lag while papers work their way through the pipeline.

For the editor, a giant backlog produces the risk that authors whose work and ideas have progressed during the waiting period will make numerous changes in proof. To avoid this, editors can offer authors the choice of acceptance with publication within a specified period, or the opportunity to submit their work elsewhere. A better method is for the editor to accept only the most exceptional papers as they arrive, publish them quickly—in issues of uneven size if practicable and return the other papers to their authors immediately.

Some journals have experimented with accelerated refereeing (or no refereeing) and fast production for certain papers only. The editor may have a hard time deciding which articles deserve such

treatment and coping with the consequent disruption of printing schedules, but the results for the journal are often worth the extra trouble. Better still is to publish all the accepted paper very quickly, omitting one or more proof stages but maintaining the overall quality of the journal.

Faster publication can also be achieved by reorganizing procedures in the editorial office and-if it seems necessary and if funds are available-by obtaining extra editorial assistance. It is worth discussing the production timetable with the printer to see whether and where any of the printing and proofing procedures could be speeded up (or omitted). Camera-ready copy can of course save time as well as money if authors can be persuaded to prepare it to the editor's and printer's satisfaction.

### **Elements of Awareness**

Most journals include both archival and current-awareness elements in their make-up. It is in mixing these elements to match readers' needs and wants, while fulfilling the journal's aims, that editors give their publications a distinctive character. The list of items that may be included in journals is a long one. In a new journal the mix will depend on the journal's cope, on the interests of the editor and editorial board or committee, and on the publisher's assessment of the market.

Editors of weekly journals tend to place more weight on news worthiness when they consider publish ability than do editors of monthly or quarterly archival journals. In the medical field, of example, Sir Theodore Fox argued that in a weekly Journal such as *The Lancet*, which he edited for many years, the research articles might well be dropped, as they were read by only a small number of subscribers. Ingelfinger disagreed with this view, arguing that part of the function of a weekly medical journal is educational, and that doctors ought to be informed of current research activity even if it is not of immediate practical value to them. In fact, the *Lancet* continues the mixed tradition with much success.

The sequence of the various sections in each issue of a journal is an indication of editorial priorities. In medicine, for example, the New England Journal of Medicine (a society-sponsored journal) publishes original scientific articles first in each issue and has the editorials in the middle, after the case records of the Massachusetts General Hospital (i.e. 'local society' activity) and before the letters to the editor. The British Medical Journal, on the other hand, with editorials that are often on medico-political as well as scientific issues, puts these first, followed by the original scientific articles and, towards the end of the issue, official reports of the British Medical Association. The Lancet (independent) begins with major original articles, hypotheses, review articles and the like, then launches what may be called the 'commentary' side of the journal with the editorials (leaders and annotations), followed by the letters to the editor. The society-sponsored New England Journal of Medicine is, therefore closer in arrangement to the independent Lancet than to the society-sponsored British Medical Journal, and it seems likely that the editors rather than the sponsors or publishers chose the sequence of sections.

It is also interesting to look at Science (society-sponsored) and Nature (commercially published), which both begin with editorial pages. Science confines itself to a one-page editorial before printing major scientific articles and reviews, followed by lengthy news features and commentary. In both journals the short scientific contributions are relegated to the second half of each issue. The arrangements are subtle announcements of editorial purpose, not dictated by pressures from the sponsoring organization, and new editors may learn something from them.

**Archival Information:** The description 'archival', applied here to research articles, brief communications and review articles, means that the information is expected to have lasting value, not that it is expected to be dull. But unless journals can afford to pay editors or copy-editors to rewrite papers skilfully, in cooperation with authors, there is not much that editors can do to make papers more lively, apart from exhorting authors to take courses in scientific writing, if any are available, and to study they style manuals

recommended in the journal's guidelines for authors. The convention IMRAD structure (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) of articles in the life sciences is often blamed for the dullness of the average scientific paper. The real reason is more likely to be that many scientists, however much they want to see their work in print, regard writing up completed studies as a chore for which they have little patience and which gets in the way of the next piece of work.

The IMRAD structure is in fact suitable for many articles and provides novice authors, in particular, with a comforting and familiar framework for their papers. But editors should be flexible and encourage variations on or departures from the conventional structure. The historical-survey type of Introduction, in which 'the problem' too often remains undefined, could well be replaced by an outline of the hypothesis tested, followed by the reasons for examining the hypothesis. Methods and Results can usefully form a single section, and many Discussions would benefit from less rigorous editing, as ideas thrown out casually may spark off new trains of thought in readers' minds.

Experiments with journal conventions could inject much-needed life into scientific writing and show that scientific work, like much else, has exciting moments that compensate for the daily slog.

Another tradition worth breaking is the one decreeing that negative results are not worth publishing. Publication of these results would often prevent the work from being repeated needlessly. This is especially true of work showing that statistically significant correlations were not found when these were a reasonable expectation. Editorial policy on publication of negative results was changed in two journals in the early 1970s (*Journal of Experimental Education* and *Journal of Education Research*) after Walster & Cleary published an article in defence of negative results.

A good way of creating interest in a new journal, or any journal, is to include a few solicited review articles on subjects of

topical interest or in a new field or a neglected one. Review articles are often what readers want most. Solicited reviews, of course, bring with them the problems common to all solicited articles, Unsolicited -review articles in a new field or presenting an unusual synthesis of ideas, perhaps covering several disciplines, should be considered sympathetically. Established review series tend to be conservative in their choice of topics and authors, and journals can provide a useful service by occasionally publishing more unorthodox reviews. An example of a journal whose editor took on the role of scientific critic and interpreter, a role too often forgotten or neglected, is provided by the Journal of the Royal College of Physicians (London), launched in 1966. This journal aims to publish review articles which synthesize information gleaned from many scattered articles, and to present that information in a form helpful to physicians who are too busy to find and correlate all the primary research articles.

An experimental method of generating review articles, or surveys, in an inter-disciplinary field has been described by Jesse. An extensive bibliography was compiled and copies were given to a number of scientists in disciplines related to quantitative microscope. These workers modified the bibliography and prepared papers which were first presented at meetings and then published in *The Microscope*, together with the revised bibliography which was basically common to all of the papers. The method seems especially promising when information retrieval services can be used in compiling the bibliography.

**Priority Dates :** A final point about research articles is that priority dates are important to authors and can be vital in some fields if a claim for priority has to be established inside or outside the law courts. Editors have a responsibility for protecting authors' claims to priority by assigning dates to articles. Several dates can be used the date the typescript is complete; the date of submission, taken from either the covering letter or the postmark; the date of receipt in the editorial office; the date a manuscript is provisionally accepted; the date a revised version is received; and the date a



final version is accepted. Martinsson has suggested that authors should give the date of completion at (for example) the end of the abstracts submitted for publication with their articles. This is a useful idea but may not be acceptable in some cut throat fields of science. The most practical dates to print for published articles are the dates of receipt in the editorial office and of acceptance in the form in which the paper is printed (ignoring copy-editing changes). (Editors who run their offices single-handed could, however, base the date of receipt on the date of the covering letter for articles that arrive in their absence.) If a paper is heavily revised the date of receipt should be the date of receipt of the revised version. If the author makes substantial changes in proof, or adds new material after the final manuscript has been accepted, the additions should be called a 'Note added in proof ' or should be distinguished in some other way so that readers realize that the material is never than the main part of the paper.

The year in which an article is published is the date used when an author's work is cited, but if questions of priority arise the published dates of receipt (year, month and day) of the manuscripts make it clear who has absolute priority. Editors or publishers should also record the dates on which journal issues are delivered to the post office or other agencies for distribution to subscribers, as these dates can be important in patent disputes and for establishing priority for taxonomic descriptions. The date on the journal cover may be quite different from the date on which the journal actually appears, as well as from the date on which it reaches subscribers-though editors should make every effort to match the printed date with the actual date of issue.

### **Conventional Journal**

A conventional archival journal which never publishes anything but original research lacks an important dimension. Many journals therefore publish one or more sections providing for comment, criticism, feedback from readers, discussion and controversy. Editors of new journals have a wide range of items

to choose from, including Letters to the editor, Editorials (or 'leaders'), Book Reviews, Hypotheses, Speculative articles, Controversies, Current concepts, Personnel views, Seminars, Case conferences, Open letters to public bodies and so on. Editors of established journals may add to, or change, the mix of ingredients from time to time. For example, in 1976 the British medical Journal introduced five new features: Condensed reports, Side effects of drugs, Where should John go? (For would-be emigrant doctors), Views, and Briefing—a balanced mixture of science with practical professional matters.

It is sometimes argued that self-criticism by scientists in their journals may encourage the general public and lay press to criticize scientists unnecessarily. Some editors have therefore discouraged discussion of professional ethics, the environmental dangers of some kinds of experimentation, potential cruelty to animals in experiments, and even standards of scientific writing. But the answer to this is fairly obvious: the public will criticize science and scientists from time to time anyway, and if there is something to criticise it is better for scientists to put their own house in order first.

The recent rash of new journals on the philosophical, cultural and ethical implications of science, which Ingelfinger has commented on, perhaps reflects the failure of established journals to accept enough articles on these implications. The segregation of subjects like this into a sub-speciality may mean that fewer scientists than before will reflect on the *raison d'être* of their profession and its contribution to civilization. The blame for this will be laid at the door of shortsighted editors.

Among the many possible discussion and opinion-forming sections of journals, Letters to the editor, Editorials and Book reviews are the ones that appear most often.

**Letters to the Editor** : Many letters to editors are badly presented, in spite of being written with an eye to publication. Even if an assistant deals with the Letters section, the editor should read all the letters, either before or after the assistant has

worked on the selection to be published. Most journals that publish correspondence point out that the editor reserves the right to reject, shorten, excerpt or edit the letters for publication. Editing should, however, be restricted to removing intemperate statements or examples of bad taste. Spelling mistakes should be corrected but the grammar should not be changed unless the writer's point is unclear. Letters should be published as soon as possible after receipt and, except in rare cases, they should be signed. Readers, attacks on an editor's own editorials or on editorial policy should be printed whenever possible-either with a reply if a reasonable one can be given or an apology if one is needed.

The time to announce 'This correspondence is now closed' is when letters on a given topic begin to repeat points made earlier, or when the letters are from the same two or three correspondents. At this stage the writers who disagree can be left to carry on their correspondence privately.

Letters to the editor rarely need to be refereed. Any letters criticizing a previously published article should be shown to the author of the article, whose reply should preferably be published in the same issue as the critical letter.

**Editorials (leaders) and Anonymity** : Editorials, often called 'leaders' in British journals, are statements of point of view. They deal with one of three types of subject: a new research advance (perhaps underlining the importance of an article in the same issue or putting it into a broader context); a statement of position on some aspect of one of the scientific disciplines represented in the journal or on the interaction between science and society at large; or a discussion of the journal itself-its objectives and editorial policy.

Some journals never publish editorials or any kind, but even archival journals ought to explain their editorial policy at least occasionally, so that contributors, potential or actual, know where they stand. The guidelines for authors, if well constructed, state the purpose and scope of the journal and describe referring procedures and the criteria for selection of papers, but the purpose

and scope should not be static and any change in editorial policy should be brought to readers' notice in an editorial.

Editors who want to know whether readers think the purpose of their journals is being achieved can most easily find this out by writing appropriate editorials. Readers will certainly react and if their letters are published they will feel that they are influencing the direction a journal takes. Even the unpublished letters can give editors food for thought. The days of authoritarian journals with the attitude. 'The editor and the editorial board know best' are surely over.

Not all editorials are written by editors and not all editorials are signed. Is this anonymity justifiable? Shouldn't the authors be named, to make it clear that they are real people whose judgements may be fallible rather than superior beings making *ex cathedra* pronouncements? The standard answer to this question is that the editor takes responsibility for all editorials, whoever writes them, and takes the blame for any that seem unacceptable or inaccurate to readers. But this is carrying editorial responsibility too far. If the argument were extended to its logical conclusion, no papers in the journal would bear any authors' names, since the editor ultimately assumes responsibility for the papers too.

There are several better arguments in favour of anonymity, as pointed out in a recent anonymous editorial. One is that editorials are sometimes the work of several of the editorial staff, who could not sign *en masse*. Other editorials may be based on the advice of one or more experts who would not necessarily agree wholeheartedly with the interpretation—perhaps a political one—expressed in the final version. A third kind of editorial may have been provided by a well-informed expert but may need to be heavily rewritten before it can be printed. Or a prominent scientist may be unwilling to sign an editorial because the position it takes either compromises or preempts the stand of the writer's professional organization on that issue. Anonymity also gives younger or less well-known scientists an opportunity to speak freely without fear of being harmed in their careers or having their

views discounted because readers have not heard of the writer before.

Although signed editorials are to the preferred anonymity can therefore sometimes be tolerated. In addition it might improve the situation if a new distinction were to be drawn between leading articles and editorials in scientific journals leading articles by experts who are asked to comment on the scientific content and significance of work by other people should be signed, while editorials that are the work of editor is and/or their editorial staffs need not be signed. If the distinction proved difficult to make, editors could allow the outside consultants to decide whether they would sign their work.

Statements of opinion about or on behalf of the profession should usually, be signed, whether written by the editor or by an outside consultant, since the opinion may be against what most people in the profession believe, and an unsigned editorial may carry too much weight with the lay press, the public and too government. Similarly, in a society sponsored journal an anonymous editorial might be taken as reflecting the society' collective opinion of policy. Either a disclaimer should be included or the editorial should be signed.

Editorial comment on research articles in the same issue is particularly valuable a journal of wide scope whose readers may not immediately recognize the importance of every piece of work described or its potential application to them own or another field. To obtain expert comments which can be published at the same time as the article commented on, the editor should first telephone the potential writer to ask whether the leading article (or editorial) could be completed within, say, two weeks. A copy of the final manuscript of the research article can then be sent to the commentator, who may well have been one of the referees. Since it is usually considered an honour to be invited to contribute a leading article, most people will produce it in time. The leading article, could every be accelerated through the printing process to avoid any delay. Or the authors of the research papers may accept

a short delay if it means that their article receives greater prominence.

An interesting use of an editorial is to comment unfavourably on an article that the editor has nevertheless decided to publish. The *Lancet* of 17 September 1977 published an editorial on Bladder cancer and saccharin' which listed what the editor considered to be faults in the research design of an epidemiological study reported in the same issue. The editorial made clear the editor's reasons for accepting the article for publication despite its faults: rumours about the study's results were already circulating and were influencing public policy on whether saccharin should be banned, but since the design of the investigation was open to criticism the study, with its detailed description of the design, had not been accepted for publication elsewhere and could not be judged objectively. The authors agreed to this procedure and their reply to the editorial criticisms was published in a later issue. It would not be good policy to print many editorials of this kind but the example shows how effective it can be to throw away the editorial rule book. Editors should assess their work often, asking not 'Will this set an awkward precedent? But 'What, in this particular instance, will be most conducive to the public good?'

**Book Reviews :** Anonymous book reviews provoke the same objections as anonymous editorials. The answer is much the same, too; signed reviews are preferable from many points of view but anonymity allows people to write freely when they might not otherwise do so in reviewing books by their friends, enemies or colleagues. Editors who want to be flexible on this point could state that reviews will normally be signed but that the writers may remain anonymous if they insist.

Book reviews can be either descriptive or evaluative. Descriptive reviews, which merely recast the blurb and the list of contents, help to make a book's exigence known but do not help anyone to decide whether to buy it. All list of books Received is more useful than a collection of descriptive reviews, since many more books can be listed than can be reviewed.

Evaluative reviews are helpful to both readers and authors provided that the reviewers in fact discuss the books named: Some reviewers take advantage of their platform in the journal to publicize their own thoughts on the subjects covered, with hardly a mention of the books themselves. This essay type of review is encouraged in journals devoted to book reviews, such as the *American Sociological Review*, but is inappropriate in journals with short book review sections.

Guidelines and or review forms can be used to set the tone of the book review section and to discourage reviewers from writing essays instead of evaluating the books under review. The guidelines should state the word limit or range, the time allowed for writing the review, whether it will be signed (as discussed above), whether the reviewer will receive a fee, and what the review should ideally include. Good reviews state the contents of the book, convey its flavour, evaluate it critically, then 'stop' though 'depth and extent of coverage' might be substituted for 'flavour'.

Book reviewers should be as carefully selected as referees are but good reviewers are hard to find. 'The qualities that make for a good critical reviewer are to a large extent the same qualities that make for a good editor, or a valuable member of an editorial board, or a helpful dissertation adviser. Editors should impress on reviewers the necessity for speed, and should telephone beforehand to make sure that the reviewer can take on the work and write the review by the date required. The book review section might also be given preferential treatment, with accelerated production for all or most reviews.

Although reviewers are not usually responsible for the whole of the lag between publication of book and publication of a review, delay by reviewers is a major headache for editors as well as exasperating for authors and publishers. It is unfair to authors if reviews do not appear for months after publication, especially if the book is about a fast moving subject. Editors can compensate for this by listing 'Books received' as soon as they arrive, whether or not they are going to be sent out for review. Some editors print

lists of 'delinquent reviews'; this shows that the editor considered the books worth reviewing but was let down by reviewers.

In newspapers and magazines the apparent zero lag between publication date and review date is achieved for books of general interest by review copies being sent out before the official publication date. Even though publication dates are not usually set in the same way for most scientific books, and though their reviewers are rarely paid, the review lag for scientific books is disproportionately long; Chen found that among 3347 reviews published in 54 biomedical journals in 1970 the review lag ranged from 0-2 months to nine years, but the mean lag was about 10.4 months. In the two journals the *Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*) with the shortest review lags the average lag was 5.8 and 6.6 months, while in the two journals with the longest lags (*Acta Radiologica* and *Therapy, Physics, Biology*) the average lag was 42 months.

Editors who can find a way of shortening the lag for evaluative reviews to weeks instead of months and years will be rendering great service to librarians and potential readers as well as to authors and publishers. Many publishers would be happy to help editors by supplying advance information about books in press, or even by providing sets of proofs if reviewers agree to read material in this form. It is worth writing to the major publishers to enquire about this and to establish a convenient mechanism of receiving review copies immediately after publication.

Editors can exercise flexibility and flair over book reviews as well as over other features. One interesting 'review' published not long ago took the form of a long letter to the editor declining the invitation to write the review and stating the writer's lack of qualifications for doing so. But in his letter the writer threw such interetin light on the booking question that many readers must have rushed out to buy or borrow it.

Unsolicited book reviews should be considered on their merits. Editors who don't want to receive such reviews should say so in their guidelines for authors.



Book reviews, like letters to the editor, should be edited lightly, if at all. Errors of fact, spelling and grammar should be corrected. Vituperative attacks on authors or publisher should be softened into something more civilized and not open to a libel action. Negative reviews, however, need not be avoided: readers want to know what not to read as well as what to read or buy. Comments on the price are superfluous in a review: readers should be able to judge from a well-written evaluative review whether a book is worth the money. Suggestions to the publisher that the reviewer would prefer a paper-back, or that the book might have been cheaper if glossy paper had not been used, are also redundant: a paper-back is only cheap if there is a large market for the book and coated paper, which for a short run- book may both be significantly more expensive than matt paper, may be essential for good reproduction of the illustrations.

Journals with Book review sections should always have a Letters to the editor section, and the author (or others) should be allowed to set the record straight on facts about the book or to point out cases where the reviewer has misunderstood the purpose of the book or its intended audience. Attacks on the reviewer's evaluations are not, however, in order.

In the journal, each review should be headed with the full title of the book the name(s) of the author(s) or editor(s), date of publication, publisher's name and place of publication, name of series, number of pages, number of tables and illustrations, price, and sometimes other information such as the size of the pages or the name of a translator (see *Mantel*).

Book reviews are often badly indexed in the Contents lists of journal issues as well as in volume indexes. If there is space for all the books reviewed to be included in the Contents lists, the books and their authors should be given priority over the reviewers' names; if the reviewers' names can be included as well, so much the better. In the volume index, a list of book reviews is invaluable whether as a separate index or included in the subject index under 'Book reviews.' Reviews are then listed alphabetically under the

name of the first author of each book. The title and the date of publication should be given, and preferably the reviewer's name too, though this will appear in the author index. Editors should send two copies of every review printed in their journals to the publishers of the books reviewed. The copies should include the volume number, page number and date of the issues in which the reviews approach, as well as the journal's name.

*Society Business and Professional News* : Editors of society-sponsored journals may have to publish some or all of the following items of society business: presidential addresses (usually no editing allowed); abstracts or synopses of meetings (which should be edited, if only to show how abstracts of papers in the body of the journal should be presented); reports and resolutions from the society's general meetings; conference papers; and news and notes. If conferences have separate editors who suggest editorial procedures different from those usually applied to papers in the journal, the editor has to decide what the policy will be. If the conference papers are published in a separate issue with a guest editor, there may be delays and disagreement over copy-editing standards. For news and notes, editors must usually accept what their societies provide, editing only for grammar and technical points of style, but ensuring that the amount of material does not outweigh the scientific content of the journal.

A problem facing editors of some society-sponsored journals is that members may expect to have their papers published without any refereeing and even without review by the editor. This privilege is becoming less, common but older members of a few societies or national academies may still expect to benefit from out-dated rules. Editors should try to see that, when rules are revised, a procedure is provided by which the editor can appeal to an editorial committee if there is a dispute.

In both society-sponsored and commercial journals, especially weekly or monthly publications, a section on forthcoming meetings is useful to readers. This section usually needs accelerated production. It should include a note of the publication deadline for such announcements.

**Corrections** : From time to time, authors point out errors or commissions that they have noticed since their papers were typed or printed. It is more important to correct these mistakes for readers than to establish who was responsible for them. Corrections should be printed in type of normal size, with a heading clearly advertising their existence, and they should be listed as Corrections on the Contents page, preferably always in the same position and giving the full title of the article that is being corrected; corrections should also be listed in at least two places in the subject index of the volume. They should not be buried in an obscure place in the journal in the hope that nobody will notice that a mistake has been made; this practice goes against good scientific principles, though it is common in many leading journals.

This chapter has mentioned a few ways of handling some features in journals, but the best mix of articles and other items will always depend on the personality and ability of the editor and on the particular circumstances of the journal—the field(s) it covers, its readership, its state of financial health, the quality of its editorial board and referees. There are no blueprints for producing successful journals, and even if there were, editors would be right to ignore them and create journals out of their own imagination, intuition, good sense and knowledge of the field.

Some questions on a quite differing level still remain about editing. Will new technology, for example, help editors to cope with the more mundane problems of keeping their journals going in times of steeply rising costs? Or will that new technology instead destroy journals and books as we now know them?

## Proceeding Editing

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Conferences have a special part to play in the transfer of scientific information. Organizers and editors new to the work may also benefit from the advice of their predecessors on the organizing committees of conference series. This chapter deals with the questions: which conferences are worth publishing and how should they be published and edited?

The publication of conference proceedings is criticized on many grounds. The commonest objections are that 'routine publication... Clutters up the literature and overburdens library budgets', that published proceedings 'are not profitable to scientific endeavour', and that by the time they are published, many of the papers have already been printed with essentially identical data in academic journals as proper publications. Those that have not may have been disapproved by reviewers and editors. The symposia proceedings are not subject to review and there is no distinction between invited and proffered papers. Other objections are that proceedings volumes often sink into obscurity, are carelessly edited, and are published far too long after the conferences they record.

Decisions about whether to publish conferences are influenced

by pressures on and from the many conference-goers who are apparently obliged to present papers to earn their travel grants, by the overt or covert aims of organizers and sponsors, and by the opportunism of certain publishers who view conference-goers and libraries as captive markets. "The first kind of pressure often results in many mediocre papers being offered at conferences. To counteract this, in their circulars and invitations the organizers should point out to intending participants and to grant-giving bodies that all kinds of communication at the meeting—contributions to discussion as well as formal papers—are important in their own right. The other two kinds of influence—the ambitions of organizers and of publishers—tend to encourage the publication of mediocre volumes of proceedings. Obviously, some conferences can be transformed into admirable books, and many publishers serve science excellently (and with little profit) when they produce these books. Equally obviously, other proceedings should never have reached the printing presses, and there are publishers who are seduced by guaranteed sales rather than the prospect of a worthwhile product. But while, good sales figures are a legitimate goal for publishers, the organizers, sponsors and potential editors must remember their wider responsibilities to science when they assess whether proceedings are worth publishing. It is not a good idea for editors to lend their names to publishing projects over which they may not have, or do not wish to take, full editorial control.

### **Selection of Conferences**

Some clues about the content of conferences that succeed as books are provided by book reviewers. In a typical review the writer points out that although the material in the proceedings volume is available elsewhere, the juxtaposition of diverse, loosely connected topics is useful, particularly for someone trying to survey several fields of current interest quickly. I found the volume introduced me to interesting lines of work relevant to my own interests, and I suspect it will serve the same purpose for others. That, after all, is one of the things a good symposium should do.'

Another reviewer praises the clarity of the discussion sections and then says: 'At many meetings such discussion is more valuable than the formal presentations, for it brings out the points which the speaker may have passed over but which other participants do not follow; much of the disparity of research results between different centres can be resolved during such an interchange. As this review implies, the most important contribution from many smaller meetings is indeed publication of the discussions.

Organizers and editors can help to dispose of some of the objections to the publication of proceedings either by designing their conferences specifically for a well-defined readership or by considering carefully whether all or any of the work presented is worth publishing in collected form. If there is no editor on the organizing committee when (and if) publication is decided on, an experienced editor should be appointed as soon as possible after this decision is taken.

The criteria for publication of conference proceedings are, or should be, the same as for any other book namely that the work described is original, authoritative, up to date and readable, and that a need exists for the information offered. Not surprisingly, it is no easier to decide whether a genuine need exists for conference proceedings than it is for any other kind of book. The pressures mentioned earlier do nothing to smooth the decision-making path. One signpost may be found in the distinction between 'collegial' and 'a positional' conferences. Collegial conferences are those at which research findings are exchanged and their relation to other work is discussed. They are worth publishing if the subject and the size of the meeting are right. Even congresses with 1000 or more participants may be worth publishing in full when a field needs strengthening because it lacks funds or journals, or both. For large meetings of this kind, poor papers should be weeded out by a selection committee and/or refereed before publication. It is easier to convert medium-size conferences with 100-1000 participants into good books than it is to make successful books out of vast congresses, but in both cases there should be some

























- (2) A conference worth publishing is not necessarily worth publishing in full. Further, the papers need not always be collected in a book but might appear in a journal issue or supplement, or even be submitted separately to journals in the usual way.
- (3) Published proceedings should consist either of original papers, preferably referred, and similar to journal articles, or of papers written specifically for the conference, especially for the kind of meeting that allows plenty of time for discussion; both kinds of proceedings should be published as quickly as possible, and in a retrievable form.
- (4) A firm timetable for receipt of synopses and manuscripts must be drawn up.
- (5) Discussion should be carefully edited to make them useful, readable and retrievable.

## Reference Editing

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A unified system for bibliographical references is described. The suggestions, which are in the main compatible with ISO DIS 690, allow the name/date (Harvard), the numeric-alphabetic or the sequential numeric system to be used for references in scientific books and serials; an optional dual-access system is also outlined. The 'master typescript' system described allows numbers to be substituted for names/ dates in the text when a paper is submitted to a publication that uses a numeric system. In reference lists, depending on what the author's target publication requires, references must be arranged either alphabetically or sequentially, in the order of their citation in the text. In all lists, whether alphabetic or sequential, references should contain the same elements, arranged in the same order, as follows:

Able BC, Cain A D, Adam E, Eve A 1976 Bark thickness in apple trees. Tree J 12:90-99

Extra punctuation marks can be added if required. Authors may leave further capitalization and italicization to be marked by editors/ copy-editors. Titles of articles should be included; they can be easily deleted if the publication does not require them. Journal titles should be given either in full or abbreviated in accordance with the standards blamed in this document.

The suggestions made here form a two-part system dealing with the citation and arrangement of bibliographic references in scientific serials and monographs. The proposals are addressed to authors, typists, editors and copy-editors, and will also interest publishers and printers. The 'master typescript' method explained here can be easily adapted for publications using either the name/date or one of two main numeric systems for references (sequential-numeric and numeric-alphabetic). The standard layout suggested for references in reference lists can be used for all three systems. If there are differences between the suggestions in this document and an editor's 'Instructions to authors', the latter must take precedence in the final manuscript submitted.

The purpose of citations (in the text) and references (in the list) is the identification and retrieve of documents (usually an article or a monograph). The connection between citation and reference is made either by repetition of the author's name and the year of the publication cited, or by repetition of a reference of the author's name and the year of the publication cited, or by repetition of a reference number. The two most common systems that use numbers assign them either in the sequence in which the references appear in the text or by numbering references in an alphabetic list.

These suggestions are similar to the recommendations made in the draft International Standard (ISO DIS 690) on bibliographic references, except that in the system described here initials are used instead of fore names, punctuation marks are kept to a minimum, ISSNs and ISBN are not mentioned, and (for monographs) the publisher's name precedes the place of publication.

The theme of these suggestions is uniformity. They are put forward as a compromise between the best of the innumerable systems that at present take up so much time when manuscripts are being prepared for publication.

The master typescript method is based on two premises: first that it is much easier to convert the text from the name/date to one of the numeric systems than vice versa, and secondly that many authors use the name/date system in preparing the early drafts of

their papers. (Note: Authors who are sure that their papers will be accepted by a publication using a numeric system do not need to use the master typescript method but they should follow the suggestions made here in sections 3 and 4).

The principal features of these suggestions are:

- (1) a master typescript method is described that allows easy conversion of name/date citations to numeric citations;
- (2) reference lists should be arranged according to the system (numeric or alphabetic) required by the author's first target journal;
- (3) references should always be made up of the same elements, arranged in the same order;
- (4) references should be styled with a maximum of informational and should conform as closely as possible with the conventions of spelling and punctuation of ordinary text in the language concerned. However, for easier transformation between reference systems, punctuation is here kept to a minimum.
- (5) other than as shown in the examples, capitalization and italicization of elements in references need not be indicated by authors but may be left for editors or copy-editors to specify according to each publication's typographical style;
- (6) an optional dual-access system is described that not only provides readers with a bibliography but also allows them to refer back from the reference list to find where the reference is cited in the text, using the reference list as an author index.

If a master typescript is prepared according to these recommendations, the author can—with a minimum of effort—alter copies of the master so that they conform to the requirements of individual serials or books, as follows:

- (a) if the information contained in certain elements (e.g. titles of articles) that are listed here as standard parts of a reference is not wanted in a particular publication, the unwanted elements are deleted before the final typescript

is submitted. If punctuation additional to that recommended in this document is required by the publication, punctuation marks are added as necessary.

- (b) If the numeric-alphabetic system is required in the target publication, the list is numbered and numbers are substituted for the citations originally typed in parentheses in the text.
- (c) If the sequential-numeric system is required in the target publication, the list is rearranged/retyped in order of citation (in practice if the first journal to which an author submits a paper uses sequential numbering, the references in the list should be typed in the order of their appearance in the text). Name and date citations in the text are then changed to the relevant numbers.

## The Guidelines

**Citations in the Text** : In the master typescript, citations should be in the name/date forms.

Jack & Smith (1977) report...

or

... as was recently reported (Jack & Smith 1977, Braun et al 1978)

If the target publication uses a numeric system, several spaces should be left after each citation in the text.

After conversion to a numeric system (1.5), names of cited authors will appear in the text only if they were originally cited outside parentheses:

Jack & Smith (1977) report that...

Becomes

Jack & Smith (22) report that ...

But

as was recently reported (Jack & Smith 1977)

becomes

as was recently reported (22).

- For citations in the text that refer to three or more authors, the form Brown et al. should be used every time such citations are made, including the first.
- If citations refer to specific pages in books or in lengthy journal articles, those page numbers belong with the citations in the text, not in the reference list, and may be placed after the date. Reading is facilitated if the year or reference number is separated from the page number by adequate punctuation:

(Smith 1977 p 302), or (Smith 1977: p 302).

In a numeric system this would become:

(22:p 302) or (ref. 22:p 302)

Alternatively (and perhaps preferable where superior numbers are used), a new number may be assigned each time a different page of the same book or article is cited in the text; each such reference in the list then gives the specific page number as well as the other elements of the reference.

- Citations referring to communications which cannot be retrieved by readers do not belong in the reference list. If included at all, such communications should be described in the text as 'unpublished work' (not as 'in preparation') or as a 'personal communication' (not as a 'private communication') and the source should be included:

... as was found recently ( J Smith, 1977, personal communication). or (for a meeting without published proceedings):

This project has produced significant results (M. Brown, unpublished paper 3rd Congr Psycho Eng, 25 November 1977).

- If a numeric system is required in the publication, appropriate numbers are substituted for the name/date citations in the text of the master typescript.
- Where names/dates are used in the text, and if it is

desirable for readers to be able to refer back from the reference list to the text, a dual-access system (About 1974) may be used. In this system, numbers are placed between names and dates in the text, with the numbers running consecutively through the text (as in the sequential-numeric system, but with each citations being assigned a new number, however many times a reference may be cited in the text):

Jack & Smith' (1977) report...

or

... as already described (Jack & Smith 1977)

These numbers are then placed in parentheses at the end of each reference in the reference list in the way.

**Reference Lists :** Alphabetic lists. For Publications requiring alphabetic reference lists, entries should be arranged in strict alphabetic order, unless there are several citations of articles/monographs by three or more different authors with the same first author. References of this latter kind, where 'Brown et al' (for example) is followed by several dates in the text, should be arranged chronologically in the list, regardless of the number (above two) of authors and regardless of the alphabetical order of the names of authors other than the first (since the names of the other authors are not known when the text is being read). References arranged in this alphabetic-chronological way should be placed after papers by Brown or by Brown & X, as shown.

- Arrangement of entries referring to the same -first author (IUB-CEBJ 1973):

Citation in the Reference list

Brown & Green (1977) Brown A 1977

Brown & Green (1976) Brown, A, Green B 1976...

Brown & White (1975) Brown A, White C 1975...

Brown et al (1974) Brown A, White C, Green B 1974

Brown et al (1975) Brown A, Black D, White C, Green B 75

Brown et al (1976)	Brown A, Black D, Green B 1976
Brown et al (1977a)	Brown A, White C, Green B 1977a Why wheels turn. Gen Eng 7:59—65
Brown et al (1977b)	Brown A, Green B, White C 1977b How wheels turn. Gen Eng. 8:10-15

- Authors' surnames should be given and alphabetized exactly as spelt, with prefixes, Mc and M' should not be alphabetized as Mac. Names beginning with prepositions such as de, De, van von, O', etc. should be alphabetized under the first letter of the prefix. The term Fr or roman numerals may be added after initials. The important principle is conformity between the citation in the text and the entry in the reference list.
- Terms such as 'ibid.', 'idem', 'op.cit.' and 'loc.it.' should never be substituted for complete references in reference lists. In the text, if used at all, they should be used sparingly and with great caution. Later changes in the text can make such references misleading.
- If the numeric-alphabetic system is required, the alphabetically arranged references are first numbered: Adam E 1976... Adamson J 1975... The numbers are then substituted for the name/date citations in the text.
- If the dual-access system described in 1.6 is used, the numbers from the text are inserted in parentheses at the end of each reference in the reference list:

Jack V F, Smith J 1977 Structure of seeds of *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill. J Bot 35:290-295 (1,5,149)

- Sequential-numeric lists
- If the sequential-numeric system is required, the name/date text citations are numbered sequentially in the order of citation in the text; the references in the list are numbered accordingly and the list is arranged so that the entries are in numerical order, regardless of which letter of the alphabet the (first) author's name starts with. When a



reference is cited more than once in the sequential system, either (a) the reference may retain the same number, thus breaking with the strict sequential principle, or (b) it may appear as many times in the list as it is cited in the text, each time numbered according to the sequence of citation. Before conversion or preparation of the typescript the author must consult the instructions to authors of the target publication to see how it handles multiple citation of a single reference.

**References to Articles in Serials :** References to articles in serials should take the following forms:

Jack V F 1977 The seeds of *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill. J Bot 35: 257-261

Abel B C, Cain A D, Adam E, Eve A 1976 bark thickness in apple trees Tree J 12:90-99

- This system uses the minimum punctuation necessary to present the information clearly. It also takes into consideration that punctuation marks can be added easily if the journal's style so requires, and that words and characters can be deleted more easily than they can be added. The references include the following features:

Surnames and initials of all authors are inverted.

The initials are spaced to permit punctuation if required. A comma appears between the initials of one author and the surname of the next author.

No ampersand or 'and' is needed between authors' names but space should be left for its subsequent insertion, if required.

A stop is placed only at the end of titles of articles.

No elements are underlined.

- The date of publication is placed immediately after the authors' names. These two pieces of information are the most valuable in identifying or appraising a reference and

are the key elements in locating a reference in a reference list when name/date citations are used.

- Titles of articles in serials should be given, as many readers consider this to be essential information. However, if the first target publication will not print them, the articles titles can easily be deleted or omitted.
- Serial titles should either be given in full, or be abbreviated in accordance with ISO 833, ANSI Z39.5, 1969), and BS4148 (1970, 1975) (these standards are compatible with each other) or with list (such as Index Medicus, BIOSIS List of Serials, etc.) based on the principles set out in those standards. One-word titles are never abbreviated.
- First and last pages of articles in serials and chapters in monographs should be given. This information tells readers the length of the article, i.e. whether it is a short note or letter or a full-length paper, and indicates how much photocopy is likely to cost.
- The issue number of a serial is redundant information unless each issue is paged separately; if issues are paged separately, the issue numbers should be inserted (in parentheses) immediately after the volume number:

12. Jack V F 1967 Trees. Sci Am 17(3):38-47

For newspapers or popular weeklies the full date of the issue may be given instead of the volume number

Smith A 1974 Creating wealth. Times (Lond) 25 November 3

**References to Monographs** : References to monograph should take the following basic forms:

- Monographs by one or more authors, without an editor:  
Jack V F 1977 Monograph of Stellaris media (L.) Vill. Pergamon, Oxford  
Zorba A, Quinn A 1976 Bone structure of early Cretans' 3rd edn. Elsevier/Excerpta Medica/North-Holland, Amsterdam
- Chapters or sections of edited monographs:

Jack V F 1977 Seeds of *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill. In: Smith J (ed) *Anatomy of Caryophyllaceae*. Springer, Berlin, p 250-280

or (preferred if there are references to several contributors to the same book):

Jack V F 1977 Seeds of *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill. In: Smith (1977) p. 250-280

Smith J (ed) 1977 *Anatomy of Caryophyllaceae*, Springer, Berlin

- Chapters in edited monographs forming apart of a series:  
Bull F, Friend A 1975 Jumping over the moon In: Jones M, Lloyd P (eds) *Space travel*. Galaxy Press, Houston (Soc Space Sci Symp 21) vol. 3:1-24
- The references is given in this chapter include the following features:

Name(s) and initials of editor(s) are given as shown above. 'Editor', 'editors', and 'edition', may be abbreviated as 'ed', 'eds', and 'edn', respectively.

A stop is placed at the end of the chapter titles.

The publisher's name, shortened if necessary, is placed before the place of publication. For publishers operating in several places, it is sufficient to given the name of the first place listed on the title page of the cited book as the publisher's address

Page numbers or volume and page numbers referred to, are placed after the place of publication.

No full stops used at the end of the entries.

No elements are underlined.

**References** : Abbott K M 1974 *References-a new system* used by CSIR. *Scientiae* 15:27-28. ANSI Z39.5 1969 *Abbreviation of titles for periodicals*, American National Standards Institute, New York

BIOSIS list of serials. BIOSIS/Biological Abstracts, Philadelphia

BS 4148 1970 *The abbreviation of titles of periodicals*. Part 1. Principles. British standards Institution, London

BS 4148 1975 the abbreviation of titles of periodicals. Part 2. Word abbreviation list. British Standards Institution, London

ELSE Working Group 1977 Recommendations on references. Earth Life Sci Ed 5:7-8

Index Medicus. US Dept of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health

Service, National Institutes of Health, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC

ISO DIS 690 Bibliographic references to monographs and serials

ISO 833 Documentation-International list of periodicals title word abbreviations

IUB-CEBJ 1973 The citation of bibliographic references in biochemical journals. Recommendations (1971). Biochem J 135:1-3 [and elsewhere]

This document evolved from discussions before, during and after an ELSE-Ciba Foundation Workshop on the consolidation and Adoption of a Rational System for References, held at the Ciba Foundation, London, on 25 November 1977. The Workshop, funded largely by the Ciba Foundation, was held in order that the ELSE Working Group's recommendations on references (1977) and the ensuing discussions and attempts at formulating generally acceptable guidelines could be discussed by a wider group. The participants in the Workshop represented the earth sciences, life sciences, chemistry and biochemistry, physics and engineering.

### **Advertisement Code**

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For disciplines other than medicine this code could be modified as necessary.

- The publication of advertisements has become a recognized function of medical journals, but any advertisement may be refused without explanation.

- The advertisements in a journal, like the text, are a source of information for readers. This information is provided by the advertiser, who is responsible for its accuracy; but care should be taken that no advertisement contravenes the principles set out below.
- Advertisements should not imply or promise benefit which, after due consideration and, if necessary, consultation with experts, appears highly improbable. Claim should be supported by trustworthy evidence.
- No therapeutic product should be advertised unless its essential constituents and their quantity in each dose, are disclosed to the editor of the journal. Methods of manufacture need not be disclosed.
- Advertisements should not impugn the dignity of the medical profession or offend against good taste or recognized standards of medical practice.
- Advertisements of drugs or appliances should not contain testimonials, anonymous or otherwise. This does not exclude dated references to reputable medical journals, but such advertisements must not include misleading quotations from articles.
- Advertisements of books may contain quoted matter from reviews so long as a dated reference to the review is given, but not the name of the reviewer.
- Opinions expressed by contributors to medical journals must not be quoted in a way that makes them look like editorial opinions.
- The distinction between the advertisement columns and the text should be kept so clear that no ordinary reader can mistake one for the other.
- Publication of an advertisement means that in the Editor's judgement it does not contain misleading statements: but such publication does not necessarily mean that the journal endorses the claims made, and such endorsement must not be implied in advertisements of the same product in the lay press.

- medical journals should not accept advertisements of products that are improperly advertised in the pay press or elsewhere.
- Advertisements should be considered on their own merits. An advertisement that is otherwise acceptable is not necessarily made unacceptable by the fact that the advertiser is putting forward improper claims for other products.
- disparaging references: no advertisement should be published which appears to bring discredit on the products of other manufacturers.

## **Book Reviews**

Length and form of review: 700-1000 words, typed double-spaced starting on the attached page.

Date by which review should be sent in: [date within two/ four weeks of book being posted to reviewer]. If for any reason you cannot review the book by this date, please telephone the book review editor as soon as possible.

Fee: the editor regrets that no fee is payable for book reviews; the review copy, however, remains your property.

Anonymity: reviews in the journal are normally signed. If you have a particular reason of remaining anonymous, please discuss this with the book review editor; if he agrees to anonymity, please mark your review accordingly.

Please note that the journal requires fair and balanced reviews. Even if your review is a negative one, please use temperate language in your evaluation of the arguments in the book and avoid attacking the authors/editors personally. There is no need to comment on the price of the book unless it is outstandingly expensive (or cheap): readers can judge for themselves, with the help of your evaluation, whether a book is worth what the publisher is charging for it. Paper-backs are not in themselves cheaper than hardbacks; when they cost less than a hardback book of the same length it is

only because the publisher expects to sell a very large number of copies and can price the paper-back accordingly.

In your review, please:

- Describe the contents briefly.
- Indicate the intended readership.
- Evaluate the book first on its own terms, saying how well you think the authors/editors have achieved their stated aims. You may then want to criticise those aims and the way the subject has been handled, taking into account the following questions (where relevant), amongst others that may occur to you:

Is the material well selected and well organized?

Are the arguments clear and logically correct?

Are the statements of fact accurate?

Are the conclusions convincing, original and important for the discipline as a whole, or for the special topic of the book?

Where experimental work is discussed, is the experimental design satisfactory?

Is the style clear, concise and readable?

- Comment briefly on any or all of the following:
  - the general appearance of the book,
  - the legibility of the typeface,
  - the incidence of typographical errors,
  - the clarity of the illustrations,
  - the accuracy, up-to-dateness and coverage of the reference and the usefulness of the index (if there is one).
- Please return the review (which should include your name and address).

## Reporting to Editing

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Very good reporters almost always get offers to become editors, sometimes early in their careers. Some turn them down because they would rather stay in the front lines with their typewriters. This is for the reporter who didn't turn down the offer, or won't turn it down, when it comes. It reviews the editor's problems of designing and managing investigative reporting. It also should help the beginning investigative reporter understand the problems of the man he's working for.

### Investigative Programme

To develop an investigative program, the newspaper editor should consider adopting the following plan. It consists of nine steps:

1. Decide that you want an investigative tone in the local news report and that you are willing to accept the pressures this decision implies.
2. Carefully marshal the reasons for your decision and discuss them with the publisher, telling him you won't raise the budget or hire new people just yet.
3. Convey your investigative attitude to sub-editors and



reporters. Reinforce it by asking challenging questions and assigning reporters to make aggressive follow-ups on stories that have been treated superficially. Make it concrete by asking reporters and editors for lists of investigative ideas. Study, screen, and merge these ideas into a few attractive, feasible story ideas, then settle on one.

4. Pick the staff member who shows the best combination of investigative attributes, give him at least a week to study the feasibility of the story before reporting back directly to you.
5. If the reporter's study confirms the feasibility of the project, clear him of other duties so he can begin basic research. Set up a schedule of meetings, at least one a week, to review progress and discuss problems.
6. When the reporter believes he is ready for the key interview, evaluate his research and discuss the key interview plan with him.
7. After the interview, block out the time to do a "feet up" editing job, the kind Neale, Copple describes in *Depth Reporting*. This editing entails a single, clear-cut sentence of your purpose and thesis, a background to help the reader understand the circumstances surrounding the story, and interpretation. Interpretation is used here as a super definition of the why of the investigation. And the details of the investigation, the facts beneath the surface, and fitting the story into the reader's world. Make your hypothesis work or knock it down.
8. After you are sure the story is solid, let the publisher know it is coming. Be prepared to argue for it but don't try to slip by him if he is not used to high-risk, hard-nosed reporting. If he is not prepared for strong public reaction, it could cost you and the reporter your jobs.
9. A week after the story has run, get the staff together and discuss the story's impact. The way in which individuals respond will help identify other investigative reporting prospects on the staff. The meeting will also help reinforce

in staff members; minds your own commitment to quality journalism. Such commitment is a sine qua non for further development.

Of course, the whole project may blow up in your face at appoint from Step 2 to Step 9. If it does, you will have to decide what to do about it. You have to make things happen. You can't be half-hearted. If, for example you run a story about shady retailing practices but delete the names of offending stores, the word will spread quickly. "If there's obvious lack of feeling for a subject by an editor," says Al Delugach, "it's going to be communicated by an attitude, even unspoken, to a reporter. The guidance is negative."

Conversely, your direct expressive of interest motivation, support and counsel for good and feasible projects will stimulate at first a nervous trickle, then a steady stream of ideas-too many, in fact. Readers will be phoning in tips or walking in with inconclusive documents and fascinating but unprovable their and ideas. Reporters will be baying for scalps Than's when your editing judgement will be put to its severest test. You have to keep on top.

**Picking the Players:** The first rule to honour in keeping on top is to pick good people. My first piece of advice is simple: don't hire an investigative reporter from out to own. Why?

- \* Established, responsible investigative reporters are very expensive, Until your paper has a track record-at least a couple of years of persistent performance against tough opposition-you will have a hard time hiring the sectioned investigator. The experienced ones are wise, indeed cynical, about pioneering their craft for a paper whose editor and publisher have not proved their commitment.
- \* Some self-styled investigative reporters float from city to city, looking for chances to collect scalps mid prizes without accepting responsibility. One of these may blow your way and knock over the police chief in six weeks. But he ray also skimp on research, hang it all on "confidential sources"and leave your holding a court summons.
- \* Even if you find a diamond in the rough, he'll take several months to get the feel of your town, its local power structure

and political scene, Unless you and the publisher are prepared to wait. You may be disappointed. My second piece of advice, therefore, is equally simple: pick people on your own staff. Either that or size up new recruits who seem to have investigative potential. Here are the qualitative to look for in a reported who has investigative possibilities:

**Self-discipline** : Whether he works on a team or alone, the best reporter, keeps himself under control. He does not act hastily. He things constantly aid analytically.

**Mental Toughness** : He has the ability to stand up under fire, to outstare, outtalk, and outthink people who try to foil him. It is the quality of being decisive. It is the kind of determination that produces results. It is difficult to assess this quality in an interview: performance is the best measure.

**Persistence** : Similar to mental toughness, persistence implies a sort of Oriental patience. When direct tactics cannot be applied, persistence will pay off. When the front door is closed, the investigator walks around the block and finds the landlord, the delivery man, or a telephone mechanic to help him get to the people inside.

**Deferred Gratification** : The investigative reporter does not live for tomorrow's by-line. He enjoys the business of dogged pursuit, of careful deduction, of patient construction of a framework of facts. He doesn't expect a by-line until he has a story that he can stand behind, word for word. Then, of course, he wants it very much.

**Single-mindedness** : As Ben Bradlee says, "It was not accident that both Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were young and divorced... nobody clutching them at home, nobody saying, 'Let's slip away for a long weekend,' "Bradlee was talking about the willingness" "to put in the time, to invest a sheer godawful number of hours' once an investigation gets under way.

**Personal Integrity** : This quality connotes a devotion to truth. It also implies an integration of self, a wholeness of personality that enables the reporter to withstand personal abuse, uncertainty, frustration, jealousy, backbiting, loneliness.

***A Board and Open-mind*** : Two traits are paramount in the investigative reporter: he abides rigidity of ideology or investigative theory, and he looks far and wide for patterns. He sees both the forest and the trees, and he then picks out which trees have been planted in rows and which have sprung up from windblown seeds. The true professional also talks openly about his work. He is willing to defend it against criticism is not afraid to take a problem to his editor, is not crushed when the editor makes a considered and well-articulated no-go decision.

***Independence of Thought*** : This quality comes as standard equipment with any model of investigative reporter, new or used, It is his most valuable tool. He is not awed by the folklore of journalism. He does not believe "you can't touch that story." He does not believe the best way to do some thing is "the way we've always done it." He examine subjects an institutions with fresh vigour.

***A Sense of Outrage*** : This term is Les Whitten's and it means about the same thing as Bill Lambert's "low threshold of indentation." It is an essentially humanist orientation, most often manifested as a desire to defend the little guy against the big guy. Only a shade or a degree away from obsession or cant. 'Tbis attribute can easily turn into a pursuit of devil theories, blinding its advocate to plausible explanations. But to some degree, it is present in virtually every investigator. It is the vision that enables him to see that the king is naked.

***Competency in Writing*** : The nature of investigative writing sometimes makes it less exciting than a dramatic rescue story. But you must look foot a clear writer, one who puts together a well-structured story. Read sample of his writing and check with his last editor to see if the work was his own or needed extensive rewriting. Find out whether he writes easily and automatically, or slowly and laboriously. Is he able to accept criticism? Does an experienced editor on the staff have time to work over his writing.

Evaluate all these factors. Then pick a person who averages four on a five point scale on all traits.

***Coaching the Individual*** : Training your own investigative

people entails headaches, false starts, and frustrations. A reporter needs lots of testing before he can be turned loose. He needs to develop judgement and poise. If he can spell and write declarative sentences—and shows a lot of ambition—hire him and send him to the police station. Dave Nimmer, ex-investigator turned managing editor of the Minneapolis *tar*, put it this way: “If a guy hadn’t covered cops, then I don’t believe he had his as kicked around enough to develop the tough mindedness for investigative reporting.”

The police station and the editor can’t carry the burden of training alone. Fledgling investigators can benefit as well from seminars and academic training, though these should not substitute for practical experience. The American Press Institute in Reston Va., schedules two week seminars for investigative reporters. These are intensive experiences with lecturers recruited not only from the top ranks of the Washington and New York press corps, but also from among editors and reporters on newspapers of all sizes.

Most major schools of journalism offer courses that immerse advanced students in investigative concepts and techniques. Some of the best programs are at American University, Ohio State, Northwestern, and Stanford.

*Coaching the Team* : The outstanding journalist seems to get himself trained—and to get stories by flashes of genius. He often substitutes intuition about a source’s reliability for some of the drudgery of by building a massive documentary case. But for most mortals—reporters and editors alike tackling a large institutional or system story in pairs or teams is more practical and efficient. Teaming helps encourage the flow of ideas; teammates check each other and increase the effectiveness of key interviews. A team following a good plan can be far more productive than two journeymen working separately on day-to-day assignments from a city editor.

Jim Steele and his partner Donald Barlett are Exhibit A in support of the team idea. In six years they won fourteen national reporting awards. Such a success rate is reason enough to consider the advantages of team reporting.

**The Permanent Team** : Permanent teams have been highly successful not only for the Philadelphia Inquirer, but also for Newsday (the modern pioneer in teaming), the Chicago Tribune, and the Boston Globe. Their teams range from two to six persons, occasionally supplemented by others for specific projects. The goal of each team is to conceive and develop original investigative stories. Team members took for stories no one else has done, ideally for the story none else has even thought of. Although some teams—notably those of Newsday and the Tribune—aim for slow, planned turnover, all lean toward synergistic personal relationships with a high degree of permanence. The advantages of the permanent team are worth analysing:

**Volume** : Team members become familiar with a wide variety of reference works, basic and special sources of documents, and bureaucracies. They can move on several lines of inquiry simultaneously rather than sequentially, a fact that can be crucial in probing a changing, developing situation. The lone reporter may be simply outpaced by events. Changes in policy, elections, personnel turnover, death or transfer of key persons, loss of sources—these may cloud or negate the meaning of facts gathered nine of ten months (or two years) earlier. Most teams plan their projects to last no more than two or three months from conception to publication.

## The Success

**Success Rates** : Largely because they are more thorough, team projects generally produce greater public impact—changes in laws or policies, rises or falls of businesses or government agencies.

**Breadth of Contacts** : Members of permanent teams usually have had experience on two half a dozen beats, and they are assiduous about keeping up those contacts. On a given project, a team may split tasks on the basis of members' back rounds. Or, as Bill Lambert points out, a team can merge information from individual members sources and effectively conceal the origin of key leads. Thus a team merely has to generate and develop as many new sources on a project as does an individual reporter.

**Synergism** : The effect of three or four minds analyzing a

problem is more than the sum of the parts. At times, the effect seems most exponential. It can produce unconventional ways of viewing a set of facts, of putting together observations.

**Interviewing :** When a key interview comes up, the solo reporter must choose between going it alone or briefing another reporter to accompany him. But the team member already has one or more fully briefed veterans working with him. They can concentrate on scripting the interview. On planning roles and tactics, rather than each worrying about whether the other understands the problem. And in the critical phase after key interviews, the team can produce a complete series or story-and side bars, promptly. This speed of production minimizes the risk of a leak to the opposition or a counter-attack by the target.

**Continuity and Momentum :** Perhaps the major advantage of the permanent team is that it permits one project to follow another quickly without cumbersome phases of slowdown and start-up. Sometimes base-building for a long-term project may begin while a current project is being wrapped up. The Tribune's great vote-fraud effort of 1972, for instance, called for nearly a year of inside work by task-force member William Mullen in the election commissioner's office. While Mullen was occupied there, task force leader George Bliss and others were carrying out a highly successful nursing-home investigation.

**Self-checking :** The best reporter, trying to write a five-part series from 200 pages of notes, a 50-page chronology, 165 index cards and two congressional committee reports, must worry about errors of memory and understanding. If team members check each other's daily notes and story drafts, the risk of error is sharply reduced.

**Self-regulation :** At the end of a long, hard job, even good reporters can fall into devil theories or impute evil motives to characters who may only be incompetent or stupid. The presence of one to three colleagues, each presumably a strong and independent thinker, reduces this risk of lost perspective.

**Simpler Management :** An experienced team can be easier to supervise than a number of individuals. The wise editor holds

the team leaders accountable. He spends a good deal of time with the leader but finds this much easier than having to resolve the individual problems and conflicting needs of three or four persons.

**Training :** About once a year, a new member is taken aboard the Chicago Tribune Task Force, while one veteran returns to general assignments or a beat. This rotation reduces jealousy among other staff members. It also helps to test and train.

**Team Problems :** But team operation, like any other, is not without costs and problems. Because the team works with more direction and fewer burdens than most reporters, as Barlett notes, its salaries may be more efficiently spent, but all investigative work costs money. Further, security is harder to achieve when five people (including the line editor) know something than when a single reporter knows it.

To be able to carry on several lines of inquiry at once is an advantage-but not if gaps are being left or if the same trail is being crossed several times. These errors and omissions sometimes occur in a team effort. The team leader must ensure that every member of the team knows, day by day, what others have found out. Each team member must not only write his own daily memo, but also read the notes of his colleagues. Bob Greene is wont to bring in a pot of coffee laced with Scotch and pass it around at the end of a day. Says Greene: 'We talk about what we have found out. One says, 'I think the next person I should go to is this.. We work it out that night, approximately what we're going to do the next day.'" Then, as described in Greene reads all the memos and "breaks" them for duplicating and distribution the next day.

The ego and the navel are also matters to reckon with in team efforts. The stereotypical investigative reporter has a strong ego. He may refuse to let others share his prized sources. He may complain that "nobody else does any work." If a person with an excessive ego turns up on a team, he will upset his colleagues and will himself operate at less than maximum capacity. The risk of passing into a contemplation of the level is greatest in a two-person team hidden away in a private office. If two successive projects fall short of expectations, the publisher starts asking what



return is coming from that \$50,000 line in the budget, and the team may indulge in excessive caution, restudy of procedures, reorganization of files, self-criticism—anything other than tackling a new project aggressively. David Nimmer remarks: “They had better report to somebody [an editor] every day, just for their own benefit. If they re out chasing butterflies, it’s very easy to get down on themselves. They’ve got to feel part of a newsroom.”

If, on the other hand, the team starts winning prizes—especially if it achieves results against great odds—an aura of mysticism may arise around its members. The very good ones can handle it. But some are never the same. Some become sticklers. Because methodology paid off they become infatuated with it. They spend time drawing plans and writing daily memos to themselves and as a result fall behind in the real work. Others get snooty. The victims of snootiness spend much time lecturing about journalism; they may even write books. They don’t want to move on a story unless the work plan has been screened by the Pulitzer Prize advisory committee. Such case are sometimes cured by enchanting the classic definition of a courageous managing editor: he’s the one who fired a Pulitzer winner.

And reporters not on the team can, of course, become jealous. They can refuse to pass along tips and ignore tips given them by team members. They complain about their own work loads and resent the time investigator spend reading books, encyclopaedias, and magazines.

The good editor—the coach—has to manage things to minimize the problems and maintain the advantages of the team.

**Ad hoc Team :** The temporary team put together for a specific story is even more work for the editor than a permanent team. It can, nonetheless, produce spectacular results. After the project is finished, team members return to their beats. The ad hoc team might include one expert and a few specialists picked to supplement his skills and knowledge. Or it might include several experts who don’t need the help of specialists. One reason it worked so well is that we had used ad hoc teams on at least five major stories in the three previous years (two won national awards).

With a couple of notable exceptions, the strengths of an ad hoc team are the same as those of a permanent one. They can handle about the same research volume, bring in a breadth of contacts, react synergistically. Train the new member, and check each other. If anything, ad hoc teams are more conservative than permanent ones—more inclined to discuss difficult questions at length and less inclined to take chances. Elitism is also less of a problem because team members know they are going back to other tasks when the project is done. The cost per project is about the same as for a permanent team; however rather than four or five major projects a year, the ad hoc concept envisages only one or two, so the annual cost for this type of teaming is usually lower.

But three strengths of the permanent learn-simpler management because of a strong team leader, standard writing procedures for keeping daily reports and producing final drafts, and especially continuity and momentum are lost with an ad hoc team. The permanent team practically runs on its own. The editor has to intervene more with the ad hoc team. With little operating continuity, he must take special pains to see that the team is protected from other assignments, that the schedule is followed, that the daily reports are written, that the project files are maintained. The editor has to assign writing-duties to the team, explain the general approach, then mediate disagreements between reporters, such as an argument about turning a sideboard into a major story. Instead of having reporters continually defining new ideas and exploring feasibility, the editor finds the burden now falls on him. When he assigns feasibility studies, he finds they must be sandwiched into other routines. When a report comes back, the editor may have to make an undersirably quick judgement on a half-developed idea. And when he does decide to form a new team, he must shuffle beats, brief team members, set up a schedule of progress conferences, and arrange new file facilities.

There is also the greater danger of leaks. Especially if the effort drags on for months and several people pop into and out of it, word of the project will get on the grapevine. Less experienced reporters tend to be less scrupulous about keeping their files—and their Mouths locked. So security is also a problem with the ad hoc team.

What is less of a danger, however are ego trips. They are less of a problem than on a permanent team. The editor, though, must make sure the work is properly apportioned and that people who do the routine records work and peripheral interviews get appropriate credit.

The ad hoc team, then, represents the editor's conscious trade off of continuity and momentum for a more tightly controlled budget. It is an effective check, certainly, on "head hunting" or make-work by irresponsible persons, but it can also become a damper on reporters' motivation.

*Single Ace* : When you have a Seymour Hersh, a Nick Gage, a Gene Cunningham—or a staff of Stanley Penns and Jonathan Kwitnys—you are a better off to leave them alone, asking only that they talk once or twice a week with a senior editor. Such persons develop their own working styles, their own solid sources. Though they may appear to operate instinctively, they work efficiently. They keep their own files. They know most of the standard hustles and games people play, so they know where to look for the chinks in the system. They combine indignation, logical judgement personal strength, and physical stamina. They have the peculiar self-motivation that management can rarely improve on and can indeed stifle with too many restrictions. Their most common problem is a occasional fit of cynicism or gloom.

Although his salary and expenses may seem high, the solo performer can be very cost-efficient. The editor must develop, with his business manager, a pay policy that permits him to work the hours he feels necessary. Putting the reporter on fixed salary-adjusted for expected extra effort-is one practical approach. If he produces as many as three of four major stories or series a year-stories that build the paper's credibility and cause other good things to happen he is a bargain. He will also spin of scores of tips and ideas for other staff members and will usually motivate them to do better day-to-day reporting. He may arouse jealousy among the time-services, but the editor has an easy response to those people: "You get the same results, friend, and you can have the same deal."

The strongest reason for finding your own ace is to avoid the

danger of playing safe. An editor has plenty of controls tilting him toward the status quo: his publisher, his elite friends, his conservative staff members. The law, the traditions and codes of professional associations. If he wants his newspaper to do its public duty, he should always find room for one or two iconoclasts on the staff.

**Editing the Players :** If there ever was a time for feet-up editing, it is when the investigative reporter's first draft arrives. Investigative editing calls for the same kind of sleuthing as investigative reporting. The editor should take the draft into his office, shut off his phone calls and read it through several times. He not only has thousands of his budget dollars in the piece, he had the newspaper's reputation for accuracy, honesty, and fairness on the line. Although the reporter is willing to stand behind every word, the editor is the one who will be called to account for whatever recriminations ensue. Therefore, the editor should read that story through not once or twice, but six times. Six times? Yes. And each of those times, he examines the story from a different point of view, as we shall see.

First reading. Is the thesis proved? Is it clearly stated and is there enough documented, attributable evidence so that a reasonable reader may understand the conclusions? If not, make notes about what is missing and go on to the next reading.

Second reading. Is the thesis important? Will a significant number of readers see it as important? In short, who will give a damn?

Third reading. Does the story flow? Does it move in a continuous logical line? Or does it pause frequently to branch off into details explanation of some legal point or translation of bureaucratic or technical jargon?

Fourth reading. How can it be trimmed? A story in which the reporter has invested weeks or months will probably be laden with detail, excessive restatement, tedious qualification, and unnecessary attribution. It may help to pencil an Outline of the story as written, identifying the essential points so you can decide how much support each point needs. If one sharp quote captures

a key thought, are three reinforcing quotes needed? If three sets of records support a contention, is it necessary to detail all three, or will a single sentence ("City purchase records confirmed the-transaction") be enough? Draw a line or put a light X beside each possible cut or computation. Try to arrive at a balance between enlightenment and boredom. You want to get the story told quickly with strong, clear words. This is the time, for example, to strip out quotes that simply make an interviewee look silly without contributing information about his motives.

Fifth reading. After the cuts and adjustments, will the story read? Will making a side bar out of the fifth and sixth paragraphs make mysterious gibberish out of everything after the sixteenth paragraph? This is simply standard editing "to conform," calls for special care in a long, complex piece.

Sixth reading. Now it is time, to test the reporter. If he is a pro, he can stand it. If he cannot, you would rather know now than after the story is printed. Put yourself in the position of the subject of the key interview-or his attorney. Write down in blunt words every question you can think of that challenges the accuracy of the reporter's arithmetic, the credibility of his quoted sources, the logic of his assertions.

By now you have spent at least a couple of hours with the story and have made marks all over the copy, plus a list of pertinent and impermanent questions. It is time to call the reporter in and to through the list.

### **Reasonable Solution**

Your job is to keep things moving briskly towards reasonable solution of the problem: how to get the piece in print. A good reporter appreciates it. "I'd hate to sell a story to a person who didn't think of asking the right questions," says Dick Lyneis "I want them to be real tough. I want them to set incredibly high standards. I want him to pin me up against the wall. I want them to make me defend everything I've got."

If your questions from the first and last readings are substantive, it is wise to tackle them first. You may have at least

a temporary no go situation, and you need to determine if it is worthwhile to send the reporter back for more work.

If you can establish that the story has a sound thesis, proved by evidence, the next step is to deal with the hard questions that came up in the last reading. These are questions you, the editor, may have to answer in a phone call or visit from the aggrieved person or his attorney. The reporter should have answers to every one of them. If he does not if he appears confused or claims "confidential source" too often you must articulate your reservations now. This can be a delicate problem in human relations as well as one of the most crucial aspects of editing. Presumably, the reporter has been pouring heart and soul into the project, day and night for weeks on end. Whenever possible, suggest that further checking is in order that perhaps some other source or record can be found to fill whatever gap has shown up. But if the reporter has simply failed to talk to an obvious person because "he wouldn't tell us anything anyway," then draw a hard-line. Such a reporter is making unwarranted assumptions.

If you have a competent reporter at work, there is no serious confrontation on 99 stories out of 100. But you are making a terrible mistake if you avoid the challenging questions. This kind of self-evasion leads to decisions such as, "We've put so much work into it, I suppose we have to run something." That attitude is a disservice to your readers.

Once the critical questions from the sixth reading are answered, the rest of the conference should be a breeze.

The important tasks now are to strip the main piece to greyhound shape, to pull out and rework the side bars, and to set up the accompanying graphics with the layout specialist while the reporter rewrites. If the main story involves penetrating some corporate labyrinth, you may decide on a simple chart—boxes and connecting lines—to clarify the relationships. If the story is heavy with statistics, simple line or bar graphs can help clear up major points.

Call the company lawyer and tell him there will be a piece for him to go over tomorrow. Stop in the publisher's office and, as

bravely, as possible, assure him that the “big piece” is in hand and, so far, all books well.

**Final Huddle :** During the time between your acceptance of the reporter’s story and its publication, you as an editor have hard and critical work to do. You must allow ample time to do it well.

The first step is to seek out a trusted colleague—city editor, editorial writer, veteran reporter—who has not been involved in the story and show him the rewrite. Don’t ask for a detailed editing but a fresh viewpoint and a candid evaluation of the thesis, approach, and structure.

Next visit the lawyer, Lawyers think in terms of evidence and proof. That’s not a bad viewpoint to have just before you publish. Have the lawyer read everything—side bars, charts and graphs, headlines, cutline. Unwitting level in heads or cutlines is common. Occasionally, the lawyer will also react like a typical reader and tell you he doesn’t understand some compressed thought that the copy editor tried to squeeze into a fourteen count headline. The lawyer’s lay judgement, as well as his profession can be helpful.

After the page is made up. Read it again. This may disrupt normal shop procedure, but it should be done in the interest of accuracy. Have the reporter read the page, too.

If time allows, have yet one more new person look at the page. The sports editor, the life-style editor, the wire editor, or some other trusted but uninvolved staffer may spot an error everyone else has missed. Even a simple complain—“I don’t quite follow what this paragraph means”—may suggest a change that adds the final polish to the story.

The final huddle complete, stop and congratulate the reporter for persistence and professional performance. And make sure that he or the city editor is greeted for follow-up—not just the next day but two weeks from now or a month from now.

## Art and Craft

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Editing is both an art and a craft. The art of any kind of editing lies in knowing which manuscripts to accept outright, which to reject and which to accept in spite of their imperfections. The craft of scientific editing lies in revising and preparing material for publication as promptly as possible and in a form acceptable to readers. But what exactly do scientific editors do? How do they learn to find the best authors or select the best articles for multi-author books or journals? How do they operate a refereeing system? How do they develop a method for revising, or teaching others to revise, the presentation of scientific work? What are their responsibilities to authors, to readers and to science itself? The people most in need of answers to these questions are those who have been enticed into editing by assurances that there is really nothing much to it and that it will not take much of their (unpaid) time. Neither statement is true. Editing is complex, time-consuming, and often exhausting. It can also be absorbing and highly satisfying, as this book will show.

Editors need good judgement, tempered with imagination and intuition, and a wide and sound knowledge of the disciplines covered in their publications. They should be endowed with a



firm command of language—perhaps extending to more than one language and a well-controlled passion for accuracy. They must exercise tact in dealing with authors and common sense in revising the language or structure of papers. And they must be able to cope with, or arrange for others to cope with, the numerous practical problems of getting typescripts into print and then into the hands of readers.

In general, the aims of scientific editors are to choose the best and most original work available at the time on a particular topic or in a particular branch of science, and to bring that work to the attention of interested readers as promptly as possible, in a form that is both readable and retrievable. Scientific editors, alone or with the help of advisers and assistants, save readers' time and tempers (and some authors' reputations) by rejecting or revising any mediocre, badly presented or misleading work. These aims are the same as those of editors in other branches of scholarship. Scientific editors differ from others perhaps only in requiring a particularly crisp and exact style of writing and in preferring certain conventions and methods of presentation that have come to be regarded as indispensable in science.

The exact functions of scientific editors vary with the fields in which they work. Some of their work is creative, some of it consists of substantive and technical editing, and the rest is administrative.

*Editors in other Subjects :* In the less mathematical, more literary fields such as psychology, sociology, archaeology and some parts of theoretical biology, editors are concerned more with assessing the quality of ideas than with improving the way those ideas are expressed. Authors in these fields may even refuse to have their manuscripts edited. When the subject is one in which experimental data or reproducible observations are impossible to obtain, authors are perhaps justified in being less than precise. In the more material sciences, however, certain ways of presenting results and arguments are widely accepted, and systems of nomenclature are continually being proposed, debated and (occasionally) agreed; clarity and conciseness are vital, and logic

essential. Editors must therefore be familiar with the standards and usages of their disciplines and be prepared to tighten author's presentations accordingly.

Whether editors obtain material for publication by seeking out the best authors to contribute to a book or by selecting the best manuscripts from the many submitted to a journal, the problems are the same: good authors are rare and prescriptions for success in compiling good scientific books or journals are rarer still.

What, in fact, are the criteria for judging quality? Chase found that, as ranked by 191 successful scientists, those criteria are: logical rigour, reputability of research techniques, clarity and conciseness of writing style, originality, mathematical precision, coverage of significant published work, compatibility with generally accepted disciplinary ethics, theoretical significance, pertinence to current research in the discipline, and applicability to practical or applied problems in the field. In Chase's sample this ranking order varied with the discipline: natural scientists placed more emphasis on replicability of research techniques, originality, mathematical precision and coverage of the published work, while social scientists gave higher ranking to logical rigour, theoretical significance and applied significance.

Even with these criteria as guides, the ability to choose the best work to publish remains an indefinable and elusive talent owing as much to intuition as to a deep knowledge of the subject. Since a talent of this kind cannot be taught, though it develops with experience, the rest of this chapter concentrates on outlining the other aspects of editing multi-author books, conference proceedings and journals. The first section goes into some detail over the editing and publishing of multi-author books, since these do not receive a separate chapter to themselves later, unlike the other two categories and since some of this first section also applies to conference proceedings-which are of course another form of multi-author book. The three sets of outlines are intended to place the various editorial procedures in context for editors or potential editors of any type of scientific publication.

## **Work by Several Authors**

The term 'multi-author books' refers here to books with chapters by different authors on different aspects of a single topic and to collections of review papers such as those in year-books and similar series. The principles described apply to textbooks as well, but their planning is not covered in detail. The compilation of a multi-author book can be justified only if the subject is such that one person could not handle it adequately. The subject should therefore be one with facets in many disciplines, or be especially complex, or so new that it is essential for previously unpublished developments in different institutions to be described by the original workers. Monographs, review series and textbooks may all meet these criteria.

Editors of multi-author books have to make sure that the subject is covered adequately and in a balanced way. They select authors so that this goal can be reached, arrange to fill gaps if anyone fails to submit a chapter in time, and edit the text so that the book has unity and a coherent style. They need two almost contradictory qualifications. They must know their subject very well indeed so that they know what kind of book is needed in that area of science and can choose the appropriate authors to collaborate in producing it. At the same time they must be able to put themselves in the place of readers who are not as knowledgeable as the contributors to the book; they must then edit the chapters so skilfully that readers will not only understand the different contributions but also appreciate the connections between the chapters and the structure of the subject as a whole.

Multi-author books may be initiated by a scientist with an idea for a book, or by a scientific society or institution, or by a publisher's 'acquisitions editor' who asks a scientist to do the editing. Before approaching a potential scientific editor, an acquisitions editor makes sure that market exists for the proposed book. Scientists or a scientific organisation with an idea for a book or series of books should themselves examine what competition there is from recently published work, as they will have to convince a publisher that the book or series meets a need and has an

assured market in established disciplines or professions. No one should compile a book first and hope to find a publisher afterwards: if publishers disagree with a scientist's assessment of the market the work will all be wasted.

After the initial idea for a book has been mulled over and knocked into shape, therefore, the editor writes an outline of what it will contain and draws up a list of potential contributors. An editor who wants to stay sane keeps the list short: the fewer authors there are, the easier it is to keep in touch with them and the less likely it is that manuscripts will be delivered late, or not at all. For a yearbook or annual review, however, some editors find it advisable to invite more authors than will eventually be needed: then if authors fail to submit their chapters in time the book can still be produced on schedule, and the chapters received after the deadline can be updated and printed in the next year's volume.

The outline helps to show the editor which kinds of expertise are needed for the various chapters, and the writers may then almost select themselves. But even if the possible authors are an editor's friends (or perhaps especially if they are), their latest work has to be examined critically before they are invited to contribute. Is their knowledge of research developments still comprehensive and sound, or have they turned into overworked administrators? Do they have good reputations for keeping to deadlines? Have their recent papers had to be heavily edited before they could be published?

When contributors are being chosen, editors may be subjected to certain pressures. Formal or informal advisers occasionally make suggestions that are not strictly disinterested. This kind of pressure can usually be recognized easily enough and the editor can be ready to deal with it firmly but tactfully.

Pressure from a sponsoring society may be more difficult to cope with. If the book is one of series covering a wider field, a sponsoring organization sometimes ask for topics to be included which do not fit into the editor's plans for that particular publication, or the sponsor may ask for certain topics to be excluded

because they are to be covered in other books in the series. Or the society may want some of its officers to be invited to contribute even though they are not particularly qualified to do so. Again, editors have to be ready with prompt and tactful solutions to this kind of problem.

Another type of pressure may be felt if a book has two or more editors. Joint editors must discuss the aims and scope of their book in some detail before they approach possible contributors or a publisher. They should be quite sure that they agree completely on what the book is about and to whom it is addressed, what work each of them will do during its preparation, which disciplinary conventions they will use, and what general procedures they will follow. Usually, each editor is responsible for a different section of the book. But to ensure consistency and prevent overlapping of chapters, at least one editor should read all the manuscripts before the material goes to the printer. If co-editors edit each other's chapters in the book, they are probably wise if they agree to exchange comments in writing rather than face to face.

Although the editor of a multi-author book usually asks potential contributors informally at an early stage whether they are interested in collaborating on the book, it is better not to send out formal invitations to write chapters until after certain practical details have been agreed with a publisher. Scientific editors who have to find a publisher will want one who can provide, or at least promise, good production arrangements, attractive presentation, rapid printing, and rapid and efficient worldwide distribution and promotion. Book reviews, publishers' catalogues, publishers' advertisements in journals, and the advice of librarians and of colleagues who are authors or editors can all help when a short list of suitable publishers is being drawn up. Directories of publishers show how well established different publishers are, what agencies they have in other countries, how many books they publish each year and what kind of books they publish (it is no good sending a book on nuclear physics to a publisher specializing in poetry). Publishers who handle perhaps 50 books a year can give a book individual attention, but getting it into print is only

the first step: wide distribution is essential too, and small or new publishers may not have the necessary machinery for this.

If a book in English is to be published by a British publishing house which has no branch in the USA, or by an American publisher without a UK subsidiary, the potential editor should ask what arrangements will be made for handling sales in North America or the UK market, respectively. Worldwide publication is not automatic unless the publisher has world rights in a book or arranges to assign certain rights to another publisher who operates in areas not covered by the first publisher.

Another point the potential editor should investigate is who in the publishing house will be assigned to watch over the book during the publication cycle. A publishing house editor normally acts as the scientific editor's contact on all matters to do with the book's production and promotion. A contact of this kind is essential if the scientific editor is not to waste time looking for the right person every time a query arises. And if copy-editing is being done in the publishing house the scientific editor should also find out how much the copy editor will do and arrange to see the manuscripts again after they have been copy-edited but before they are typeset or retyped as camera ready copy.

For their part, publishers want authoritative and reliable texts, neither too short nor too long, that are likely to reach them in readily publishable form, preferably with some well-known names amongst the authors. European publishers who want to sell books on the American market are happy to see American authors among the contributors and *vice-versa*. Editors looking for publishers should therefore send all those on their short list the outline of the book, the list of potential authors (including a few words about the qualifications of each), and some indication of the book's length, the level of readership and the range of disciplines to be covered. Detailed questions about production schedules, marketing arrangements and so on can be left until a publisher shows definite interest, but it is worth asking at this stage about the total production time and possible price for the book.

Once a scientific editor and a publisher reach an understanding in principle, a formal agreement is negotiated, dealing with some or all of the following: the approximate length of the typescript; the date by which the typescript should be handed to the publishers; the target publication date; royalties or fees; copyright and other rights; responsibility for costs incurred during editing; responsibility for copy-editing; indexing and proof-reading; responsibility for libel; arrangements for reprints and free copies; and other matters affecting production, design, promotion and distribution, including sanctions to be invoked if the agreement is broken.

Before any agreement is signed it is probably wise for new editors to consult a lawyer who knows something about authors, rights, or take advice from colleagues who are experienced editors or authors. Editors who insist on tight production schedules must remember at this stage that they will have to keep their side of the bargain by producing manuscripts promptly at the agreed time. The publisher is unlikely to try to influence the content of a book once the agreement has been signed, but if the book later turns out to be very different in length or scope from what was agreed originally, the publisher has a legitimate complaint and a new agreement may then have to be negotiated.

Most publishers offer editors either a fee or a standard royalty based on either the list price of the book or the net receipts from sales, the arrangement to base royalties on net receipts being more common in the USA than in the UK. In the UK, 10% of list price is a common royalty on a hardback book, though 12 1/2 % or 15% may be offered. To produce the same amount as a 10%, 12 1/2% or 15% royalty based on list price, the royalty based on the publisher's actual income from sales would have to be higher—about 15%, 19% and 23%, respectively, assuming an average discount of 35%. A sliding scale may be agreed by which the royalty increases (or starts) when, say, 1000 or 2000 copies have been sold. On a paper-back edition the royalty may be 7 1/2% of list price, or perhaps only 5% or 6%.

Publishers price books, usually, at about five times the

production cost per copy (the unit cost), or at a price per page which works out at roughly the same as five times the unit cost. A breakdown of list price might look like this.

Production cost	20%
Average discount (to book-sellers. etc.)	35%
Royalty	10%
Marketing and Overheads	25%
Publisher's profit	10%

The publisher makes 10% profit only when every copy has been sold, and makes no profit at all until a certain sales figure, the break even point, has been reached.

Editors who have their readers' interests at heart rather than their own often want to know why books are highly priced. The answer is that if the book is in English the publisher has to pay to produce, advertise and distribute the book of a worldwide market, yet the total expected sales may be very small. A highly specialized monograph of interest only to graduate, research workers in a limited field of study might sell, say, 500-1500 copies in three years before it goes out of date; a collection of review papers in a series that every library feels obliged to buy may sell 2000-3000 copies; and a textbook for undergraduates may sell anything from 10,000 copies upwards, depending on how wide its appeal is and how long it remains up to date. The comparative cheapness of paper-backs is entirely due to the publisher's expectation of high sales, not to the lower cost of a paper cover: the unit production cost for a paper-back is usually very little less than that of the hardback version. Similarly, text-books or other books with large markets are cheaper than specialized monographs of the same length because the production cost for a large number of copies is not much more than for a small number and the unit cost therefore falls. Even though the main appeal of a scientific book lies in the quality of its contents, its appearance has a certain importance. Long before manuscripts are ready for the printer, the editor should discuss the design of the book with the publisher or



the publisher's designer and ask to see specimen pages showing the style of headings, references, the typeface, type size and so on.

### **General Arrangements**

When general arrangements with the publisher have been completed, the editor can draw up a timetable for receipt of manuscripts. For a book likely to run to, say 2504M pages, about 12 months might be a reasonable time between formal invitations going to the authors and manuscripts being sent to be printed. Longer may be needed if authors have to write long chapters or several chapters each, or if the authors have particularly heavy professional commitments which leave little time for writing (but it is better to avoid choosing these as contributors in the first place). Within 12-month schedule authors may be allowed, say, four months for writing their contributions, with reminders about the approaching deadline being sent to them after 10 weeks and again after 15 weeks. If a manuscript fails to arrive the editor decides whether to drop the chapter or find a substitute author who can Ate it in time. The rest of the 12 months is needed for consultation, editing, revising and writing any introductory or linking material. Depending on the production method, the printer's capacity and capability, the contributors' cooperation and the editor's sense of urgency publication of the book itself will then take 5-12 months from the time the printer receives the last typescript from the editor: first profits will be ready in six to eight weeks, or longer; authors may be given-or take-up to four weeks to return corrected proofs; correction of first proofs and production and proof-reading of second proofs may take another four to six weeks; and final printing, binding and so on may take six to eight weeks, or longer.

As soon as the timetable for receipt of manuscripts has been drawn up the editor can send formal invitations to contributors. The letters should outline the book and indicate the level of readership the editor has in mind. The editor suggests what each person should write about and how long the chapter should be, gives the date by which a working title and synopsis should be

supplied and the date the manuscript has to be ready, and may want to say what action will be taken if the typescript does not arrive in time. The publisher should be named, as should the other contributors, with those who have not yet agreed to contribute being distinguished from any who have already informally agreed to do so. Authors should be told whether secretarial or other expenses will be met, whether a fee or a share of the royalty will also be paid, when proofs (if any) can be expected, and whether a free copy of the book, or reprints of chapters, or both, will be provided by the publisher. If an editor has decided that unsatisfactory chapters will be rejected even though people have been invited to write them, authors have to be warned that the editor reserves the right to do this. If chapters are to be seen by an editorial board or other referees, authors ought to be informed of this too. A form of assignment of copyright may be enclosed with the invitation.

The editor also prepares a style guide and, before sending it to the authors who accept the invitation, may test its practical value by writing a chapter for the book to the guide's specifications. Alternatively, the editor might ask authors to follow the guidelines of an appropriate journal in the field and simply add a few instructions about specific requirements for the book. Later, when the contributing authors have supplied working titles and synopses for their chapters, the editor distributes these, or a detailed summary based on them, to all contributors.

The editor's main problem in the easier stages of the preparations the book will be to get all the authors to deliver a publishable manuscript on time, so that dilatory contributors do not undo the good work of the punctual ones. A draconian solution is to commission a new author if a chapter has not arrived in spite of frequent reminders. If a small amount of money is available for editorial and writing costs, one way of using it is to pay extra secretarial and other fees to help authors who are asked to write a chapter at short notice.

When manuscripts begin to arrive, the editor logs them in and checks whether authors have covered the subjects arranged at the

agreed length, and whether they have presented their material appropriately for the intended audience, written passages that overlap too much with other chapters, left gaps they were expected to fill or introduced contradictions with other chapters. The editor then revises the content or style as necessary, and writes linking pieces if the subject changes too abruptly between chapters’.-

When most of the material is ready for the printer, the editor either writes or asks someone else to write a preface or foreword outlining the book and its aims. Instead of a preface, or sometimes in addition to it, the editor or one of the contributors may write an introductory chapter setting the scene for the rest of the book in more detail than a short preface allows. Introductions or prefaces, together with any passages written to link different sections, do much to give multi-author books the unit they often lack.

After all the manuscripts have been referred for outside opinion necessary edited and revised copy-edited and assembled in what seems a local order, the editor considers the book as a whole once more, to see that it has the required unity and consistency of style.

At this stage, as well as when ending each chapter, the editor must keep the readers clearly in mind. The book has to be made intelligible to the least experienced readers and to workers in other disciplines, but these readers should not be patronized, nor should more knowledgeable readers be given the feeling that the text is over-explanatory. The editor’s role is to see that the chapters are on the same level of intelligibility and shown authors where over-familiarity with their subject has led them to condense too much, fogging the readers’ understanding. In the interests of clarity the editor must be ready to insert sub-headings, define symbols and neologisms, and substitute plain language for laboratory shortened or for the impenetrable prose that is unfortunately far too common in science.

When work on the text is finished, the ‘front matter’ or ‘prelims’-the title page, preface, contents and so forth—are prepared and the typescripts are sent to the printer, usually via the publisher. The publisher will then probably ask the editor to write descriptive

blurbs for the jacket and provide other promotion material. The publisher will want advice on individuals, societies and institutions who might be included in a mailing list of possible buyers and a list of journals or people who might review the book. The editor may also be asked to choose designs and colours for the binding and dust jacket.

Depending on the production policy agreed with the publisher there may be two proof stages, or one, or none. Proofs are and a master set is returned to the publisher by the date agreed. If there are two proof stages, authors normally receive only the first but the editor receives the second as well.

As soon as paged proofs are available, the editor either compiles an index or has it prepared by a professional indexer. Once the index proof has been checked, the editor need only wait expectantly for publication day and the comments of contributors, other colleagues and—eventually—book reviewers.

## **The Distinction**

Conference proceedings differ in several ways from other multi-author books, and their editors often face an additional set of problems. The editors may have had no opportunity of influencing the choice of papers presented at the conference, and they may even have their editorial functions thrust on them after a meeting has ended. They then have to try to construct a satisfying book out of several unrelated building-blocks separated by yawning gaps. When this goal is reached it is usually only because the editor has cajoled speakers to produce good manuscripts, rewritten some passages, interpolated linking paragraphs, or written whole chapters to replace missing manuscripts. But many people who have been seduced into editing conference proceedings at a late stage find themselves forced to allow a motley collection of papers to be published, in a book that is later deservedly attacked by reviewers for the unevenness of its contents.

The responsibilities of editors of conference proceedings range from rewriting most of the papers and re-drawing the illustrations

to doing nothing more strenuous than giving permission for their names to grace the title page—an unethical practice that should be anathema to any scientist with a reputation to consider. In general, the work of the conference editor depends partly on the size of the conference and partly on how much help and advice the publisher—if there is an outside publisher—can provide. If the sponsoring organization publishes its own conferences but has no regular system for doing so, the editor will probably not only undertake the scientific editing but will also be expected to deal with printers and arrange for marketing and distribution. Another route to publication for conferences is in journals or journal supplements, a solution which does away with some of the criticisms made about the publication of conference proceedings.

The aim of most conferences is to generate interaction amongst those who attend them. The aim of the published proceedings is to preserve all worth-while material presented during the meeting and make it available to readers who did not attend the conference. Both sets of purposes should be clearly defined by the organizing committee at the outset and adhered to afterwards, otherwise both meeting and book will be less than adequate. The editor has to recognize the different goals of meeting and book, and work with the conference organizers and with any co-editors in achieving both sets of aims.

For some conferences intended for publication, all speakers are invited by the organizing committee; for others, especially large congresses, anyone who wishes may submit a paper or abstract for consideration by the committee; in a third type, the programme may consist of a mixture of invited and submitted papers. The organizing committee then has to make a number of decisions about publication. Should all papers on the programme be published, or only some? Are papers to be selected for publication? Will they be refereed? By what date must they be submitted? Are full papers, or only synopses, to be circulated before the meeting? In the published book, will discussion sections be included? Who will publish or print the proceedings?

Ideally, the editor is a member of the organizing committee when these questions are discussed. Even if other people choose the speakers, the course of publication runs more smoothly when the editor can see to it that invitations and circularise contain clear and firm general information for authors on the requirements for synopses and manuscripts. Fully detailed instructions are more conveniently given in a separate set of guidelines for contributors. The sample guidelines for multi-author books can be adapted for conference proceedings.

Publishers who specialize in conference proceedings can help the editor by providing advice about the style guide and by assisting with copy-editing and proof-reading. As well as covering the items already listed for multi-author books, the agreement drawn up between the publisher and the sponsoring organization may define what assistance will be provided and make it clear how discussions will be handled, if these are to be published. If the sponsoring organization itself is the publisher, the editor and organizing committee may negotiate an agreement specifying the exact role of the editor in the publication of the proceedings. If, as often happens, points like these are not covered in the formal agreement, they should nevertheless be agreed in writing by those concerned.

Royalties for, and sales of, conference proceedings are similar to the figures given for multi-author books, though conference editors are perhaps more likely to be paid a fee for their work than royalties, and volumes of proceedings rarely, if ever, have such high sales as text-books.

Once the date for a conference has been arranged, other dates can be fixed around it. These dates depend on what the organizers decide to circulate before the meeting. A good compromise is to send out a programme containing synopsis-preferably rather extended, factually informative ones-about three to four weeks before the conference. Speakers should be asked to send these summaries to the editor or organizers some 10 to 12 weeks before the meeting. With repeated reminders, it should be possible to obtain over 90% of the summaries in time to be printed with the

programme. Some organisers make receipt of the synopsis by a certain date a condition of the author being allowed to speak.

In some ways handling a large conference is easier than handling other multi-author books; a would be contributor who fails to deliver a paper at the meeting, for example, can hardly insist on it being included in the published proceedings. The main problems for the editor therefore lie in obtaining synopses in good time, and perhaps in arranging for the recording and transcription of impromptu papers and discussions.

A particularly important part of the editor's work on proceedings is the conversion of a good oral presentation into a publishable paper if authors have not succeeded in doing this. Where discussions are included, the editor's most valuable contribution lies in preparing them for publication in a way that satisfied both readers and participants.

Work on manuscripts for conference proceedings is similar to that on manuscripts for other multi-author books. The main principle of editing conference proceedings is also the same as for other multi-author books: a single intelligence-the editor's must hold the various parts together in spite of disparities in the scientific level of contributions and in the communicative skills of the authors. For conferences another important principle to follow is that the proceedings must be published quickly if they are to be of any use to readers. This means establishing firm timetables and keeping to deadlines. Delays in the early stages can easily lead to a volume being out of date before it leaves the binders.

### **The Periodicals**

A journal is, in effect, a third kind of multi-author book, but one that appears weekly, monthly, quarterly, or perhaps irregularly, with most of its contents submitted by authors for their own reasons rather than solicited by editors for theirs. Editors of journals are responsible to the scientific community as well as to their sponsors (often learned societies). At the same time they usually have great freedom in controlling the content and form of what is

published. It is this freedom that allows editors to put an individual stamp on their journals, even though many different authors contribute to each issue.

Scientific journals, whether sponsored by learned societies or by commercial publishers, vary from the ultra specialized to the general, from the rich giant to the impoverished dwarf, and from the academically detached to the politically engage. The scale of the editor's work varies accordingly, but the basic responsibilities remain the same for every kind of journal. Editors must define or re-define the aims and scope of their journals and choose ankles and other features congruent with those aims. They have to decide whether to select articles after consulting referees or mainly on their own unassisted judgement. They must determine whether poorly presented but scientifically valuable papers should be published as they stand or be improved before publication and, if papers are to be improved, whether the work should be done by the editorial staff or by the authors. Editors must also organize an efficient handling system for typescripts and proofs, ensure prompt publication by the most suitable printing method, and cooperate with secondary services (abstracting and title-listing) and data banks in making primary articles readily retrievable. Some editors are also responsible for the efficient distribution, promotion and economic viability of their journals.

Most journals, whoever sponsors them, have an editorial board or committee whose ostensible purpose is to advise the editor on anything and everything to do with running the journal. In practice, boards range from the purely decorative to the strictly functional. Most commonly, board members act as referees or as section editors, or they may recommend other people who would be suitable as referees. When a journal is new, board members well known in their disciplines may be persuaded to write several of its first articles, as an encouragement to other contributors. The only material regard for board members is likely to be a free subscription to the journal: apart from this, publication of their names is the best compensation most journals can offer.



## Elected and Co-opted

The editorial boards or committees of journals sponsored by learned societies are elected or co-opted in the same way as other committees of these societies. If the society is a local or national one, the members of the committee may meet form ally once a year or more often, and their duties usually include establishing the policy of the journal. Members of editorial boards of commercially sponsored journals, on the other hand, are invited to join the board by the editor and publishers, and they may never have any formal meetings at all, still less any discussions of policy. Committee or board members may be asked to serve for a set number of years or for an unlimited term, but a set time is preferable: good advisers can always be asked to serve another term on the board but replacing bad or inert advisers can be difficult if membership is for an unspecified time.

For most journals, but not all, reference help editors to select papers for publication. The criteria for selection of papers are those listed at the beginning of this chapter.

Journal editors also have to decide whether to publish a wide variety of articles and features or whether to restrict the journal to one or two types of section, and they must choose the specifications which apply to each section. The possible sections include:

Original articles: will there be a maximum permitted length or specified form?

Solicited research articles

Short notes, e.g. on methodology: same handling as for full length articles, or with special arrangements for speedy publication?

Review articles: solicited, unsolicited, or both?

Hypotheses not stemming from the author's own results  
 comments on other published papers, without new data  
 Correspondence.

*Corrections:* how to bring them to the reader's attention?

Editorials: never, occasionally or in every issue? Linked to articles in the same issue or independent? Political or apolitical? Singed?

Synopses of papers to be presented at meetings of the sponsoring society Other society business (including presidential addresses and the like) Guidelines for authors: in every issue?

Book reviews

Advertisements

University and other appointments vacant and wanted

This list seems formidable, but many of the decisions may be simple to make, or may be made by the editorial board, the sponsoring society, or the publishers. The simplest list of what to publish would probably be:

Original, unsolicited articles (or letters, for a 'Letters' journal)  
Corrections (otherwise known as Errata)

Guidelines for authors

Even this short list can produce problems, as can be seen from Lis DeBakey's book *The scientific journal in which experienced journal editors provide guidelines for others*, revealing as they do so a wide range of opinion, and even disagreement on certain points. The main questions are: (a) are referees to be used, and if so how are conflicts of opinion between them and the authors to be resolved and (b) is the presentation of articles to be improved and, if so, how much and by whom? On the second point, it is generally recognized that the journal editor's role is to uphold standards, both by rejecting poor articles and improving good ones. Solicited articles, including editorials, review articles and book reviews should, however, be edited with a light hand, especially if they are signed—another policy decision that has to be made.

Although journal editors may commission review articles and other items, they spend much of their time dealing with unsolicited manuscripts submitted for publication by hopeful authors. The general principles of selection have already been mentioned and

the mechanics of handling manuscripts. The editor, or the editorial office personnel of the larger journals or organizations, examines each manuscript when it arrives and, if referees are used, decides who is best qualified to assess it. Occasionally it will immediately be obvious that a paper can be accepted or rejected without being sent to anyone else. If the journal does not use a refereeing system the editor is the only arbiter anyway. Selection there has to be: apart from questions of quality, few journals could afford to publish all the papers submitted.

The work of journal editors and referees is made easier if each journal provides clear instructions or guidelines for authors. Guidelines can never, of course, improve the quality of the research described in submitted papers, but they can influence authors to think more carefully about the style and form of their typescripts. If an author submits a paper that has clearly been prepared without reference to the guidelines, the editor may decide to return it, after first considering the principles.

Most new editors want to change the format, layout and covers of their journals, but surprisingly, perhaps this involves much more than individual taste. Restraints on six, for example, have been imposed by postal authorities and laid down by standard organizations. Changes should not be initiated lightly. Designers, publishers, printers and librarians have to be consulted and various production methods and the relevant cost factors have to be taken into account. Another temptation that must be resisted is changing a journal's tide, as this causes endless confusion for the secondary services as well as producing problems for readers, authors and other editors.

## **The Clients**

Journal editors have to decide who their clients are. If they aim to serve authors they will develop a system that allows either for rapid publication of submitted articles or for equally rapid rejection. If their chief clients are the readers, careful and critical review will be the main aim together with much editorial work on the accepted articles to make these as comprehensible, interesting and retrievable

as possible. To attract readers, these editors will probably encourage correspondence, comments on published work, hypotheses and so forth. If they see themselves as committed neither to authors nor to readers as separate groups, but to the advancement of science as such they may take one of two directions. Either they will demand extensive and rigorous proof of every statement made—and here they will rely heavily on the approval of the referees; or they will decide to publish only the most original work, even when it yields conclusion contrary to the prevailing consensus (or dogma).

In practice, most editors try to serve authors, readers and science: it is a question of deciding with what priorities and by what mechanisms. Of course, the image of the reader as someone who subscribes personally to the journal, opens it eagerly as it arrives and reads it through from cover to cover is old-fashioned, if not mythical. Readers are those who are alerted to individual articles either by a secondary (title-listing or abstracting) service or by their own browsing through the contents pages of current periodicals in a library. Editors who keep this concept of 'reader' firmly in mind ask authors to add key phrases to their titles, for inclusion on the contents pages of the journal. They place the contents in consistent form on one of the outside covers. They arrange for the name of the journal and its volume number and date, as well as the page number, to appear on each page of the journal, so that a full reference is included on photo-copied articles or parts of articles. Conscientious editors also draw special attention to correction the unthinking or insecure editor hides them away. The first course of action promotes scientific progress; the second impedes it. Attention to details of these kinds distinguishes the considerate editor active in the service of science from the arrogant or merely conservative arbiter of which articles deserve publication.

Unlike most editors of books, editors of some scientific journals may have to contend with the financial problems of keeping their journals going. Here we need only point out that economic pressures force editors to make their journals as attractive as possible,

whether by selecting the best articles and publishing them much faster than any competitors, or by offering a superb and rapid editorial service to those who are not masters of language or by commissioning informed comment on work being published in the same issue of the journal. If, in these and other ways, an editor can create a superlative product, people are likely to pay what is asked for it- a proposition that may remain true even in times of shrinking library and research budgets.

These outlines already show that editing is not a simple task. The expansion or exposition of the scientific information system that has been in progress since the 1950s has exposed editors of primary publications to increasingly heavy pressures from would be authors. At the same time editors have had to learn to cope with the requirements of the secondary services and with the problems posed by new techniques of information transmission. To keep the information system running smoothly editors must be stringent in selecting only first rate original work for publication. They must be punctilious in ensuring that readers can obtain or identify published material as quickly as possible. And, as discussed in the next chapter, they should arrange for authors to receive whatever editorial guidance they need and it is practicable to give them.

## Future Prospects

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The vision of the communication system has changed for future. Only in the last five to ten years, as computers and video display terminals have flooded into scientific laboratories and percolated more slowly into printing houses, has the dream more much nearer to reality, at least in scientific communication. Traditional methods of scientific publication still flourish and more journals are born than die every year (see Ulrich's International periodicals directory from one edition to the next), but now every conference of editors or publishers pays much uneasy attention to the changes looming ahead and those already on us.

With one computer terminal available for every 15 professionals, 'computer pervasion of the -research process is Virtually complete' in the USA, as Baker et al have pointed out. In Europe and other parts of the world the computer explosion is perhaps 10 or 20 years behind the point it has reached in the USA. Nevertheless on both sides of the Atlantic the age of electronics, is already affecting the scientific information system in certain ways, and other possibilities are being investigated now or are forecast for the future. These technological innovations may soon

drastically alter the way scientists work and communicate with each other. One confident prediction, for example, is that in 15 years' time electronic journals will be cheaper than the conventional kind printed on paper.

### **Utility of Computers**

The present uses of computers in scholarly publishing include making printing faster, and sometimes cheaper, easing distribution, by maintaining and updating subscription lists and printing addresses; keeping records and organizing the refereeing system; and possibly helping with the copy-editing of manuscripts and preparing them for publication. Other technical advances have led or will soon lead to new forms of publication. I shall mention these developments first, then refer to the computer-based processes already in use or under investigation, and end with some comments on professionalism in editing and on the outlook for editing and editors.

The term microform (or micrographics) covers both microfiche and microfilm. Microfiches are sets of reduced transparencies of typescript or printed pages, with 80 to 100 pages mounted together. Ordinary microfiches are reduced by a ratio of 24. There are also ultrafiches, reduced by a ratio of 150, allowing 3000 or more pages to be concentrated on a fiche the size of a postcard. A microfiche reader is used to project an enlarged copy of one page at a time onto a screen. Paper copies can be made from the microfiche on reader printers or separate printer. Microfiche versions of journals or books are ideal for libraries that are short of space, provided that the publication which they have condensed is likely to be needed only occasionally, for reference: it is no pleasure to browse through microfiche or scan many articles in succession on a microfiche reader.

Microfilm, which is less convenient for the user than microfiche, is useful for archival purposes, and many journals now provide microfilm versions when each volume is complete. Users apparently do not like microform journals much yet, but societies

whose journals have a very small circulation may find microform the best (or only) way to keep their journals going, especially if authors cooperate in providing good clean typescripts and illustrations, since production and mailing costs are much lower than for-paper journals. A few journals are in fact successfully published in microfiche or microfilm alone (e.g. the American Journal of Computational Linguistics). Microforms and journal publishing have recently been surveyed by Campbell and Ashby, who conclude that the trend towards the use of microfiche in journal publishing will continue and will 'aid the development of journals as more powerful vehicles for the distribution and storage in accessible form of research material and ideas.'

*Synoptic Journals* : Microfiche is also exploited in the experimental synoptic journals now being published in Europe and the USA. One way of publishing synoptics is to issue the journal in two forms: a full form in microfiche, made either from typeset or camera-ready copy and perhaps also available in miniprint (see below) for use in libraries and other reference centres; and a synoptic form, probably typeset, in which the author summarizes the full paper in some fixed fraction of its length or a fixed number of pages (ranging from two to six). Alternatively the synoptic form alone might be published, with copies of the full original typescript available on demand from a data store. In both systems subscribers to the synoptic journal can buy microfiche, reprographic or miniprint copies of full papers if they want more detail. In the method used by the Journal of Chemical Research (S) and (M), the synopsis is accepted for publication only after the full paper has been through the complete editorial selection process

This system could have a retrograde effect on both science itself and the editorial process. If people read synopses without obtaining full details of the work that interests them, they may acquire the habit of accepting statements without examining the evidence. Likewise, refereeing for seldom-consulted archive may prove so unrewarding that standards in this activity too



will deteriorate. And copy-editing should probably not even be attempted for the archival form, provided that the manuscript is comprehensible to readers. It is inauspicious that, in the first trials conducted by the chemical societies of the UK, France and Germany, only one out of 310 papers summarized in the synopsis part of the journal was requested in the complete version.

### **Main Drawback**

A drawback of synoptics is that authors have to prepare three versions of their papers—the full text, an abstract and a synoptic. The guidelines for authors preparing synopses should be very carefully thought out and more detailed instructions than usual should be given about the presentation of typescripts.

*Miniprint* : Miniprint, which is just legible to the naked eye, is used either for complete articles or for extensive data that can usefully be printed immediately after an article. It may either be typeset in very small type or be reduced from typed pages supplied by the author. Readers need either very good sight or a magnifying glass. Use of miniprint reduces paper and mailing costs, and significant savings can be made.

*Selective Dissemination of Articles* : The selective dissemination of articles has been discussed, tested and, to a certain extent, practised. Subscribers either order articles from regularly supplied lists of titles available, or arrange for articles that match their 'interest profiles' to be sent to them direct. The profiles are based on index terms chosen by the subscribers as reflecting their interests. They are spared from receiving material they do not want. This system may be suitable for societies or publishers dealing with several different fields, but its cost-effectiveness is still in doubt. And as readers and authors are often unskilled at finding accurate keywords, even when given a thesaurus from which to select them, the system also has intellectual drawbacks.

***On-Demand Publication*** : On-demand publication sometimes refers to arrangements like those provide by selective dissemination systems, by which readers can obtain printouts of journal articles as wanted. It also refers to a service offered by a few publishers by which photo duplicates of books or typescripts can be provided on request. Copies are not cheap, and the system is not economical if more than 250 copies of a book are likely to be ordered.

***Electronic Journals and other New Forms of 'Publishing'*** : Although electronic journals produced and stored in a computer and read on a video screen sound an expensive proposition, a University of Toronto study predicts that from the middle or late 1990s onwards they will become cheaper than the conventional kind; and a study in Norway predicts that 1990 will see the start of the 'paperless society' there. The Arpanet communication system which links computers in the USA and Europe already allows scientists to exchange 'information even more easily than by mail or telephone, and at least one newsletter (the Sigart Newsletter) was being produced through the system two or three years ago. Arpanet has also proved useful for transmitting manuscripts to referees and for other editorial tasks. This and similar interactive systems allow co-workers thousands of miles apart to communicate effectively when they draft joint papers, and editors can work with referees and other advisers through these systems. Audio cassettes, gramophone records, video cassettes and televised information systems are other types of process into which editors may find themselves venturing. Those are also video disks which can hold many books or journals on a disk the size of an ordinary long-playing record.

***Early Capture of Textual Material on Magnetic Tape*** : The savings that can be made in composition costs when authors provide camera-ready copy have been mentioned several times in this book. Camera-ready copy can be prepared more easily with word processors than with conventional typewriters. Word processors record typed characters on a magnetic card, disk or cassette and allow the typist to correct, insert or delete material

without retyping the rest of the manuscript. The more expensive word processors have video screens which display what has been type and allow for changes and corrections to be made on the spot. When the copy is perfect, the tape or other magnetic record is fed into the same or a separate machine, which types the whole page or chapter flawlessly and at high speed. Some word processors can be used to control photo-composers, and various instructions can be incorporated to control the typeface, type size, format, right-margin justification, italicization, and so on; words can even be flagged for indexing later.

Another refinement is to have the original copy typed in an optical character recognition (OCR) typeface which a scanner can translate directly into a magnetic tape or other recording. The tape can be used to produce any number of copies of an article for the editor, referees, author(s) and copy editor to work on, and instructions for change from any of them can be incorporated into a corrected tape which can be used to control photo-composition. When scanners and OCR typefaces come into wider use, copy editors should be spared some of their more humdrum tasks, such as proof-reading.

The existence of a magnetic tape or other record mean that even before a book or journal is printed, the title, bibliographic details, key terms and abstract of a chapter or article can be fed to abstracting and current-awareness services without further keyboarding, with its almost inevitable errors. This is unquestionably an advantage in time, money and accuracy.

**Editorial Processing Centres :** The use of computers and scanners in editorial procedures forms part of the concept of Editorial (or Electronic) Processing Centres (EPCs), much discussed since it, was first put forward in 1972. In an EPC several learned societies would shake an automated system, providing enough work to make the system financially worth-while. Four levels of automation are envisaged. In all of them authors would submit manuscripts typed in an OCR typeface to the Centre, where the manuscripts would be scanned and entered into a computer system.

Printouts-preferably the kind without typesetting instructions embedded in the text-would go to the editor and later to the referees. Comments would be typed in OCR type for recording via the scanner, with printouts being provided at any stage as needed. The computer would be programmed. For copy-editing, with printouts going to authors before publication. If authors approved of the changes they could simply telephone the Centre and the message would be typed into the computer. If they disapproved of the changes or had more alterations to make, the manuscripts would be recycled through the EPC to the editor. Final versions of manuscripts would be transferred from the computer to a magnetic tape which the printer would use to control photo-typesetting. Again, date for abstracting and indexing services would be available as by-products.

The computer could also handle the various 'housekeeping chores assigning manuscript numbers; providing lists of referees with their specialities matched to the key terms given in the title or assigned by the editor together with information about referees' past performance and present work load for the journal; typing letters to referees; automatically producing reminders to referees, the editor or authors when manuscripts become overdue at any stage; and, after acceptance, providing deadline reminders to copy editors, printer and authors. Computers should not, however, be used to churn out letters to authors from the editor; no software program yet devised can cope satisfactorily with the countless different circumstances an editor should discuss individually with authors. •

As well as editorial activities, an EPC-computer system should be able to handle the maintenance and upkeep of subscription lists for the societies taking part, sending invoices and reminders out as necessary.

Studies of the EPC concept funded by the National Science Foundation in the USA have indicated that the system is technically feasible and economically viable but at the moment is showing no signs of becoming an operational reality. It is a system of this kind

feasible in countries other than the USA? Woodward has described a modified version more suitable for European and other countries where full-scale EPCs would be too expensive or are not needed. In the Cooperative Publishing Office (CPO) proposed by Woodward, editors and referees would work on authors, typescripts until final edited versions had been accepted and approved. At that stage manuscripts would be retyped in OCR type in the publishing office. Copies would go to authors for checking, and the corrected version would be scanned and stored until needed for a journal issue. Material for secondary services would also be typed by the CPO for input to the computer system, and reminders and other letters could be sent out as from an EPC. Woodward calculated that at 1976 prices in the UK the initial investment in a CPO would be about f: 150 000. With the capital sum discounted over five years, the operating costs would be about the same as conventional costs; at 20 000 pages a year the CPO should save about 9% of the conventional publishing, printing and distribution costs.

EPCs and CPOs were intended to solve some of the temporal and financial problems of publishing for learned societies, but commercial publishers who invest in scanners or editing terminals are in effect already running editorial processing centres themselves. Learned socialites may find it more satisfactory to have their journals published commercially than to collaborate with other societies in setting up an EPC or a CPO. For the societies they are supposed to help, the greatest drawback to EPOs or CPOs would be the initial capital costs and the extra salaries of people employed to run them. At present some of the costs of copy-editing, improvement of illustrations, and correspondence of all kinds may disappear into institutional overheads. The rest of the work is done by the editor in trains or planes, in the lunch-break, or after the children have gone to bed. Learned societies benefit from this freely donated time, and as long as dedicated people are prepared to do the work, the societies will want to encourage them.

## Professionalism in Editing

Many scientists edit journals and books either in their 4 spare' time, as just mentioned, or in a small part of their working lives. Yet editing is clearly no job for an amateur. Editing should of course be in the hands of scholars active in the fields covered by the publications for which they are responsible, but this often means that the editors are professional scientists first and editors some way afterwards.

Editors can help themselves in several ways. One is to read appropriate journals, among them Scholarly Publishing, IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, the Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, the Journal of Research Communications Studies and others, as well as the books and articles on editorial practice and policy referred to in this book. One book that is particularly valuable on technical and other innovations is Capital Systems Group's improving the dissemination of scientific and technical information, a loose leaf publication that is updated from time to time. A similar publication produced in the UK is also helpful. DeBakey's book, The scientific journal is essential reading, and Gtunewald's guidelines provide a succinct account of the work of editors. The Editerra editor's handbook has (or will have) three useful sections (publishing - and printing; editing; standards and style) that will interest editors in all disciplines.

Another way to improve one's professionalism as an editor is to join an association of editors (some of these, such as CBE and Editerra/ELSE, have useful newsletters). The number of associations covering different disciplines and different geographical areas is increasing and the First International conference of Scientific Editors, held in Jerusalem in 1977, has given birth to IFSEA-the International Federation of Scientific Editors' Associations as well so to a volume of proceedings.

A third solution-where funds are available-is for editors to share their responsibilities with one or more scientifically

trained assistants, either part-time or full-time. Assistant editors, like any professionals, should master all the details of editorial work, keep up to date with developments, and themselves make innovations.

### **Executive Editor**

Although assistant editors of large-circulation journals in the UK are usually scientifically trained, in the USA it is quite common for editors to send accepted papers direct to scientifically untrained copy editors, who deal with the technical editing work but do very little rewriting. As this did not seem very satisfactory, Woodford attempted to introduce a system for training 'executive editors' for biochemical journals in the USA. Those who took the course had advanced degrees and research experience in the biosciences. They were trained to assist chief editors by working in detail on publishable typescripts before their acceptance for publication. The philosophy on which the training was based was that a scientific paper is in most cases more intelligible, useful and enduring if it is the product of cooperation between the author and an executive editor: the author originates the ideas and does the work but is not necessarily good at getting it onto paper, while the executive editor, though not an expert on the subject matter, understands it and is also an experienced communicator. Clearly, there must be mutual respect in such cooperation, and both partners must be willing to learn.,

Authors are not always willing to learn from copy-editors who are not scientists, but executive editors are more acceptable on several counts. First, with their scientific training executive editors are less likely to make misguided changes that arise from a lack of understanding of the subject; and if these editors do misinterpret a passages, the authors should realize that other well-informed readers may do the same. Secondly, sub-editing of manuscripts submitted to journals can be done before the manuscripts are finally accepted, at a time when authors are more amenable to guidance. Thirdly, rank pulling is impossible because the executive editor has high scientific status. Experienced copy

editors can overcome the inherent disadvantages of their position, especially if editors back them up firmly, but they often start at a disadvantage.

For these reasons it seems sensible for a part-time chief editor with a heavy work load to persuade the sponsoring organization to employ a professional assistant editor with scientific training in the appropriate field(s).

Finding and paying for suitable copy editors may be nearly as difficult as finding executive editors. Neither a first degree in science nor one in English (for English-language journals) is any guarantee that a person without previous experience will turn out to have the necessary qualities of patience, attention to detail, and eye for spelling and typographical errors, a sound knowledge of grammar and a feeling for language, together with the sense not to antagonize authors and the wit to know when to stop comma-catching and let the book or journal get to press.

In a few large organizations copy editors receive some formal training, but many of them learn as they work. When employers can afford to break their copy editors in gently, proof-reading and reference-checking are the best jobs for them to tackle first text editing should be left until they have experience of all the other copy-editing procedures. Editors can speed up the learning process by getting new copy-editors to read Judith Butcher's book on *Copy-editing*, as well as *Writing scientific papers in English* and any relevant disciplinary or national style manuals that are recommended to authors (Nordic biomedical manuscripts, Dorothy Mizoguchi's book for Japanese authors, and others), since style manuals and guidelines for authors show copy editors what to look for in typescripts. (Copy editors should read this book too, of course.)

Whether or not they are blessed with help from executive editors or copy-editors, journal editors who take a professional attitude to editing can subject themselves and their journals to regular review and self-assessment. One mechanism for doing this is to discuss the objectives of the journal with readers, using the



editorial pages as a sounding-board in the way mentioned earlier. Examples can be found in the *Journal of Medical Education*, in which a new direction for the journal was announced in 1971; in *Biochemical Biophysical Acta*, in which a change in editorial policy on the acceptance rate was justified on the grounds that there had been an unmanageable logarithmic growth in the number of papers submitted; and in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, whose editor confessed that several innovations by the journal had not succeeded, and suggested some reasons for the failures (Ingelfinger's articles, incidentally, is a goldmine for the innovative editor). These three editorials are all examples of editors discussing their policies and procedures with their customers-thinking aloud and using the scientific method of hypothesis, testing of hypothesis, and deduction.

A second procedure for self-assessment is to use the *Journal Citation Reports* published by the Institute for Scientific Information. The number of times journal, as opposed to an individual paper, is cited is a fair indication of the impact-positive or negative-it is having on the scientific community. If the impact factor (average number of citations per article during the first few years after publication of each issue) of the journal, falls over the years, something is certainly wrong; the editor has to discover what it is.

At present, only the full-time editors of certain large-circulation journals are accorded the status they deserve, while scientific editing in general confers little prestige on its exponents. As editors become more proficient the status of editing will rise, together with the general standard of the publications for which they are ultimately responsible. This is a highly desirable state of affairs at which to aim-but it depends partly on the continued existence of books and journals in a world where communication systems are advancing and changing very rapidly indeed.

***Outlook for Editors and Editing*** : In practice, what changes are we about to see in the scientific communication system? Will scientific articles in future always flicker at us from

video screens? Are we really heading for a paperless world devoid of the pleasures of browsing? Are editors to be replaced by electronics?

The answer to all three questions is 'No', or at least 'Not for a long time yet'. In 20 or 30 years electronic journals will probably be widely used but it seems likely that journals printed on paper will exist side by side with the electronic species. Words on paper are still the most efficient and acceptable way of transmitting archival information or any material that readers have to study for any length of time. Until scientists everywhere have instant access to computer terminals, books and journals will remain the most acceptable and attractive means of packaging that information. And because the costs of entering material into computer systems and storing it are high, editors will still be needed for electronic journals for the same reasons as they are needed for paper ones—to control the quality and form of what goes into the system.

Even though this view of the future for editors and publishers is an optimistic one, a concerted effort is needed now to improve the state of the art of scientific publication. Costs need to be brought down or prevented from rising exorbitant, and ways should be found of drastically shrinking the publication flag for books and journals without diminishing the quality of the information offered to readers. Above all, production and distribution should be made vastly more efficient. It is many years since it became possible for newspapers to be composed in one city and for facsimile versions to be produced in other cities, hundreds of miles away with more communications satellites circling the world, and with decreasing computer costs and ever-improving production methods, how long will it be before books and journals can be economically photo-composed in one continent and reproduced as bound copies, in any number needed, anywhere in that continent or another? The electronic era will show its achievements in this way just as surely as it already does in allowing access to one or more pages at a time on a screen.

Although many of us will be happy to look at material for which we are in a hurry on a video screen or microfiche reader before deciding whether to obtain hard copy versions, most of us—whether we are reading for pleasure or to obtain general background information—will also want to go on reading books or journals in their conventional form, however unconventional the production method may be. Even when terminals sprout in every office or laboratory, 'Who wants to go to bed with a floppy disk or with a microform projector? All the indications are that paper publications, and their editors, will coexist happily and for long time to come, with whatever electronic and other innovations may spread into the world of scientific publishing.

# Appendix

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## The Terminology

### A

**ABC Audit Bureau of Circulations;** source of authoritative figures for newspapers' net sale over specified periods.

**ad** Advertisement, *classified* or *display*.

**ad alley** Section of composing room where advertisements are assembled.

**add** Written on copy to be added at end of story already set or subbed and sent to printer.

**ad dummy** Miniature set of pages marked with ad placings and sizes of advertisements. Sometimes called 'the scheme'.

**ad rule** Rule separating ads from editorial matter.

**advertisement manager** Newspaper executive in charge of advertising in newspaper.

**advertising agency** Organisation preparing ads for clients and buying space in newspapers and magazines, and TV time.

**AFP** Agence France Press, French news agency.

**agate** Old name for 5½ pt. type; Fourteen agate lines are 1 in. deep.

**agency** Organisation supplying news but not publishing or printing newspapers; or advertising agency.

**A insert** Copy to be inserted (according to marked accompanying proof) into matter already set.

**all in** Proof reader's term meaning all copy and proofs are in the reading room.

**all in hand** Printer has received and is setting all copy and headings for a particular story or page.

**all out** Printer has dispersed all copy for setting.

**all rights reserved** General copyright warning, usually to avoid lifting of exclusive material/information.

**all up** All copy has been set, but not necessarily read and corrected.

**alterations** Changes on proof that differ from original copy (i. e. not simply corrections).

**angle** Aspects or point of approach in a story; 'play up this angle'.

**AP** Associated Press, US news agency.

**arabic numerals** Those we commonly use: 1,2,3, etc. (as distinct from roman numerals: i, ii, iii, iv and I, II, III, etc.).

**arm** Horizontal stroke on T, diagonal lines of Y and K.

**art** Frequently means pictures and other illustrations plus layout and design; use is changing with increasing role of designer artists in newspapers.

**art editor** Picture editor, responsible for acquiring photographs and in charge of photographers; or (more recent) design editor.

**art paper** Coated paper with high finish. Process department require proofs on art paper to make white-on-black headings, strip type into illustrations, etc.

**ascender** Part of letter rising above x-height; e g., f, h, k, all have ascenders.

**assignment** Reporter's specified task.

**author's marks** Corrections on proof made by author as distinct from those made by reader.

**author's proof** Proof altered, corrected or passed by author.

## B

**back numbers** Previous issues of the paper kept for sale.

**back room, back shop** Mechanical department of a newspaper.

back set Section of a newspaper printed and folded separately at the end (back) of the first.

**bad break** Incorrect division of a word between the end of one line and start of the next; turning (from one column to next, or to another page) on a divided word.

**bad letter** Broken type, not printing fully.

**bad spacing** Irregular or over-spacing of a line of type; space not distributed correctly for sense and appearance.

**bank** (i) Part of a multiple headline; (ii) place where matter in type is assembled.

**banner** (i) Title of newspaper on front page or above editorials on leader page; (ii) large headline across all or most of top of page.

**barker** Headline variant in which one line, usually one word, is set in large type over deck of smaller headline.

**bastard measure** Type set to a width different from the basic column width or multiples of it.

**beard** Projecting part of type mount or shank producing white space below character when printed; varies between typefaces but needs to be taken into account in page design and measurement.

**beat** Reporter's regular or special area (e. g. courts, politics, crime; etc. );

**bed** Part of printing press that carries type forme or plate to be printed.

**Ben Day** Mechanical tint for producing shading on blocks.

**bf** Abbreviation for *boldface*.

**bind, binding** A type forme that will not lock up squarely and evenly is 'binding'.

**bite off** To remove complete paragraphs at the end of a story to fit the space. The noun 'bit off' is what has been removed.

**black** (i) Carbon copy of reporter's story of feature; (ii) boldface type.

**blackletter** Old black, angular, spiky typefaces based on handwritten books, basis for modern types in this style.

**blanket** Newspaper page proof.

**blanket head** Headline covering all columns occupied by a story or combination of related stories.

**blind ad** In which the identity of the advertiser is not revealed.

**blind interview** One in which the source is quoted but not named.

**blobs** Black circles (properly, fullface circles), useful for adding colour to a page by itemising or setting out a series of points in a story without numbering (any can be held out without ruining sequence).

**block** Illustration in metal form, either *half-tone* or *line* or a combination of both.

**block heading** Heading enlarged photographically from proof, useful for producing headlines in larger sizes than normally available.

**blow up** (Enlargement), applied to pictures and other artwork, including headings photographically enlarged from proofs.

**blurb** Commonly a publisher's eulogy on the jacket of a book, but in newspapers, outside the literary department, is more frequently used to mean a preliminary paragraph set up distinctively to introduce a feature or news story.

**body** Type has thick, thin, medium, etc., body according to thickness of vertical strokes.

**body matter** Text set in newspaper's body type, or the text as distinct from headings, cross-heads, etc.

**body type** Typeface in which the main text of a newspaper is set.

**bodoni** Type series in common use for headings, etc., distinguished by its clean lines, fine serifs and vertical stress.

**boiler plate** Editorial term for timeless raw 'filler' material.

**bold, boldface** Typeface which varies from the standard (or regular) form by having thicker vertical strokes so that it prints blacker.

**bowl** Curved stroke of letter surrounding closed 'white' area or counter as in letters o, b, a.

**box** Type matter enclosed by rules on all four sides; also in some offices the stop-press column.

**bracketed Serifs** are said to be bracketed to the stem when they are joined to it in a continuous curve rather than set at a sharp right-angle. Old face types have bracketed serifs.

**break** (i) Convenient or appropriate place in text to insert crosshead or make a turn to another page; (ii) tear in web of newsprint feeding the presses.

**break up** Disperse type material from a page, either for melting down and recasting or to typesets.

**brevier** Old name for 8pt type.

**bridge** Proof reader's mark showing that words or characters are to be joined together.

**brief** Short news paragraph.

**broadsheet** A page the full size of a rotary press plate, approximately 22 in. deep by 15 in. wide.

**broadside** (i) Full-size newspaper page as printed on a rotary press; (ii) old announcement or newspaper page printed as a single sheet, irrespective of how it is to be folded.

**broken matter** Text, headings, etc., that have been taken out of a page and are probably disordered (pied).

**broken word** Word turned from one line to another, with a linking hyphen at the end of the first line: words should be split to respect sense and etymology; vertical ranks of hyphens should be avoided.

**bromide** Piece of positive film—of either type of illustration—used for sticking on to page in photaset newspapers.

**bucket** Rules below and on both sides of type matter.

**bulk** Bench or stone where assembled type is kept ready for use.

**bulletin** Short message giving new development of latest situation on running story.

**bump** Add extra spacing material to type matter to make it fill a given space.

**bureau** Editorial office separate from main publishing building, mostly in another city or country.



**buster** Headline with too many characters and spaces for the given measure.

**by-line** Line of type indicating authorship.

## C

**cabalese, cablese** Set forms of words and abbreviations used in cabled copy to reduce expense of transmission.

**cancelled matter** Type material removed from stories by corrections, cuts, etc.

**C & lc** Caps and lower-case, i. e. the normal mixture of capital and small letters. Often written as u & lc (upper and lower case), which is the same thing.

**C & sm c** Caps and small caps, i. e. capital letters with the small capitals (the same height as lower-case letters) belonging to the same size and type. The abbreviation is sometimes rendered c & sc.

**canned copy** Publicity material sent to newspaper.

**caps** Capital letters, i. e. A, B, C, etc.

**caption** Line (s) of type below a picture or other illustration  
**caret** Proof reader's mark (l) indicating something is to be inserted.

**carry-forward** Instruction to comp. to carry text matter to next page or to turn.

**case** Tray holding individual type characters of type matrices.

**case rack** Cabinet for holding cases.

**case-room, case department** Printers' workshop, composing room.

**Caslon** Solid, serifed typeface often used for feature display.

**cast** Printing plate, produced by molten metal from a cast (matrix) of a forme.

**catch** Notice an error, or make a last-minute correction to a page (rectifying a bad error is called a 'good catch').

**catchline** Identifying word on copy or proofs enabling related material to be identified quickly and brought or kept together  
**centre spread** Two facing pages at middle of newspaper. A spread is any two facing pages.

**Century Maid-of-all-work** type series for modern newspapers,

serifed, with vertical stress but robust rather than elegant like Bodoni.

**CGO** Short for 'can go over'. Indicates that the copy may be held over until the following day or days.

**Chart-pak rules** Trade name for rules, dotted borders and other designs supplied on transparent sticky tape for use in makeup of photoset newspaper.

**chase** Metal frame in which type is assembled to make up a newspaper page; when filled it is called a forme.

**check** Confusingly for the layman, printer's readers use a tick which elsewhere denotes that something is correct) to indicate the need for a check to determine accuracy.

**chimney** Grouping of pictures and/or headlines (or advertisements) so that they run in a narrow band from top to bottom of the page.

**choked type** Type filled with ink or dirt, producing blotchy printwork. .

**circled numbers** Instruction to printer to spell out; applies also to abbreviations.

**circulation** Number of copies sold; not to be confused with readership, which is usually about five times as high.

**circulation manager** Newspaper executive in charge of paper's distribution to wholesale and retail trade.

**classified** Small advertisements, set single-column, and charged and measured by the line.

**classified display** Advertisements in the classified columns given prominence by rules and use of boldface or larger type, at extra charge.

**clean copy** Copy that can be read easily and without ambiguity.

**clean proof** Proof of type matter after all alterations and corrections have been made.

**close quote (s)** Punctuation mark(s) indicating end of direct quotation.

**close up** Reduce space between words, letters, of lines, of type.

**cockup** (i) Initial letter rising above the line of smaller type on which it stands; (ii) incompetent confusion at any point of the newspaper-making process.

**col** Short for column. cold type Filmset type.

**column, column measure** Basic division of newspaper page into seven, eight or nine vertical lengths of equal width (usually 101/z, 11 or 111/2 cms).

**columns-inch** An area one column wide and one inch deep, used as a unit of measurement of newspaper space, and as basis for advertising charges.

**column rule** Thin type rule used to divide adjoining columns.

**columnist** Regular writer, either on a particular subject or in a special place in the paper.

**comp** Compositor; craftsman who assembles type.

**composing stick** Small, hand-held tray on which type is composed.

**condensed type** Narrower, thinner version of standard type, providing contrast with it.

**copy** Written or type-written material which the printer sets in type according to the instructions given.

**copydesk** Table where copy editors (sub-editors) work and over which all editorial copy passes.

**copy editor** Sub-editor, marks and prepares editorial copy for printer.

**copyholder** Proof reader's assistant.

**copy paper** Usually newsprint reel ends cut into blocks or pads of a convenient size for typewriter and setting purposes.

**copyright** Ownership of original elements and form of words in written and printed material.

**copy-taster** Sub-editor who reads all incoming copy and estimates its worth for publication.

**correct** Mark proofs so as to make them conform with copy.

**cover** (i) Report on event or situation, have responsibility for a particular area of news-gathering; (ii) deputise for a colleague otherwise engaged.

**coverage** Extent of newspaper's attention to particular events or situations.

**credit** Photographer's or artist's by—line, usually in small type below or next to block/cut.

**Creed** Teleprinter machine; or copy.

**crop** Reduce limits or frame of picture to concentrate on required area, and/or to fit required 'shape.

**cross-head, cross line** Sub-heading placed in text, between paragraphs.

**cross-ref (erence)** Line of type directing attention to story or picture on another page.

**cursive** Flowing style of type, resembling hand-writing but without joining-up of letters;

**cut** Make deletions from copy or text in type.

**cut in** Make deletions from copy or type to reduce to a required length, or to get in add matter.

**cutline caption:** line(s) of type below a picture or other illustration.

**cut-off rule** Rule separating one story or advertisement from another above or below.

**cut-out** Half-tone plate in which all background has been removed, leaving figure in silhouette.

**cuttings** Items cut from previous issues and other publications and filed for reference (US clippings).

## D

**daily** Daily, usually morning, newspaper.

**dak edition** Up-country edition containing matter that has already appeared in a previous final edition.

**dateline** Place and date of origin of newspaper story; sometimes attached to by-line, sometimes given separately.

**do** Double-column.

**dead** Copy discarded (killed) and not used. Also text, headlines, etc., removed after being set or being run for an edition.

**deadline** Time by which copy must be delivered to appear in a particular edition, varies from page to page for each edition,

and also according to whose deadline it is (on the same story there will be progressively different deadlines for copy to subs, copy to printer, set matter to page, and page to press).

**deck** One unit of a multiple headline, or one line of a two-or-more-line heading.

**delete** Take out; proof reader's mark.

**descender** Part of letter protruding below x-height (e. g., in g, j, y). **design** (i) Selection of typefaces, illustrations, rules, determination of spacing and general visual style of a newspaper; (ii) layout of individual pages of articles.

**desk** Sub-editors' table.

**diary** Daily list of jobs to be covered by the newsroom.

**dirty copy** Copy so heavily marked and corrected that it cannot be read easily or is ambiguous.

**dirty proof** (i) Proof so marked that changes cannot be easily followed; (ii) proof containing so many literal and other errors that it cannot be worked on until matter is corrected.

**dis** Break up type from page for return to cases or melting for recasting; the word is short for 'distribute'.

**display** (i) Headline and illustrations for feature; (ii) display ads department.

**display ads** Larger ads, frequently designed in ad agencies and supplied to newspapers as stereo plates, to be mounted for use in page.

**dot leaders** Dotted lines (e. g. those relating one column of figures to another)

**dotted rule** Rule composed entirely of dots.

**double** (i) The same story, whether in identical or different form, appearing twice in the same edition; (ii) repetition of words in different headlines on the same page.

**double-column** Across two columns; measure is not simply twice single-column, but also includes the space between columns.

**downstyle** Style with minimum of capital letters.

**drop cap** Initial capital covering more than one line, but hanging below the top line.

**drop head** Headline in which each line is set further to the right; stepped head.

**dummy** (i) 'Miniature' of paper showing where ads have been booked; (ii) mock—up of newspaper for design experiments, rearrangements, launching and promotional use, etc.

**dummy run** Producing a new newspaper or section up to any stage short of actual publication.

**dupe** Duplicate.

**duplex** Line-casting matrix which carries two characters; also make of newspaper press.

## E

**earpieces** Ads or ad spaces to left and right of page one banner.

**ears** Curved projections of letters such as r, g.

**edit** Prepare copy for printer.

**edition** One of several separate issues of a newspaper on the same day.

**editor** Chief journalistic executive of newspaper, responsible for all it contains, including advertisements.

**editorial** Leader, leading article: expression of the newspaper's opinion.

**editorialise** Insert opinion in what is meant to be informative copy.

**egyptian** Type family distinguished by thick slab serifs and heavy main strokes; also known as 'antique'.

**Elrod** Machine which casts rules, borders, spacing.

**em** Unit of linear measurement, the square of any type size, but usually the 12pt em (six to 1 in.) also called a 'mutton'.

**embargo** Request not to publish information supplied in advance until specified time or circumstances.

**em dash** Dash one em long.

**em quad** Spacing unit, below type height, one em wide. en Half an em.

**English** Old name for 14pt type. Double English is old name for 28pt.

**engraving** Printing plate produced by engraver.

**exclusive** Newspaper word for material or information that no other newspaper has.

**extended, expanded** Typeface with width greater than normal. **extra** Extra or special edition.

**extra-condensed** Exceptionally narrow typeface.

**eyebrow** Short line in smaller type, often underlined, above main deck of headline, also called teaser, highline, overline: strap.

## F

**face** Engraved image which carries the ink to be impressed on the paper.

**facsimile** Exact reproduction of the original. Also method of transmitting news pages by wire or radio waves for printing in second centre.

**fake** Falsified story.

**faking** Patching several photographs together for special effect.

**family** All the type of any one design, e. g. 12pt Bodoni Bold and 14pt Bodoni Bold Italic, and 72pt Bodoni Black are all members of the Bodoni family.

**file** To send a story by wire; one day's output by a news agency.

**files** Back issues; library clippings/cutting are also 'on file'.

**filler** Short item used to fill out a column. Evening papers rushing to press need a good supply of fillers of varying lengths to suit the varying size of 'holes' in a page after the main stories and pictures have been placed.

**first proof** First pull of a setting after line casting which is read from copy. It is then corrected and reproofed as 'clean'.

**flag** Title plate on the first page of a newspaper. Also a piece of paper or slug inserted in galley of type to remind printers that correction, or insert, is required at that point.

**flash** Urgent, brief message on wire service announcing big story.

**flat bed press** Press which prints from a level surface.

**flong** Blank sheet of absorbent paperboard used to make mould, or matrix, in stereotyping.

**flush** To set type even with the column rule or margin, on either left or right. A 'flush left' head has all the lines ranging evenly on the left.

**fold (n.)** Point at which the newspaper is folded horizontally. Commonly, in newspaper display, 'below the fold' means, in a broadsheet 22 in. deep, any point below 11 in.

**folio** Page or page number.

**folio line** Technically, line at top of page carrying page number, but generally now means inside page line carrying page number, name of newspaper, and date.

**fc** Follow copy.

**follow copy** Instruction to printer to set copy exactly as written despite apparent errors.

**follow** Story that follows up a first day story.

**follow up** To seek new information on an earlier story; a story that takes an earlier story further.

**format** Strictly, the size and shape of a page, newspaper or book. More generally refers to the fixed elements in a newspaper design—shape and size of the page, plus the number and measure of columns to a page.

**forme** Combination of type, blocks, etc., locked up in a chase and ready to go to press or to the foundry for duplicating.

**foul copy** Copy so heavily corrected and marked it is difficult to follow,

**foul proof** Proof set aside by the compositor (usually spiked) after he has made the corrections marked on it; proof containing errors, so not to be used for sending corrections to printer.

**fount** All the characters of any one typeface in any one size needed for a piece of printing; pronounced 'font'.

**Fourth Estate** The public press; the three original Estates were the Lords Temporal, the Lord Spiritual, and the Commons.

**freelance** Self-employed writer, artist, editor or advertising man.



**fudge** Small box-like device inserted into cylinder of newspaper to permit printing directly from slugs of type. The fudge box is used for printing late news 'on the run'. The fudge or box is also the name for the place on the page where the late news, so printed, appears.

**fullface** Old term for boldface. Contraction: ff.

**full line** Line set 'flush' both to left and right.

**full measure** Type composed to the full width of the column (or page).

**full out** Type composed the full normal measure of page or column. Full left is type full out to the *left*, but ranging freely on the right; full right is type full out to the right, but ranging freely on the left.

**full point** Printer's term for full stop.

**furniture** Wood or metal, less than type high, used to fill in blank spaces in the chase.

## G

**galley** Shallow, three-sided metal tray in which type is assembled and proofed; also, about twenty column-inches of text matter.

**galley press** Press which produces printed image on proofing paper of type in galley.

**galley proof** Impression taken on a strip of paper by inking a galley of type, and 'pulling' a proof so that the type can be checked with the original copy for errors.

**galley slug** Slug with catch word, phrase, or number placed on galley of type to identify it, e. g. News 20.

**Garalde** British Standards Institution term for classifying what is popularly called old face roman type, such as Bembo, Garamond, Caslon.

**gate-fold** Wider or deeper page in magazine or book which has to be folded to fit the format. To be read properly it has to be swung open like a gate. Usually sold to advertisers in a magazine.

**get in** Instruction to printer to make adjustments to spacing, etc., to accommodate extra letters, or words.

**ghost** Ghost writer is the author of stories that bear someone else's name.

**give it some air** Instruction to printer to add white space.

**glossy** A shiny-finished photograph usually preferred for making half-tone engravings; a magazine printed on glossy paper.

**gone to bed, gone to press** Page or edition forme has left the composing room and is being, or about to be, printed.

**gothic** Type family of monotone letter forms without serifs and with vertical emphasis. Gothics is US term; Europeans prefer to call these types grots (grotesques).

**great primer** Old name for 18pt type.

**green proof** Uncorrected proof. .

**grid** Basic divisions and sub-divisions of a page which the designer uses as a skeleton for his layout. Also clear sheet of plastic used in making up photaset papers. It is a bit larger than page size and is graduated in lines; a blank sheet of paper is attached to the grid and bromides are assembled on it in the same way that type is put into a chase.

**grot** Abbreviation for grotesque, type family of monotone letter forms without serifs. Modern types based on early nineteenth century forms and, despite name, have subtle appeal which makes them best of sans serifs for newspaper display. US term for grots is gothics.

**gutter** Blank margins between two printed pages. Also a river of white caused by wide spacing or spacing occurring in awkward pattern.

## H

**hairline** Thinnest stroke in letter form; thinnest rule used in newspapers. Also unwanted wisps of metal which sometimes adhere between letters on a slug and so impair printing.

**hair space** Thinnest spaces in line-casting, six to an em or thinner.

**half-tone** Engraved plate reproducing, by pattern of dots, gradations of tone of photograph or drawing.

**hammer** One-or two-word heading set flush left over main heading of about half the size.

**handout** Copy supplied by speaker or publicity agent.

**hand-set** Type set by hand; newspapers try to avoid much handsetting, though Ludlow headline matrices are assembled by hand before casting.

**hanging indent** Style for text and headline composition in which first line is set full measure and all succeeding lines are indented an equal amount at the left.

**hanging par** One paragraph set with a hanging indent. hdg, head Abbreviation for headline.

**head to come** Notice to composing room that headline will be sent after the story.

**headline schedule** Sheet or booklet displaying all headline types used by a newspaper. Displays are grouped in column widths, or scored with pica rulings: unit count per column may be given.

**hold over** News copy which is to be set but not published without a release notice. Speeches are often supplied by *handout* ahead of delivery; obituaries are also commonly 'set and hold' material.

**holding** Delaying sending a page or edit on to press while waiting for a late story.

**hold over** Instruction to keep, rather than discard, the type of all or part of a story which has not been published. A held-over story is one intended to publish at the next opportunity.

**hole** Gap in page chase or dummy where type and illustrations insufficient to fill.

**hood** Rules arranged around three sides of a headline, top, left and right.

**horizontal make-up** Style in which multi-column headlines are arranged across the page with text type running underneath in short legs. ' .

**hot metal** All metal printing materials; composition by metal rather than by film-set type which is pasted-up.

**house rules** Style notes and procedures laid down by individual offices.

## I

**IENS** Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society. Organisation of newspaper owners.

**IFWJ** Indian Federation of Working Journalists.

**ILNA** Indian Language Newspapers Association.

**imposing stone** Full title of the composing room 'stone'.

**imprint** Name and address of the publisher.

**indent** To set narrower than normal measure by having blank white space at either beginning or end. Pronounced Indent.

**indentation, indentation** White space at the beginning or end when a line is set short of full measure. The usual paragraph indentation is one em quad of the body size.

**inferior letters/figs** Small letters or figures cast on the lower part of typeface as in H<sub>2</sub>O.

**in hand** Copy is being set or a block is being made.

**insert** Copy or type to be inserted in the body of a story to interrupt the sequence already set or being set. Inserts are marked A, B, C, etc., and their placing is indicated on galley proof.

**inside columns** Columns on any page which are not either at extreme left or extreme right.

**inside page** Any page except the front or back.

**intaglio** Printing process from sunken images.

**Intertype** Trade name of keyboarded line-casting machine.

**in the page** Type already transferred from galley to chase.

**intro** Introduction or opening paragraph of a story.

**inverted pyramid** Headline style of centred lines in which each successive line is shorter than the one above: also story structure which arranges facts in descending order of importance.

**issue** : All copies of one day's newspaper. An issue may consist of several *editions*.

**italic** Type with letters and characters that lean to the right.

**ital (s)** Abbreviation for italic.

**ITU** International Typographical Union.

## J

**jim dash** Small rule, usually three ems long, to separate decks of headline or headline from text.

**journalese** Offensive term for shoddier styles of newspaper writing.

**jump** To continue a story from one page to another.

**jump head** Headline on continued part of story.

**jump line** 'Continued from page I . . .'

**jump story** Story continued from a previous page.

**justify** To space out a line of type so that it fills the column measure; to space out a column of type so that it fills the page measure.

**Justowriter** Trade name of typewriter which sets cold type from perforated tape.

## K

**keep down** Instruction to printer to set in lower—case.

**keep in** Instruction to compositor to use thinnest spacing possible to keep all words in a line or section.

**keep standing** Instruction to hold type available for use.  
**Keep up** Instruction to printer to set in capitals.

**kicker** (US) Small headline, usually underscored, placed above and to left of main headline. Also eyebrow, teaser, overline.

**kill** Do not publish. The instruction may refer to part or all of a story. Copy marked 'kill' is spiked ; type is killed by discarding in the hellbox.

**Klischograph** Trade name for electronic engraving machine.

**knifing corrections** Corrections made in photo-composed newspapers by chopping up printed images and superimposing on photoset material in the page grid.

## L

**label** News headline with no force or life; or standing features headline such as Women, Sport, etc.

**late man** Deskman who stays behind to fudge or replate for late news when last edition has gone to press.

**layout** Ian showing how type matter is to be fitted into space available.

**lead** Pronounced 'Teed'. First paragraph of a news story.

**lead** Pronounced 'led'. Strip of metal less than type high, used for increasing the space between lines of type.

**lead all** A lead (leed) or intro containing a general summary of a long news story.

**leader** Leading article or editorial carrying newspaper's opinion. Leader page carries the leader and other opinion.

**leaders** Dots to lead the eye across the page.

**lead story** Story supporting the main display headlines of a page.

**lead to come** Signal to printer that the opening paragraphs—lead or intro—will come later.

**legend** Obsolete word for caption or cutline.

**legman** Reporter who collects facts but does not write the story.

**letterpress** Printing from a relief, or raised, surface. The raised type and blocks are inked and come in direct contact with the paper.

**letterspacing** Thin spacing inserted between letters of a word, as in this example, usually to justify a line.'

**lift** To carry type forward from one edition to another, either all or part of a story or illustration. Also to steal a story from another publication.

**light box** Back-lighted work surface for viewing transparencies, negatives, and for marking on back of photo prints.

**light face** Type with lighter appearance, compared with bold.

**light table** Back—lighted work surface used in photo—composed newspapers. The compositor places the page on it to assemble the elements of the page.

**line** Single line of headline or text type.

**lineage, linage** Measure of printed material based on the number of lines printed. Freelance copy is lineage copy because it is normally paid so much a line. In US, term more commonly used for amount of advertising printed in specific period.

**line-and-tone** Process-engraved printing block combining both screen and line-etching techniques.

**line block** An engraving which prints only black and white without the shades of a *half-tone*.

**line-casters** Typesetting machines such as Linotype and ntertype which cast text type in lines. Also operator who uses eyboard of a line-casting machine.

**line drawing** Brush or pen drawing consisting of black-and-white element.

**line up** To arrange evenly flush left or right.

**Lino** Abbreviation for Linotype.

**Linofilm** Trade name of photosetting machine.

**Linotron** Trade name for photosetting machine using cathode ray tube.

**Linotype** Trade name for keyboarded line-casting machine.

**lithography** Planographic method of printing from ink impressed on a sheet.

**live copy** Copy yet to be set into type.

**lock up** (a page) The process of placing the type and illustrations in a chase, and adjusting the *furniture* and *quoins* so that the type is firmly held and the forme can be sent to foundry or presses.

**logo** Abbreviation for logotype.

**logotype** Nameplate for a newspaper or identification of a section business, family, etc., cast on one block of type.

**long primer** Old name for 10 pt type.

**long run** When a printing press is not interrupted for a long time by a new edition, or when a page similarly remains unchanged; or greater-than-usual space given to a single story or feature.

**loose** Too much letter-or word-spacing in composition.

**lower-case** Letters which are not capitals, thus c, d, e. Also the name given to the composing case which holds these letters.

**Ludlow** Trade name for machine which casts larger sizes of headline on a slug from hand-assembled matrices.

## M

**machine border** Border cast on such machines as Elrod, Linotype, Intertype, Monotype.

**machine-set** Type which can be set mechanically on a keyboarded line-casting machine, as distinct from hand-assembled type or matrices. Newspapers prefer machine-set text, captions and small headlines for speed.

**magazine** Container which holds matrices on a line-casting machine.

**make over** Process of rearranging a page of type or series of pages to accommodate later news, improve appearance or make corrections.

**make-ready** The process of preparing a page forme or stereo plate for the presses. Sheets of paper trimmed and laid beneath areas, especially blocks. To ensure an even impression on every part of the printing area.

**make up** To take type from a galley and arrange in pages with illustrations; the physical appearance of the paper; and sometimes, the dummy page plan for the disposition of stories and pictures.

**make up editor** Journalist who supervises the make-up of the paper in the composing room.

**mangle** Stereotyper's moulding machine which takes a papier-mache impression of the type.

**margins** The unprinted surround of the area occupied by reading matter.

**masking** Technique of obscuring part of a photograph (e. g. by paper overlay) to indicate the section to be printed.

**master proofs** Set of proofs, galley or page incorporating all writer's and editor's corrections.

**masthead** Strictly, heading on editorial or leader page which gives paper's name and the paper's ownership and management. Often confused with nameplate or flag.

**mat** Abbreviation of matrix.

**matrix, matrices (pl.)** A die or mould from which type is cast. Also: the papier-mache mould from which a stereo plate is made.



**matter** Any type or blocks. It may be body matter (the text setting); standing matter (not intended for immediate use); straight matter (simple setting); solid matter (without leads); open matter (leaded); live matter; dead matter; and so on.

**matt finish** Dull finish to photograph or printing paper; contrast glossy.

**measure** The width of a line, column, or page of type, usually expressed in pica ems.

**medium** The weight of type the maker puts forward, under the name of the family, as representing the design in normal weight from which variants have been derived.

**mf** Abbreviation for 'more follows'.

**Mickey Mouse** A Linotype line-casting machine stripped down to its casting mechanism so that headlines can be cast from hand assembled Linotype matrices.

**middle leads** 2pt leads (leds): called middle because they come between thin and thick leads.

**middle space** A space of four ems.

**minion** Old name for 7pt type.

**minionette** Old name for 6½ pt type.

**minuscules** Lower-case letters of the alphabet.

**misprint** Inaccurate setting, a typographical error.

**mitre** Corner-piece of rule or border cut at angle of 45 degrees to form a perfect joint; to bevel a rule or border so that there is a neat fit at the right-angle.

**mitred rule** Angle-corner rule used to make perfect joints.

**modern** Term for typefaces having abrupt contrast between thin and thick strokes; the axis of the curves is vertical; and there are often no brackets on the serifs.

**mofussil** Indian newspaper term for district or tahsil news; also mofussil desk, etc.

**Monotype** Composing machine which casts each character on a separate type body.

**montage** Arrangement or mounting in one composition of pictorial elements from several sources.

**more** Written at foot of copy or proof to show that more is to follow.

**morgue** File of prepared obituaries.

**mtc** Abbreviation for 'more to come'.

**multiple rules** Three or more type rules of the same or differing point sizes cast on a single body and running parallel.

**must** An instruction, from a senior newspaper executive, that the copy or proof on which it is written, must be followed and published without fail.

**mutton** Printers' slang for the em.

## N

**Nebitype** Trade name for Italian machine which casts metal slugs from hand—assembled matrices—its own or Ludlow/Intertype/Linotype.

**negative working** Process used in production of photoset web offset newspapers. Most pictures are inserted as negatives. On the paste-up an opaque patch is placed where a picture is to go. When the page is photographed, the patch, being reversed, becomes a window and shows clear on the page negative. The screen negative of the illustration is then placed in the window.

**news hole** Total editorial space in a newspaper after the ads have been placed.

**newsprint** Generic term to describe the pulp paper widely used for newspaper production.

**nonp** Abbreviation for non-pareil. Commonly used to indicate spacing—'add a nonp' means add half a pica (12pt) em of spacing, or about one-twelfth of an inch.

**nonpareil** Pronounced nonprul. Old name for opt.

**notch** Opening cut out of corner of engraving to accommodate type : an external *mortise*. q. v.

**NUJ** National Union of Journalists, trade union.

**nut** Printer's term for an *en*, the unit of measurement half as wide as an *em* of the same type.

## O

**OANA** Organisation of Asian News Agencies. **obit** Obituary, biography of person who has died.

**oblique stroke** One sloping to left or right, diverging from vertical or horizontal.

**odd folio** First, third, and all unevenly numbered pages. The odd folio is always a right-hand page.

**office style** House style : standard system of spellings and punctuation laid down for a newspaper so that continuity is recognisable or recognizable, depending on style.

**offprint** Reprint of an article or illustration specially run off after publication in a newspaper or magazine.

**offset** Strong candidate for most misused term in history of newspaper production. It is not a description of setting, but of printing. Papers set by photographic methods are often printed offset, but papers set in metal can also be printed offset, which means printed by the planographic printing process in which the image is transferred from a lithographic plate to a rubber roller, then set off this on to paper. Offset has become a synonym for lithography.

**offset blanket** Blanket made of rubber which takes designs from the lithographic plate and impresses them on the paper.

**offset gravure** Fine printing process giving wide range of tonal expression. Printing is by plates and impression rollers as in offset, but here the image is in intaglio or beneath the surface of the plates.

**offset paper** Absorptive, non-curling paper suitable for offset printing process; or the newspaper produced by offset printing.

**offset press** Press which prints by the indirect method of lithography.

**OK** Proof-reader's sign to indicate that there is no error on the proof.

**on the hook** Edited copy awaiting setting in the composing room.

**op-ed** American expression to describe page facing the editorial or leader page.

**open format** Style of newspaper page with white space dividing columns.

**open matter** Type which is either well leaded or has lots of short lines.

**open quotes** Begin with quotation marks (""); the beginning of a quotation set off by quotation marks.

**open spacing** Wide spacing of type, whether by white between letters, words, or lines.

**overbanner** Banner headline running higher than the nameplate of the newspaper. Also called sky-line(r) and over-the-proof in U.S.

**overlay** To place a transparent covering over an illustration, or a film set page over a filmset page, to indicate colour separation or alterations or corrections.

**overline** Display type over a picture, also sometimes called a title. Also a line of smaller type over the main headline, which, in turn, may be called a strap or an eyebrow.

**overmatter, over set** Type set for an edition but squeezed out by shortage of space.

**over measure** Type set too wide for space allocated.

**overnight pages** Pages scheduled to go to press early, late p. m. or early a. m., before work begins on the pages of the day's newspaper.

**Oxford rule** Heavy and light rules running close together in parallel, not to be confused with simple parallel or double rules.

## P

**p** Abbreviation for page, hence p 1 : p 2 etc. Its plural is pp.

**padding** Portions of copy not necessary for the narrative.

**pagination** The numbering of pages; the pagination budget for a newspaper is the number of pages it is budgeted to achieve.

**panel** Short item indented either side and with a strong rule top and bottom. Some offices still call it a panel when it has rules on four sides, but box is the preferred term;

**paragraph indent** Beginning in first line of a paragraph with a white space, usually one pica em quad.

**paragraph mark** Signal to a line-caster to begin the line with an indentation.

**parallel rule** Rule with two lines in parallel and of equal weight.

**parentheses** (Brackets).

**paste-on** Cold type pasted on to page plan for the platemaker.

**paste-up** To arrange cold type on a page plan (or 'mechanical', as it is sometimes called) for the platemaker.

**pearl** Old name for 5pt type.

**perforator** Machine which punches holes in tape to a pattern which, when fed into a line-casting machine, produces lines of type. Also the operator of a perforator or tape-punching machine.

**period** Another name for full point, full stop.

**photo-chase** Film bromides pasted on to thin strips of polystyrene for easier movement. Often used to collate columns of classified advertising.

**photo-engraving** See *process engraving*.

**photogravure** Fine printing method. The paper sheet passes between a rubber-covered impression cylinder and an intaglio plate, photographically prepared, and in so doing takes the ink from the finely etched recesses in the plate.

**Photo-Lathe** Trade name for mechanical engraving machine.  
Photon Trade name for phototype-setting machine.

**photoset** Abbreviation for photo-composition-the reproduction photographically on film or paper of lines of type characters. Photoset newspapers are called cold type papers in contrast to hot metal papers composed from lines of metal type.

**Photostat** Misused as general term for photo-copy. It is a trade name for the machine and the photo-copies it produces.

**PIB** Press Information Bureau.

**pica** Printer's unit of measurement, there being 12 points in a pica. Also old name for 12 pt type.

**pica em** Standard unit of square measurement, a pica em being 12 × 12 points.

**pick up** Proof instruction from editorial to pick up type already set, and incorporate with new material.

**pics, pix** Abbreviation for pictures, usually half-tone illustrations.

**pie, pie line** Disarranged type, freak line cast when a Linotype operator has made a mistake and fills out a line at random.

**plain rule** Rule with plain, straight lines, in variety of sizes, but without decoration.

**planer** Flat wooden block which comps place over the type in the chase and hammer to ensure type surface is even.

**plate** Semi-cylindrical metal printing sheet cast from a *flog* for attachment to rotary press; or photographically engraved metal.

**platen** Surface which holds paper and presses it against an inked relief surface; roll holding paper in typewriter.

**play** Editorial term indicating emphasis to be given to a story. Points in a story can be played up or down or played lightly; if the story itself is played up it is given a big display.

**plug** To push the popularity of a show, book, or song by publicity. Also a wedge of wood used in some printing and engraving. **point** Unit of measurement in type. It is about one seventy-second of an inch, actually 0. 01383 in. The European Didot point (q. v.) is slightly larger.

**point size** The measurement of a type from the front of the base to the back. Also called the body size.

**point system** System of casting type and measuring areas in multiples of the point (q. v.).

**points** Punctuation marks. A full point is what follows the last letter of this sentence.

**Pool** Non-aligned news agencies pool.

**pork-chop** Tiny half-column engraving of someone's face; also called thumbnail.

**poster make-up** Format which uses the front page as a poster headlines and pictures, with little or no text, designed to attract the reader inside.

**poster type** Big sizes of type, upwards of 72pt, commonly made of wood.

**pot** Holds the molten type metal in a line-caster.

**PR** Public or press relations.

**precede** Pronounced 'precede'. A new lead or story which takes precedence over an earlier story. Or a preliminary paragraph or two set up in different type to introduce, summarise or explain a succeeding story.

**preferred position** Advertiser's request for position on a page. preliminary Introductory material.

**primary letters** Lower-case letters without either ascender or descender, i. e. x, o, a, etc.

**primer** Old name for 18pt type; long primer (LP) is old name for 10pt.

**print** Total number of newspapers printed; or the positive picture taken from a photographic negative.

**printer** Sometimes means *the printer*, the man in charge of the composing room. Strictly, a craftsman who makes up formes or operates the presses, but loosely used to describe comps, line-casters, proof readers, and all those engaged in the making of print. Also abbreviation for teleprinter.

**process engraving** General term for producing an image on a sensitised metal plate.

**proof** Inked impression of type, or engraving, or page for study of accuracy or appearance before sending to press.

**proofhook** Assembly point of galley or page proofs.

**proof press** Machine for printing a galley or page proof. Proofs are said to be 'pulled' rather than printed.

**proof reader** Person who reads the proof to make sure it follows copy accurately.

**proof reader's marks** Standardised system of marks for correcting errors on proof.

**proof-slip** A long *galley proof*. Also called slip proof.

**Pro-Type** Trade name for phototype-setting machine, mainly for headlines.

**PTI** Press Trust of India, a national news agency.

**pull** Synonymous with proof. A proof is said to be pulled, so a pull of a galley or page is a proof of galley or page.

**pull-out** Section of a newspaper or magazine that can be extracted easily and read separately.

**punch-tape head** The signal from the keyboard or computer drives the punch-head to produce punch-tape for feeding into photo-typesetting machine or linecaster for hot metal.

**put to bed** To put the forme or stereo plate on the press. When a page has 'gone to bed', it is too late to make corrections.

## Q

**Q and A** Question-and-answer copy, as in formal interview or court badinage.

**quad, quadrat** A space. A piece of blank type of equal body size but less than type high used to fill spaces in a line of type. Quads are made six to a fount so that their widths are multiples of the em of the size of type used. Thus the em quad is the square of the body type; the en quad is half the body, and the smallest, the hair space, is about one-twelfth the body.

**query** Question raised on copy or on proof, or in a message to a news agency. Also a freelancer's inquiry whether a newspaper is interested in such-and-such a story.

**quoin** Wedge-shaped metal device for locking type and plates in chases.

**quoin key** Iron key to tighten quoins in locking up chase.

**quotation marks, quotes** Punctuation marks to indicate that words are those actually used by a speaker or report. Can be double ("") or single (""). "If double quotes begin, single quotes are used for 'quotes within quotes' and vice-versa." Headlines should have single quotes; books usually have single quotes in text, newspapers double quotes.

**quote** Quotation; in newspapers, often means a sentence or paragraph of a speaker's words.

## R

**random** Composing-room table, divided into galley-widths, where galleys are assembled before make-up.

**rate card** Schedule of advertising spaces available and the cost of each.



**readability** A story is said to be readable and have readability if it has a compelling narrative easy to grasp. Readability in typography means the ease with which the eye skims the type.

**reader** Man who checks proofs for consistency with copy, and corrects errors in setting, punctuation, etc. The 'readers' is the department where proof readers and their assistants, copy-holders, do their work as correctors of the press.

**readership** Not the same as circulation of a newspaper. Something like five people read a single copy.

**recast** To cast a new plate for a page whose content, usually editorial but sometimes advertising, has been changed; replated.

**reel** Roll of newsprint fed into the presses; the revolving drum or core which receives and winds the paper.

**reel-end** Part of the paper machine where the web is reeled up; the last few yards of a reel of newsprint.

**reglet** Narrow strip of wood 12 or 6 point wide, for spacing type in the former

**regular type** Standard width of a typeface, as distinct from extended or condensed versions. The preferred term, is medium type.

**rejig** Editorial alterations to a story in type, usually involving a change in the sequence of paragraphs in type, deletions, and the insertion of new matter. When a story is rejigged, the type standing in the page will be taken out and the new arrangement assembled on the random.

**release** A press note or a handout; to 'okay' for publication.

**repro proofs** Proofs of high quality, on art paper usually, to be made into engravings.

**re-punch** Repetition of a telegraphed message by the sending station, usually for the correction of an error in transmission.

**retouching** Improving a photograph by painting in certain tones; most useful in painting out any streaks on photographs received by wire, before engraving, most questionable when photographic content is altered or inserted.

**Reuters** British news agency.

**revamp** Altering a story by changing the sequence of paragraphs, but not by rewriting.

**reverse indent** The first line of type is full measure and the remainder of the paragraph lines are indented one or more ems at the beginning. This is the reverse of normal indentation where it is the first line only which is indented. Also called a *hanging indent*.

**revise** Second or subsequent proof incorporating corrections made from previous proof.

**rewrite** To write a story again, rather than simply edit the copy. American newspapers have a rewrite man to put telephoned facts into prose.

**rivers** Ugly streaks of white space in a page caused by over-spacing between letters and words.

**RO** 'Run on' : instruction on copy to set two written paragraphs as one, or treat set-out matter as a single paragraph.

**rotary press** Conventional newspaper printing press in which both printing surface and impression cylinder rotate at high speed.

**round-up** Collation of separate items into one story or under one headline; a common one is a weather round-up.

**ruby** Old name for 5½pt. English equivalent of US agate.

**rule** Type-high metal strip that prints as line or lines.

**run** Duration of printing an edition; or number of copies printed.

**run in full** Senior editorial instruction that copy must not be cut.

**running story** A story which changes rapidly between editions, as in a plane crash. Or a story which develops over several days.

**roman** Group of alphabets in the printers' fount which is distinguished from italic by verticality and the shape of certain lowercase letters.

**roman numerals** I, 11, 111, IV, V or i, ii, iii, iv or v, instead of 1,2,3,4,5.

**routing** Cutting away unwanted metal from any part of an engraving plate.

**rush** Urgent news agency summary of news break. Or a direction on copy asking the composing room to give it priority.

## S

**sandwich** Panel inset in text type cross-referring to associated material elsewhere; or, a reefer in a sideless box.

**sans, sans serif** Type without serifs on the ends of the strokes.

**Scan-A-Graver** Trade name for mechanical engraver producing plastic half-tone relief plates.

**schedule** There is the time schedule, or sheet, listing deadlines for pages, the chief sub's or city editor's schedule recording stories processed; and the headline schedule which categorises all headlines used in the paper, often to a code.

**scoop** A story or picture of some importance nobody else has; an exclusive.

**screamer** Crude, sensational headline; exclamation mark.

**screen** Given number of dots to a square inch (of a process engraving) which make up the light and shade of the picture. Fine screen engraving is suitable only for the finer quality paper.

**seal** Wording or symbol at the top of the front page indicating the edition, i. e. city edition, late edition., etc.

**see copy** Direction to readers or composing room to check proof against the copy.

**see other proof** Indication that two or more proofs need to be combined to make all the necessary changes.

**see scheme** Direction to composing room to check page proof against the page scheme or layout; or to set a piece of copy according to a scheme sent to the composing room.

**self-contained** Any item which stands by itself—a self-contained caption or picture is one without an accompanying story; a self-contained story is one without any *cross-references* or *sidebars*.

**send (a page)** Dispatch a page forme to the stereo department.

**send (copy)** Usually the instruction is to 'send it out' or 'send it down' or 'send it up' and they all mean the same thing : send the copy to be set.

**separation** Use of colour filters so that single-colour negatives can be made of multi-coloured illustration.

**sequence** Picture strip showing consecutive action in a number of pictures taken shortly after one another.

**Serial** Of, in, forming, a series; article published in instalments. Generally used for fictional or biographical feature material and or investigative stories.

**series** Size range of any design of typeface. Also number of articles pursuing same theme but in different issues of the paper.

**serif** Line or stroke projecting from the end of a main stroke. Serifs are of different forms and join the strokes in different ways, and some types have no serifs (sans serifs).

**set** To compose in type, also the width of a piece of type from side to side.

**set and hold** Set in type but do not publish without a *release*.

**set close** Instruction to printer that minimum spacing should be used.

**set flush** To set matter 'full out' or without indenting.

**set off** Desirable and deliberate in offset printing, being the transfer of image from rubber blanket to newsprint; but accidental and undesirable in letter press printing, being the transfer of ink from one printed page to the facing page.

**set open** Instruction to printer that type is to be well spaced.

**set out** Instruction to printer to tabulate the matter, setting up letters from a case of type so that wrong founts can be Picked out.

**set solid** Instruction to printers to dispense with leads (leds) and to set type on body of same size—8 on 8pt, rather than, say, 8 on 9.

**set up** To compose in type; or instruction to set in capital letters.

**Shadow** typeface in which a three-dimensional effect is created, such as Cameo, Graphique, Gill Shadow.

**shank** Rectangular main body of a piece of type; also called the stem.

**sheet** Slang for newspaper.

**shirt-tail** Brief addition to a long story.

**shooting a page** Term in photoset newspapers. When the bromides of type are assembled in position on the page, the page goes to the camera room for 'shooting'—it goes into negative form ready for plate-making.

**short measure** Type set narrower than the standard width of a column in a newspaper.

**shorts** Stories of a few paragraphs with smallish headlines (UP to, say, two lines of 24pt) intended for use down the page.

**short takes** Sheets of copy of only a paragraph or two; to 'send in short takes' means to send copy urgently to the composing room a sheet or two at a time.

**shotgun head** Multi-deck headline—two or more decks of heading on the same story, each deck consisting of one or more lines.

**shoulder** That part of the upper surface of a type which carries no relief image itself and on which the relief image stands.

**shrinkage** Narrowing of the stereotype flong during moulding process, producing page fractionally smaller than original typeset page.

**sidebar** Story related to main story and run next to it.

**side-head** Small subsidiary heading in the body of a story, set left instead of centred (crosshead).

**sidelight** Similar to sidebar but with emphasis on personalities.

**side stick, foot sticks** Pieces of wedged shaped metal or wood used to tighten type in a galley.

**single leaded** Lines of body type separated by the insertion of a thin lead between each line.

**single quotes** 'These'. Better for headlines.

**single rules** Rule printing one light line.

**situationer** News feature usually giving background information, as distinct from urgent, 'spot' news, and so will probably hold until space is available or events make it topical.

**size down** Instruction to printer to decrease the size of type to the next size down unless specified.

**size up** Instruction to printer to increase the type to the next size unless specified.

**sked** Slang for schedule.

**sky-line** (r) Headline running above the nameplate across the top of the page; also called over-the-roof.

**slab serif** Typefaces with heavy, square-ended serifs with or without brackets (i. e. gentle curve) at the junction. Faces such as Rock-well, Clarendon, Playbill.

**slot** The centre of the inner side of the copy desk, traditionally horseshoe-shaped, the slot man or slot is the copy editor who sits here and instructs copy editors who sit on the rim.

**slug** Line of type cast on a line-casting machine; spacing material six points thick; the identifying word or phrase given to each story which is set in one line at the top of the story and discarded when the story is complete and 'clean'.

**small caps** Capital letters smaller than regular capitals of a particular typeface; they are much the same size as the lowercase letters of the same fount.

**solid** Type lines without any space between them.

**spaceband** Metal wedge which automatically provides spaces of varying width to justify lines set by line-caster.

**spaces** Graded units, less than type high, used to separate words or letters.

**Spaetacolor** Form of preprinted colour advertising.

**spike** Basic tool of sub-editor and especially copy-taster, being a metal spindle on which unwanted copy is impaled. 'Spike it' means 'kill it, but keep the body available'.

**splash** The main story on the front page; the front page itself.

**spot colour** Non-process colour. No special plate is prepared but colour is applied during the run to selective parts of the page, usually one place and one small amount of colour, as in a coloured seal or coloured fudge.

**spot news** Unexpected news such as accidents or fires, as distinct from scheduled news (court cases, speeches).

**spread** Two facing pages, or a major display which covers part of two facing pages; also an advertisement that covers full page or almost.

**staggered head** Headline in which each line is set with an indentation on the previous line; opposite effect of a centred headline.

**standfirst** Brief few sentences to introduce a news or feature, set in distinctive type at the top.

**standing type** Type composed and stored awaiting use.

**stars** Common symbol for editions—one star, two star, etc. — often apparent only to the trained eye.

**stereotype** Plate cast in metal from a papier-mache mould of type and/or blocks. Stereotyping is the process.

**stet** Let it stand : a sign on copy that a correction or deletion has been made in error and should be ignored. The words affected are underlined with dots and the word 'stet' written in the margin.

**stick** Metal tray used to hold type being set by hand. Its size provides a rough common measurement: a stick of type is about twenty lines of 8pt type, two inches or so.

**story** Any news item, any editorial item in a newspaper other than letters and illustrations.

**straight matter** Ordinary editorial setting in regular column width without illustrations.

**straight news** Story without colour or interpretation of any kind. strap Subsidiary headline in smaller type over main headline.

**streamer** Headline running across top of all or most of the columns.

**stringer** Non-staff reporter who is paid on the basis of what is published, plus perhaps, a small retaining fee.

**strip in** To combine line and half-tone negatives before making offset plates; to arrange for a headline to be superimposed on a half-tone block.

**strip the forme** Take type and furniture out of the chase.

**style** System of spellings, punctuation, capitalisation, etc., followed in an office.

**style sheet** Pages listing office or house style.

**sub** Sub-editor; to edit a story and write the headline.

**sub-editor** The editorial craftsman who edits copy for sense and length and legal safety and writes the headlines.

**sub-head** Small subsidiary heading in the body of a story, usually centred.

**subst** Substitute, meaning story so marked is to run in place of another.

**Supercaster** Trade name of Monotype machine which casts large sizes of type for headlines, borders, rules and leads.

**swelled rule** A rule that is thicker in the centre and tapers to each end.

**symmetrical make-up** Attempting to balance display elements in a page on either side of a given central axis.

**syndicate** Organisation selling and buying feature or news material; group of newspapers; to sell editorial material or circulate widely.

## T

**tab, tabloid** Newspaper half the size of broadsheet, approximately 11 in. wide by 16 in. deep.

**tag line** Smaller line attached to a headline to attribute source of statement there.

**tailpiece** Short addition to a story, separately displayed, usually of only a paragraph or two and of a light nature.

**take** Each sheet of copy for a story. Unit of news agency transmission.

**take in** Instruction to the typesetter to thin-space a line or lines to get in an extra syllable or word; direction on proof to incorporate or, insert matter at the point.

**tape** Strictly, ribbon of paper with perforation which actuate a teleprinter to type copy or a line-caster to set copy in metal. Also loosely used to refer to news agency or wire copy.

**Tass** News agency of the Soviet Union, now ITAR-TASS.

**taste** To skim a story or stories in copy and assess their editorial value.



**taster** Abbreviation for copy-taster.

**teaser** Headline or caption to picture which rather than informing the reader intrigues him to read further : e. g. 'Why the soprano blushed'.

**Telephoto** Photograph transmitted telegraphically. To send a picture by wire, or a photograph taken with a telescopic lens.

**Teletype** Machine that types out news coming from a news agency—too often in capital letters that hinder readability. Also called a teleprinter or ticker or just 'the wire'.

**teletypesetting** System in which linecasting machines are operated from code in perforated tape. Tape may be punched at the local plant but in US is commonly supplied to newspapers all over the country by central news agency.

**text** Body matter, as distinct from illustrations, headlines and white space.

**text type** Type in which the body of the paper is set, as distinct from headline or display type.

**Text type** Old English or blackletter type style with bold thick bodystrokes and sharp thin serifs.

**thick lead** 3pt lead (led).

**thick space** Space of 3 points.

**think piece** Article of opinion or interpretation rather than straight news report.

**thinlead** 1 or 8½pt lead (led).

**thirty, 30, 30-dash** Sign at the end of a story, either in type or copy. It is written '30'; in metal it is a dash of about six picas.

**thumbnail** Half-column portrait block, also called pork-chop; or rough small dummy. for advertisement; also single quotation mark or apostrophe. -

**tight story** One written so concisely it cannot be cut without damage.

**tight sub** Sub-editor expert at slicing the fat from a story.

**time copy** 'Anytime' copy, meaning copy-or type matter-which is timeless and can be run at any time.

**tint block** Block or surface used for printing flat background colour.

**tinted headline** One in which the black of the type has been softened to a grey.

**tip** Hint or information worth checking for a story.

**tombstoning** Old-fashioned newspaper display in which a page was made up of single-column headlines in identical type side by side.

**tone** The amount of reflected light; the difference of the areas of light and dark on a printed page.

**top deck** The first deck or bank of a headline of several decks.

**tramlines** Unsightly effect of two rules running close and parallel.

**Transitional** Typeface mid-way between old style and modern, or Galalde and Didone in the British Standard, and there defined as typefaces in which the axis of the curves is vertical or inclined slightly to the left; the series are bracketed, and those of the ascenders in the lowercase are oblique.

**transpose** Mark on proof (*trs*) instructing the printer to change the order of the lines, words, or letters as indicated.

**trim** To shorten copy by small amounts-nibbling at it rather than cutting severely.

**trs** Abbreviation for *transpose*.

**TTS** Teletypesetter, the trade name for a machine which does *tele-typesetting* (*q. v.*).

**turn head** Headline on inside page identifying resumption of story continued from another page.

**turn line** Line of type, in bold or italic usually, directing reader to continuation of story on another page ('continued page'); also the line on the inside page identifying the beginning of the continuation ('continued from page one')

**turtle** Steel trolley with a flat surface used to move a single page forme from the stone; just large enough to hold a single page, the turtle is also used sometimes as a make-up stone.

**two-decker, three-decker** Headline composed of two or three decks, i. e. self-contained units which may each have several lines.

**two-line cap** Capital letter, usually at the beginning of text as a *rising initial* having the depth of two lines of accompanying text.

**two-line double pica** Old name for 44pt type.

**two-line English** Old name for 28pt type.

**two-line pica** Old name for 24pt type.

**two-pt lead** Lead (led) which is two points thick, the commonest.

**type** A piece of metal or wood bearing a relief image of a letter or character for printing.

**type area** The amount of space on a page to be filled with type.

**typeface** Any individual type; its appearance when printed. Usually defined by name of type family (e. g. Bodoni, Century, etc.), style (roman, italic, etc.) and point size,

**type high** Of the same height as type : English type is 0. 918 of an inch high.

**typographical error** Mistake in setting the copy (as distinct from editorial error).

**Typesetter** Trade name for photographic machine producing cold display type.

## U

**uc** *Upper-case*, or capitals.

**undated story** A pull-together or round-up in which material from several sources is presented in one story; copy to be used when convenient.

**underline** Wording, call it *legend or caption* or underline, beneath an illustration.

**under measure** Setting which falls short of the standard column measure.

**underscore** To underline a word or letters in copy or in type.

**uneven folios** Page numbers of the right-hand pages, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, etc.

**units** Standards of measurement, the *point* being the unit of measurement for type size, the *pica* (12 points) for area of type lines, white spaces, pages, etc.

**UNI**—United News of India, news agency.

**UPI** United Press International, a US news agency. upper case The capital letters of a fount type.

## V

**Venetian** Typefaces classified as Humanist in the British Standard in which the cross stroke of the lower-case e is oblique; the axis of the curves is inclined to the left; there is no great contrast between thin and thick strokes; and the serifs are bracketed, e. g., Verona, Centaur, Kennerley.

**vertical make-up** Once the standard, now the rarity; page makeup in which no display element is allowed to cross a column rule, i. e. all single-column headlines or pictures, or an emphasis in that direction.

**vignette** Small illustration or decoration not squared up or enclosed by a border.

## W

**wash drawing** A sketch made with a brush in washes with more tonal scale than simple black and white, and hence suitable for half-tone reproduction.

**waste copies** Copies of a newspaper run off at the beginning of a run when ink and registration are being adjusted.

**wavy rule** Rule that prints undulating line.

**waxing** Process in photaset newspapers. Each bromide of type is fed into a heated roller machine which coats the reverse side of the bromide with an adhesive wax so that the film can be stuck down on paper.

**web** Roll of paper which is threaded through the printing presses. **web offset** Web-fed lithography, in which printing is done not directly from the plate but from a rubber blanket that has picked up the images from the inked plate. See *offset*. 'Webb', who does not exist, is often credited with this invention through an error in spelling.

**web press** Printing press in which a continuously running web of paper is fed in between an impression cylinder and another cylinder carrying the printing plate. See *rotary press*.

**weight** The degree of blackness of a typeface: wf Abbreviation for *wrong fount*.

**white** Any part of the page which does not carry ink-spaces around headlines, in and around words and letters, margins, etc.

**white out** To put more spacing material. in the page where indicated.

**wide leaded** Lines of type separated by more than one thickness of lead.

**windy line** Line with excessive white space.

**wirephoto** Telephonic photo transmission system operated by Associated Press.

**wireroom** Department which receives teleprinted copy and photographs from the news agencies and correspondents on distant assignments.

**wrong fount** A mistake in composition by using a letter of the wrong size or not of the same design as the rest.

## X

**x-height** The height of all the primary lower-case letters which, size for size, are almost identical, and omitting those letters of the alphabet with ascenders or descenders.

**x-ref** *Cross-reference*.

## Y

**yellow journalism** The motto is 'never let the facts stand in the way of a good story'. It is sensational, exploiting chauvinism.

## Z

**zinc** Strictly, half-tone plate engraved on zinc, but commonly used for all photo-engravings, whatever the metal.

**Zip-A-Tone** Trade name for tinted sheet added to line drawings or headlines.

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