**PROOFREADING AND REVIEWING**

 **Proofreading** is the reading of a galley proof or an electronic copy of a publication to find and correct production errors of text or art. Proofreading is the final step in the editorial cycle.

**Traditional method:** A proof is a typeset version of copy or a manuscript page. They often contain typos introduced through human error. Traditionally, a proofreader looks at an increment of text on the copy and then compares it to the corresponding typeset increment, and then marks any errors (sometimes called 'line edits') using standard proofreaders' marks. Unlike copy editing, the defining procedure of a proofreading service is to work directly with two sets of information at the same time. Proofs are then returned to the typesetter for correction. Correction-cycle proofs will typically have one descriptive term, such as 'bounce', 'bump', or 'revise' unique to the department or organization and used for clarity to the strict exclusion of any other. It is a common practice for 'all' such corrections, no matter how slight, to be sent again to a proofreader to be checked and initialed, thus establishing the principle of higher responsibility for proofreaders as compared to their typesetters or artists.

**Alternative methods:** 'Copy holding' or 'copy reading' employs two readers per proof. The first reads the text aloud literally as it appears, usually at a comparatively fast but uniform rate. The second reader follows along and marks any pertinent differences between what is read and what was typeset. This method is appropriate for large quantities of boilerplate text where it is assumed that there will be comparatively few mistakes.

 Experienced copy holders employ various codes and verbal short-cuts that accompany their reading. The spoken word 'digits', for example, means that the numbers about to be read are not words spelled out; and 'in a hole' can mean that the upcoming segment of text is within parentheses. 'Bang' means an exclamation point. A 'thump' or 'screamer' made with a finger on the table represents the initial cap, comma, period, or similar obvious attribute being read simultaneously. Thus the line of text *(He said the address was 1234 Central Blvd., and to hurry!)* would be read aloud as "*in a hole* [thump] *he said the address was digits 1 2 3 4* [thump] *central* [thump] *buluhvuhd* [thump] *comma and to hurry bang*". Mutual understanding is the only guiding principle, so codes evolve as opportunity permits. In the above example, two thumps after 'buluhvuhd' might be acceptable to proofreaders familiar with the text.

 'Double reading'. A single proofreader checks a proof in the traditional manner and then another reader repeats the process. Both initial the proof. Note that with both copy holding and double reading, responsibility for a given proof is necessarily shared by two individuals.

 'Scanning', used to check a proof without reading it word for word, has become common with computerization of typesetting and the popularization of word processing. Many publishers have their own proprietary typesetting systems, while their customers use commercial programs such as Word. Before the data in a Word file can be published, it must be converted into a format used by the publisher. The end product is usually called a *conversion.* If a customer has already proofread the contents of a file before submitting it to a publisher, there will be no reason for another proofreader to re-read it from the copy (although this additional service may be requested and paid for). Instead, the publisher is held responsible only for formatting errors, such as typeface, page width, and alignment of columns in tables; and production errors such as text inadvertently deleted. To simplify matters further, a given conversion will usually be assigned a specific template. Given typesetters of sufficient skill, experienced proofreaders familiar with their typesetters' work can accurately scan their pages without reading the text for errors that neither they nor their typesetters are responsible for.

**Style guides and checklists**: Proofreaders are expected to be consistently accurate by default because they occupy the last stage of typographic production before publication. Before it is typeset, copy is often marked up by an editor or customer with various instructions as to typefaces, art, and layout. Often these individuals will consult a style guide of varying degrees of complexity and completeness. Such guides are usually produced in-house by the staff or supplied by the customer, and it should be distinguished from professional references such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the *AP Stylebook*, *The Elements of Style*, and *Gregg Reference Manual*. When appropriate, proofreaders may mark errors in accordance with their house guide instead of the copy when the two conflict. Where this is the case, the proofreader may justifiably be considered a *copy editor*.

 Checklists are common in proof-rooms where there is sufficient uniformity of product to distil some or all of its components to a list. They may also act as a training tool for new hires. Checklists are never comprehensive, however: proofreaders still have to find all mistakes that are *not* mentioned or described, thus limiting their usefulness. Therefore, the following steps can be followed while proofreading:

**1. Use a Checklist**: Create a list of important things to check for, such as problem areas like agreement of nouns and verbs and of pronouns and antecedents, and number style.

**2. Fact-Check**: Double-check facts, figures, and proper names. If information remains to be inserted at the last minute, highlight the omission prominently so that no one forgets to do so.

**3. Spell-Check**: Before proofreading a printout, spell-check the electronic version to find misspellings, as well as errors you or a colleague make frequently, such as omitting a closing parenthesis or quotation mark.

**4. Read Aloud**: Reading text during the proof stage improves your chances of noticing errors, especially missing (“a summary the report follows”) or repeated (“a summary of the the report follows”) words.

**5. Focus on One Line at a Time**: When proofing print documents, use another piece of paper or a ruler to cover the text following the line you are proofreading, shifting the paper down as you go along. This technique helps you keep your place and discourages you from reading too quickly and missing subtle errors.

**6. Attend to Format**: Proofreading isn’t just about reviewing the text. Make sure that the document design adheres to established specifications. Check page numbering, column alignment, relative fonts, sizes, and other features of standard elements such as headlines, subheadings, captions, and footnotes. Inspect each type of feature within categories, such as looking at every headline, then every caption, and so on.

**7. Proof Again**: Once revisions have been made, proofread the document again with the same thoroughness, rather than simply spot-checking the changes. An insertion or deletion may have thrown off the line count, for example.

**REVIEWING**

**What is peer review?**

 Peer review is designed to assess the validity, quality and often the originality of articles for publication. Its ultimate purpose is to maintain the integrity of science by filtering out invalid or poor quality articles.

 From a publisher’s perspective, peer review functions as a filter for content, directing better quality articles to better quality journals and so creating journal brands. Running articles through the process of peer review adds value to them. For this reason publishers need to make sure that peer review is robust.

 The peer review process can be broadly summarized into 10 steps, although these steps can vary slightly between journals. The steps can be represented in a flow chart as follows:



**1. Submission of Paper:** The corresponding or submitting author submits the paper to the journal. This is usually via an online system such as Scholar-One Manuscripts. Occasionally, journals may accept submissions by email.

 **2. Editorial Office Assessment:** The journal checks the paper’s composition and arrangement against the journal’s Author Guidelines to make sure it includes the required sections and stylizations. The quality of the paper is not assessed at this point.

 **3. Appraisal by the Editor-in-Chief (EIC):** The EIC checks that the paper is appropriate for the journal and is sufficiently original and interesting. If not, the paper may be rejected without being reviewed any further.

 **4. EIC Assigns an Associate Editor (AE):** Some journals have Associate Editors who handle the peer review. If they do, they would be assigned at this stage.

 **5. Invitation to Reviewers:** The handling editor sends invitations to individuals he or she believes would be appropriate reviewers. As responses are received, further invitations are issued, if necessary, until the required number of acceptances is obtained – commonly this is 2, but there is some variation between journals.

 **6. Response to Invitations:** Potential reviewers consider the invitation against their own expertise, conflicts of interest and availability. They then accept or decline. If possible, when declining, they might also suggest alternative reviewers.

 **7. Review is Conducted:** The reviewer sets time aside to read the paper several times. The first read is used to form an initial impression of the work. If major problems are found at this stage, the reviewer may feel comfortable rejecting the paper without further work. Otherwise they will read the paper several more times, taking notes so as to build a detailed point-by-point review. The review is then submitted to the journal, with a recommendation to accept or reject it – or else with a request for revision (usually flagged as either major or minor) before it is reconsidered.

 **8. Journal Evaluates the Reviews:** The handling editor considers all the returned reviews before making an overall decision. If the reviews differ widely, the editor may invite an additional reviewer so as to get an extra opinion before making a decision.

 **9. The Decision is Communicated:** The editor sends a decision email to the author including any relevant reviewer comments. Whether the comments are anonymous or not will depend on the type of peer review that the journal operates.

 **10. Next Steps:** If *accepted*, the paper is sent to production. If the article is *rejected* or sent back for either major or minor *revision*, the handling editor should include constructive comments from the reviewers to help the author improve the article. At this point, reviewers should also be sent an email or letter letting them know the outcome of their review. If the paper was sent back for *revision*, the reviewers should expect to receive a new version, unless they have opted out of further participation. However, where only minor changes were requested this follow-up review might be done by the handling editor.