



Resources for copyeditors and proofreaders

Books

The internet provides a wealth of instant information but all copyeditors and proofreaders need a few reliable reference works – and a good dictionary – on their shelves that they will turn to again and again. Below are some of the works that most copyeditors and proofreaders find useful or even essential; it is worth patronising your local bookshop to see which ones best suit your needs.

Butcher's Copy-editing: the Cambridge handbook for editors, copy-editors and proofreaders, 4th edition, by Judith Butcher, Caroline Drake and Maureen Leach, Cambridge University Press; 2006.

An extremely reliable and wide-ranging guide. Although perhaps a little advanced for the absolute beginner working alone, it is a book that no practising copyeditor should be without because of the wealth of authoritative information it contains.

The Copyeditor's Handbook: a guide for book publishing and corporate communications, 4th edition, by Amy Einsohn and Marilyn Schwartz, University of California Press; 2019.

Written with US copyeditors in mind, but no less valuable for that. Another essential for the copyeditor's desk. There is also a companion volume:

The Copyeditor's Workbook: exercises and tips for honing your editorial judgment, by Erika Büky, Marilyn Schwartz and Amy Einsohn, University of California Press; 2019.

The book is a series of exercises of varying length, each concentrating on one aspect of copyediting, together with comprehensive model answers and commentaries.

New Oxford Spelling Dictionary. Oxford University Press; 2014.

Useful for checking word breaks as well as spellings.

New Oxford Style Manual, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press; 2016.

Includes two updated reference works – *New Hart's Rules* and *New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors* (NODWE), which can also be bought separately. Covers print and design conventions and guidance on alternative spellings, italicisation and a wealth of other style conventions.

Hart's is an invaluable reference book that complements Butcher's. Although NODWE does not always define words listed, this is a useful guide to spelling, abbreviations, capitalisation, use of italic and so on, especially if there is no house style guidance (note that OUP uses 'ize' rather than 'ise' spelling).

Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, Chicago University Press; 2017.

www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

The definitive style guide for anyone working on publications for the US market.

English Grammar for Dummies, by Lesley Ward (angliciser) and Geraldine Woods, John Wiley; 2007.

An entertaining guide through the maze of grammar and usage.

Rediscover Grammar, 3rd edition, by David Crystal, Longman; 2004.

An excellent revision guide to grammar.

Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage, by Jeremy Butterfield, Oxford University Press; 4th edition, 2014.

A comprehensive, authoritative guide.

Penguin Guide to Punctuation, by RL Trask, Penguin; 2004.

A useful guide to punctuation.

Troublesome Words, 2nd edition, by Bill Bryson, Penguin; 2002.

An entertaining book dealing with words that people often get muddled or misuse; for example, that/which, imply/infer.

Inside Book Publishing, 6th edition, by Giles Clark and Angus Phillips, Routledge; 2019.

A useful background to publishing today, designed for students of publishing and anyone who wants to find out about the industry.

The Global English Style Guide: writing clear, translatable documentation for a global market, by John R Kohl, SAS Institute; 2008.

Advices on eliminating ambiguities and making sentence structures clearer and easier for speakers using English as a second or other language. Suitable for all types of technical documentation.

Copy-editing: A Guide for Proofreaders, by Margaret Aherne; 2017.

Proofreaders often read 'cold', without the copyedited typescript, so they no longer see how the copyeditor's input translates on to the proofs. This book aims to fill that gap. Each chapter contains exercises and there are also a number of stand-alone exercises providing practice in a range of editing skills. Discount for CIEP members (log into the CIEP website; the discount is listed on the 'Benefits of membership' page).

Accidence Will Happen, by Oliver Kamm, Weidenfeld & Nicolson; 2015.

A good source of advice.

CIEP resources

Guides

CIEP guides provide a basic introduction to the various skills and knowledge needed to work as an editorial professional. They are available to purchase on the [CIEP website](#).

Editing into Plain English, 2nd edition, CIEP guide by Luke Finley, Laura Ripper and Sarah Carr, 2019.

Your House Style: Styling your words for maximum impact, 3rd edition, CIEP guide by Christina Thomas with Abi Saffrey; 2018.

Advice and guidance on the value of a house style and what to consider when putting one together.

Why edit?

A collection of positive examples of editing – ones that demonstrate what a difference good editing can make to a text in terms of clarity and readability.

Online resources

Online dictionaries

Chambers dictionaries online

Fee access for searches.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary and Thesaurus: www.merriam-webster.com

For US spelling – free access to definitions.

Oxford Dictionaries Online

You may be able to access the Oxford English Dictionary and other Oxford reference works free using your library membership card.

Other resources

A new year a new career? Transitioning to proofreading and copy-editing, blog post by Louise Harnby in *The Parlour: a blog for editors, proofreaders and writers*, 5 January 2017.

Tips from an experienced editor to help you decide whether this career is right for you.

How to copyedit The Atlantic, blog post by Karen Ostergren, *The Atlantic Reporter's Notebook*, 6 June 2018.

A view from the United States of newspaper copyediting.

Jisc Library Hub Discover: <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk>

In a single search you can discover the holdings of the UK's National Libraries (including the British Library), many university libraries and specialist research libraries.

Anglia Ruskin University Library – Harvard System

A guide to using the Harvard referencing system. It has two sections: how to cite a reference in the text and instructions for each of the main source types such as books or web pages, with examples.

Imperial College London – Vancouver Style: www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/reference-management/vancouver-style

A detailed guide to referencing using the Vancouver system.

The *Guardian* and *Observer* Style Guide: www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide

An online A–Z list of to writing, editing and English usage followed by journalists at the Guardian, Observer and theguardian.com.

Copyright Licensing Agency: What is copyright? <https://www.cla.co.uk/what-is-copyright>
All you need to know about copyright.

Proofreading checklist: how to check page proofs like a professional, by Louise Harnby. *The Parlour*, 4 September 2017.

A really useful free downloadable checklist.

Editing tools

PerfectIt (Intelligent Editing Ltd)

Proofreading software for editorial professionals – an add-in for MS Word.

Using Adobe's commenting tools

Add sticky notes and other annotations (Adobe video tutorial)

Use annotation and drawing markup tools to add comments in PDFs (Adobe Acrobat User Guide)

Mark up text with edits (Adobe Acrobat User Guide)