



THE STORY OF **COPY EDITING** SCHOLARLY MANUSCRIPTS

2023 Edition

PRESENTED BY
JOHN GARGER

Copyright © 2023 John Garger

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in whole or in part in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the copyright holder.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS DOCUMENT

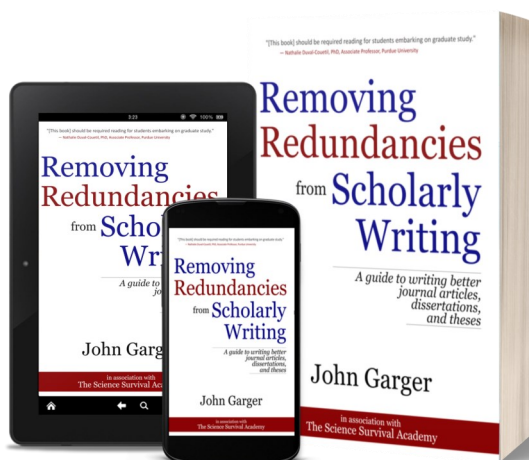
1. A brief history of contemporary copy editing
2. How copy editing compares to other types of edits
3. Understanding editing from a copy editor's viewpoint
4. Facts about copy editing
5. Preparing a manuscript for copy editing
6. Anatomy of a manuscript

More from John Garger



100 Dissertation Mistakes

A collection of errors, fallacies, myths, and misperceptions



Removing Redundancies from Scholarly Writing

A guide to writing better journal articles, dissertations, and theses



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

Message from John Garger 4

PART TWO

Contemporary Copy Editing 5

PART THREE

3 Types of Editing 6

PART FOUR

The Copy Editor's Viewpoint 7

PART FIVE

Facts About Copy Editing 8

PART SIX

Preparing a Manuscript 9

PART SEVEN

Anatomy of a Manuscript 10

MESSAGE from JOHN GARGER



Hello, Friends!

My name is John Garger and I have been a copy editor of academic manuscripts for over 20 years. During that time, I've edited great masterpieces of writing and helped thousands of authors find their voices in research. Across disparate topics in the formal, natural, and social sciences, researchers have put their trust in me to make their writing soar.

As a researcher myself, I know the passion that academic authors have for their research, and as someone who has held editorial positions and served as ad-hoc reviewer at several prominent, peer-reviewed journals, I understand the heartbreak that follows rejection, but I also know what it takes to publish a manuscript while conducting research in contemporary academia. I see writing as the window to the findings and insights that authors contribute to their respective fields. Let me help you find your voice, convey your findings and insights concisely, and get your manuscript published so you can move on to more great research.

When you are ready to see what I can offer you, contact me and let's get started!

John Garger

www.johngarger.com

THE ROAD TO CONTEMPORARY COPY EDITING



THE EARLY DAYS: 1920s–1970s

Authors mailed hard copies of their manuscripts to a copy editor and waited weeks or months for the result. They received hand-marked pages and had to make the changes to the manuscript themselves.



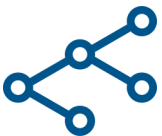
THE COMPUTER AGE: 1980s–1990s

Computers pushed most copy editing on-screen. Copy editors now made changes directly to a digital manuscript, and authors could choose to accept or reject the changes a copy editor recommended with a few clicks of a mouse.



THE MODERN AGE: 2000s–2020s

Advances in computing and WYSIWYG interfaces mean that copy editors can take advantage of built-in and custom scripts, macros, and tools, the result of which is cleaner manuscripts and much faster turnaround times.



THE FUTURE: 2020s and BEYOND

It is unlikely that software will replace the human touch to editing that copy editors offer. Pointing out minor grammatical errors is one thing, but revising written exposition at multiple levels simultaneously is another.

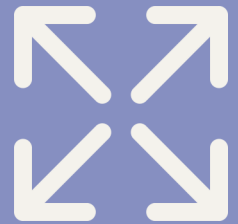
3

TYPES OF MANUSCRIPT EDITING

DIRECTION

1 DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING

Developmental editing is about a manuscript's **DIRECTION**. It helps an author decide on a manuscript's topic or the gap the manuscript fills. Developmental editing is expensive because the author is drawing from the developmental editor's expertise to direct the manuscript's content.



REVISION

2 COPY EDITING

Copy editing is about **REVISION** of a manuscript's exposition so that it is accessible to the reader. Copy editing especially revises a manuscript to ensure that every word, sentence, paragraph, section, and chapter has one voice that is concise, clear, accurate, and reliable—the hallmarks of scholarly writing.



CORRECTION

3 PROOFREADING

Proofreading is about **CORRECTION**, especially concerning spelling, typos, basic grammar, and general consistency. Words and sentences that are technically correct are left unedited. The manuscript's author is usually the person who conducts a proofread after copy editing, though some editors also offer this service.



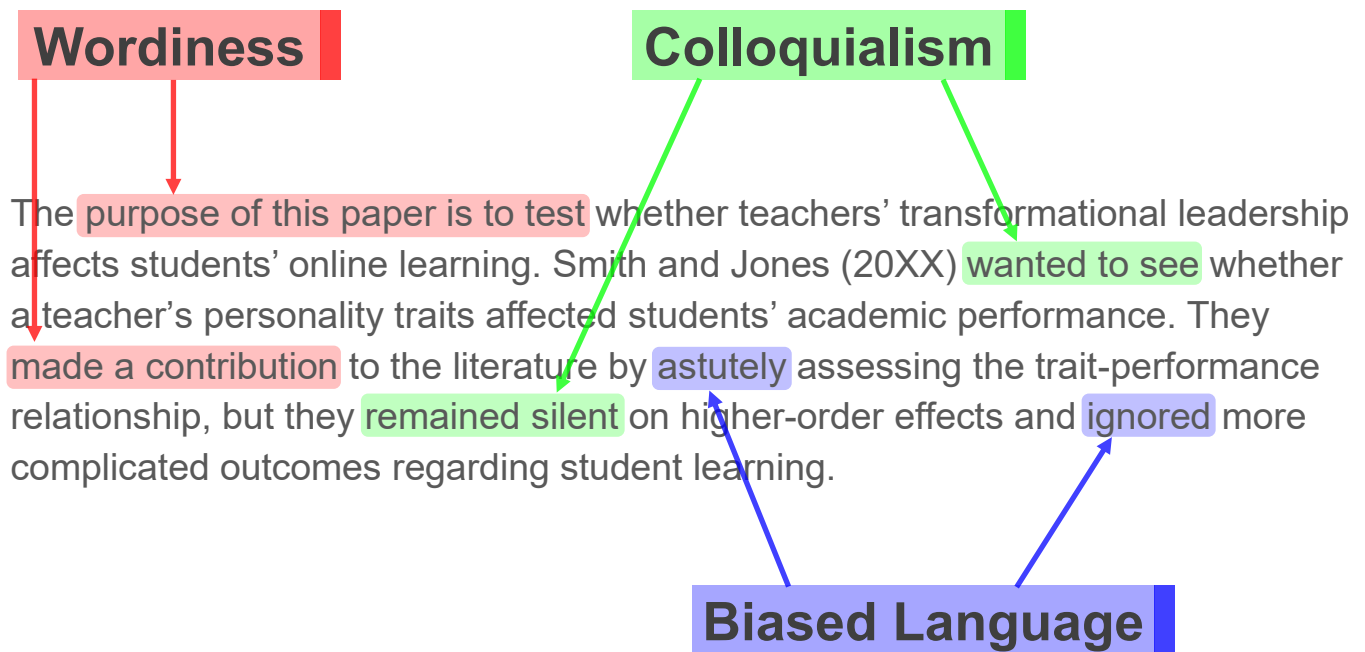


The example below demonstrates how copy editors **transform** text during a copy edit.

ORIGINAL

The purpose of this paper is to test whether teachers' transformational leadership affects students' online learning. Smith and Jones (20XX) wanted to see whether a teacher's personality traits affected students' academic performance. They made a contribution to the literature by astutely assessing the trait-performance relationship, but they remained silent on higher-order effects and ignored more complicated outcomes regarding student learning.

COPY EDITOR'S VIEW



EDITED

This paper tests whether teachers' transformational leadership affects students' online learning. Smith and Jones (20XX) assessed whether a teacher's personality traits affected students' academic performance. They contributed to the literature by assessing the trait-performance relationship but did not consider either higher-order effects or more complicated outcomes regarding student learning.

Notice that the edited text contains **fewer words** and is **more concise**. This is a natural outcome of copy editing.

SIX

COPY
EDITING

FACTS

10%

A manuscript that needs an average copy edit is about 10% shorter after editing.

To account for variation, industry standards state that 250 words comprise a 'page' of text.

250

1000

On average, it takes about 1 hour to copy edit 1000 words, or 4 pages, of text.

Reworking redundancies, vocabulary, and grammar represents the majority of copy editing.

3

8000

The average manuscript in the social sciences is 8000 words long.

The best authors rewrite the introductions to their papers an average of 10 times.

10x



PREPARING A MANUSCRIPT FOR COPY EDITING

①

DON'T "FIX" IT UNTIL IT IS BROKEN

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that your manuscript must be perfect before sending it to a copy editor. Your copy editor has seen it all. If you over-edit the paper yourself, you will make the copy edit that much more difficult, and costly.

②

REMOVE ALL EXTRANEOUS TEXT

Before sending the manuscript to a copy editor, clean it up by removing all extraneous text. The result will be cleaner text for the copy editor and possibly a lower cost for you. The more a copy editor must deal with during an edit, the costlier it becomes.

③

DEVELOP REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

If a manuscript's arguments are unsupported, hypotheses stated poorly, and design inadequate, no amount of good writing will make it right. Copy editing is a manuscript's penultimate task (proofreading is last), so ensure that a manuscript is ready for copy editing.

④

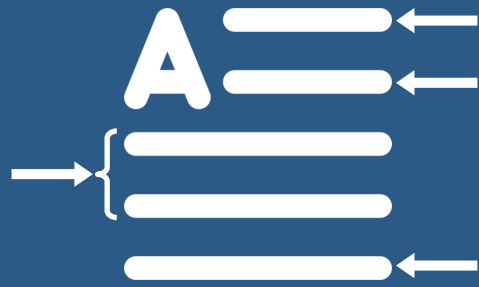
SEND A COMPLETE MANUSCRIPT

Some authors are reluctant to send a manuscript to a copy editor. However, most copy editors cannot offer a quote for services unless they have seen the entire manuscript. Send the entire manuscript for a quote to save time and money.

⑤

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR COPY EDITOR

Tell your copy editor about the constraints you are under, including length requirements, the citation standard you must use, and when you need the manuscript back. Provide your copy editor with an honest due date because rushing a copy edit invites mistakes and oversights.



ANATOMY OF AN AVERAGE EMPIRICAL MANUSCRIPT IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

TITLE

15 Words

A manuscript's title carries a lot of weight when it comes to whether other researchers will read your paper. Choose one that is descriptive and accurate.

1

ABSTRACT

350 Words

A good abstract contains a small piece of all other parts of the paper. Think of it as a very small version of the entire paper that is brief but complete.

2

INTRODUCTION

1000 Words

The introduction conveys the importance of the gap that the paper addresses. Save methods, results, and discussions for their respective sections.

3

LIT REVIEW

2000 Words

The lit review connects past research with the current paper. Be careful not to speculate or hint at the study's findings. Save that for the results section.

4



METHODS

1000 Words

The methods section is the most difficult to write. Keep it simple by stating what methods were used and why, and don't overcompensate with details.

5

RESULTS

1000 Words

The results section is only for reporting findings. Be careful not to include discussions, speculations, or identification of future research here.

6

DISCUSSION

1500 Words

The discussion is the most important section because it connects the current study with future research. Do not treat it as an obligatory part of the paper.

7

REFERENCES

1150 Words

References do more than ground a study; they demonstrate your competency as a researcher. Choose and use them carefully.

8