UNIT 1 KINDS OF EDITORS AND KINDS OF EDITING

Structure
1.0 Aims
1.1 Introduction
1.2 Field and Scope of Editing
1.3 Classification of Editors
1.4 Qualities of an Editor
1.5 Kinds of Editing
1.6 Guidelines for the Content Editor
1.7 Guidelines for Copy Editors
1.8 Role or Functions of Editor
1.9 Technology Versus Paper-and-Pencil
1.10 The Processes of Editing
1.11 Summing Up
1.12 Aids to Answers

1.0 AIMS

In this first block of this Course on Editing and Pre-Press we shall be talking, as you already know, about the importance of editing a text, the reason why texts need editing even if they have been produced by an expert in the field, and the reason why there is a need to proof read a text even after it has been edited.

In this unit, the first unit of the first block of the first course, we shall introduce you to the field and scope of editing, the kinds of editors and the kinds of editing they do.

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:
- Describe what is meant by the term ‘editing’;
- List the various kinds of editors;
- List the kinds of editing, they do; and
- Discuss the field and scope of the entire activity of editing.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Editing is one of the least taught but most widely practised media skills. This programme on copy editing and proof reading guides you through each activity involved in transforming a typescript into printed pages and includes techniques for correcting spelling, punctuation and page layout. The first question we anticipate arising in your mind is, with so many electronic word-processing programs which offer facilities for spell-check, finding synonyms, correcting grammar etc. why does one need to learn editing?

Let us quote from the poet Pope:

*True skill in writing comes from art, not chance
As those move lightest who have learnt to dance.*
1.2 FIELD AND SCOPE OF EDITING

What do we mean by the field and scope of editing?

Editing a text or document means making it worthy of publication by working on its content, organization and presentation. Editing, thus, may be said to be the art and science of transforming a manuscript into a printed medium of instruction and communication.

The field of editing is vast and any and every document needs to go through several stages of modification, improving with every stage, and rare is the document that has been produced in a swift rush of inspiration and found acceptable by the target reader or user.

Editing need not necessarily be done by an outside editor. Every writer re-reads and re-writes what he has written in an effort to express himself completely and clearly. Precision and accuracy are the keywords if the writer or author is himself editing his work. However, even after he is satisfied, the manuscript needs to go through screening of various kinds and for various purposes so that it is acceptable, firstly by the publisher, then by the distributor and crucially by the reader.

The scope of editing would cover all the activities encompassed by this effort to transform the manuscript. Right from the moment the manuscript arrives at the desk of the publisher/editor, whether it has been solicited, commissioned or merely sent for consideration by the author, it has to go through a battery of ‘tests’. Even after the publisher has found the manuscript satisfactory, he may need to ensure that it is in conformity with the policy of the publishing house as regards format, size, shape, tone and tenor of text, etc. Thus, every document needs to be, eventually, edited by professionals who will give it the final layout and shape.

An editor is a person who acts as a bridge between the reader and the author. He is answerable to the publisher of the book, newspaper or journal. He has also to discuss and suggest changes with the author, particularly, if the text is a creative one but also if it is technical or vocational. In addition, the type of editor known as copy editor also interacts with the printer, giving him instructions about the production of the final copy.

1.3 CLASSIFICATION OF EDITORS

Editors can be classified in several ways. One way is to classify them by responsibility - a chief editor, a sub-editor, a copy editor and so on. Another way is to classify them by the nature of the editing they do - creative, substantive and copy.

Activity 1

Why does a document or manuscript need editing even though it may have been written by a specialist in the area or a subject expert?

Use the space below for your answer.

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

(Check your answer with the hint given at the end of this unit)
With the modern facilities for word processing many of the editor’s tasks are either getting simplified or converged. Authors were, earlier, instructed to use new typewriter ribbons, send the top copy to the publisher, retain a carbon copy etc. etc. With computer printouts, every copy is a clear copy and the master copy can be retained either on the author’s machine or on a removable drive – compact disk or pen drive. (You will learn more about the use of electronic editing tools in Course 4).

It is difficult to generalize or have rigid compartments in today’s electronic publishing scenario since editing is a responsibility shared by many persons in a publishing house. In fact, the process of editing may be said to begin when the author goes through his own manuscript to check it for errors, inconsistencies, facts and figures, statistics, etc. However we will need to have some working definitions to proceed. You will find them below.

1.3.1 Editor-in-chief

The Editor-in-chief may not necessarily do the editing per se of any text that arrives at his publishing house. Once the manuscript has arrived at the desk of the publisher, he usually contacts his own in-house editor or wears the hat of the editor himself in order to decide whether to accept or reject it. The publisher or the editor-in-chief sets the policy and supervises the entire operation. He may be responsible to ensure that the nature, tone and content of the publications are in keeping with the overall policy of his publishing house.

1.3.2 Sub-editor

In the case of newspapers, there may be one or more sub-editors who will decide what will or will not be published. These may have various nomenclatures - the managing editor, the city editor, the wire editor, the news editor. Sometimes the sub editor and the copy editor perform similar tasks.

1.3.3 Copy Editor

It is the copy editor, however, who will make the final checks for quality and accuracy. Further, the copy editor is responsible for interacting with the press with regard to the look of the final document or book. For this purpose, apart from a wealth of experience in the field of editing, he needs to have a good general awareness of the work around him, especially, the publishing scenario.

Suffice it to say that the copy editor owes obligations to the reader, the publisher and the author. As such, he may be said to be the kingpin of the entire process of publication.

1.4 QUALITIES OF AN EDITOR

Since you are new to this course, we would like to tell you that you would find us repeating the same thing several times over as you proceed. Repetition of information presented earlier is deliberate and meant to reinforce what we have said already. For example, the duties of an editor will be repeatedly talked about. The duties of an editor will vary from time to time and place to place but the qualities or qualifications desirable in an editor will not vary too much.

Harold Evan, former editor of The Times, London, lists the qualities of an editor in his book Newsman’s English thus:

- Human interest qualities - sympathy, insight, breadth of view, imagination, sense of humour
• an orderly and well-balanced mind - implying judgment, sense of perspective and proportion
• a cool head, incapable of getting flustered
• quickness of thought and accuracy
• conscientiousness, keenness and ruthlessness rightly directed
• judgement, based on well informed commonsense
• capacity for absorbing fact - and fancy - and expressing them in an acceptable manner
• adaptability, able to see from authors point of view
• knowledge of the main points of law of libel, contempt and copyright
• physical fitness (!) and last but not least,
• team spirit.

Activity 2
Why do you imagine an editor needs a cool head and physical fitness?

(Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit)

1.5 KINDS OF EDITING

We have mentioned earlier that one of the ways of classifying editors is by the kind of editing they do. Editing could be content editing or language editing, formatting or copy editing or sometimes merely proofreading. In the West ‘ghosting’ or ‘collaborating’ have produced a number of good books. As an editor, you will have to be on guard against a, usually irrepressible, desire to intervene and rewrite whole sections of text which can well stand on their own. This is a creative aspect of book editing and brings together people who have a lot to say with no means to say it and people who speak beautifully but have nothing to say!

Irrespective of the degree of responsibility within the publishing house that an editor may have, he will have to decide on the degree and nature of editing a document with him may undergo. By this, we mean whether the editing will be interventionist or ‘education of author by proxy.’ Editors of technical documents discover that most technical and scientific writers have only mannerisms, not style. The nature of editing done by technical editors draws no attention to itself but presents the facts and arguments simply, clearly and unambiguously. They try to leave untouched any writing that has a personal flavour without being either impressive or verbose. In fact, unobtrusive editing is a desirable quality in each and every editor.

Spelling, style, references, persons writing in a language not their first language, etc. are some of the issues editors will have to handle, irrespective of the school of editing they belong to. Therefore, at the outset, be prepared to handle unforeseen texts and be on the lookout for unique usages only as they will provide the training ground for you.
So what degree of editing does an editor do? Editing may be said to be of three types:

- editing for content;
- editing for presentation of content; and
- editing for presentation.

1.5.1 Editing for Content

This is a responsibility which should be undertaken in close collaboration with the author. Usually the author is either an authority in his or her field or a creative writer. Insofar as subject or content editing is concerned, with experience most editors tend to develop specializations through experience. Editing for content in academic texts requires checking out facts and figures, conformity to requirements of the syllabus or course of studies and checking for degree of difficulty which includes terminology and lexical items.

1.5.2 Editing for Presentation of Content

While editing for the physical look, the presentation of content is basically the domain of the copy editor, the content editor too suggests deletions, additions, and/or changes in the order of presentation of information so that the information conveyed is a coherent whole. Changing the order of paragraphs, suggesting where more or less matter would increase readability is equally the domain of the content editor. The copy editor will decide on letter size, font, typeface, margins etc. in order to make the page look visually appealing and readable. In fact, he knows what margins to leave for the binder, etc. and makes provisions for them.

1.5.3 Editing for Presentation

Highlighting of important points, giving headings, how to introduce the subject, or where the point is over-stressed would need to be done while editing for presentation.

1.5.4 Language Editing

Editing for language or style is a sensitive area and the editor would need to acquaint himself with the style of a particular domain or discipline. Technical texts, scientific texts and literary texts all need to be handled differently.

### Activity 3

Discuss editing for content with reference to any text that you feel could have been better written. You may select anything you have recently read in a magazine or newspaper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss editing for content with reference to any text that you feel could have been better written. You may select anything you have recently read in a magazine or newspaper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Check your answer with that giver at the end of the unit)

1.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTENT EDITOR

We shall be discussing subject-specific editing later on in this Programme, but we shall briefly touch upon the domain or field of content editing in this unit as well.
No editor will go through a manuscript (used interchangeably with typescript since hardly any publisher would consider handwritten submissions nowadays) in order to see if it is publication-worthy. He will, most probably, scan a synopsis to see if it fits into his scheme of things. Then he undertakes a cursory reading when the first few pages help decide the fate of the manuscript. However, he may decide that the reputation of the author, the requirement of his publishing house, or the subject matter demand that he devote more time and effort to the screening. There is an unwritten rule that what does not interest the editor cannot interest his reader since he always carries his reader along with him. In other words, the editor here is the surrogate reader.

No content editing should be done until the author has been duly consulted or his acquiescence taken unless the text is a commissioned one i.e., the author has been given the brief and scope of what he is to write about. It is assumed in a commissioned text that the author is an authority in the area which is why he has been asked to write. Therefore it is always a good idea to cross-check before modifying the content of any manuscript.

Content editing or general editing of the sort we have been talking about here needs a responsible attitude, expertise in the field and experience with pen-and-ink editing rather than word-processing prowess alone.

1.7 GUIDELINES FOR COPY EDITORS

What is a copy editor? A copy editor is a person responsible for producing a well-organised and consistent book for the reader and a complete, self-explanatory ‘copy’ for the printer.

Normally, the chief editor in a publishing house issues guidelines to copy editors of manuscripts accepted for publication. However, since you may be on your own or work in a concern where you are expected to take responsibility right from the word “Go” we give you below a brief list of responsibilities you may have to undertake. Naturally, as you proceed in this Programme, you will be encountering these in some detail.

While working on the text, then the copy editor is expected to:
1) eliminate repetition and verbosity;
2) break up long paras into smaller units or paragraphs;
3) suggest deletion of passages and tables if inessential;
4) delete hyperboles and superlatives; and
5) watch out for grammar, idiom, spellings, punctuation, clarity.
6) Sometimes short paras make complex ideas unnecessarily simple. In such a case, telescope them for cogency and readability.
7) The copy editor should point out obvious errors even if the author is a subject expert; and
8) Decide spellings in advance or ‘s’ or ‘z’ forms of verbs and conform to them systematically.

Any rule is only suggestive and not prescriptive.

The copy editor is also responsible for the physical look of the text, the margins, spacing, type size, bold or italicized text etc. This he does with the help of symbols and marks which are universally recognized by printers and not of his own devising.

Do not worry about how to go about all these tasks just yet. We shall deal with them in detail as we proceed.
1.8 ROLE OR FUNCTIONS OF EDITOR

An editor's job is both creative and self-effacing. Right from the beginning, it will save you much heartbreak if you do not see yourself as the author, irrespective of the nature and amount of editing you may have done before a manuscript sees the light of day as a printed book or magazine. Unless you are a freelancer, do not expect to get individual credit from any one. If the author thanks you in his preface or the chief editor of your organization praises you, consider it a bonus. Even if you have done a wondrous job of re-creating the manuscript, even the reader does not want to know that the popular author whose book he bought had not ended his book the way it finally ends! The ending of Great Expectations, for example, was changed by the editor. But the credit goes to Charles Dickens, not to the editor.

An editor could be involved with any or several of the following activities at the same time:

- Discussion with author regarding changes;
- Referring to subject specialist for opinion;
- Consulting with production department regarding cost estimation;
- Discussion with sales department regarding sales potential;
- Giving instructions to printers and layout department; and
- Discussions regarding sales promotion.

Normally, the roles are allocated to a number of people. As you can see from the list above, at any time there may be a number of books under consideration. One may have been accepted for production right away, another may need some changes in content and yet another may have arrived from the printer and need to be distributed for sale. Obviously, a number of persons from different departments will be handling the processes.

1.9 TECHNOLOGY VERSUS PAPER-AND-PENCIL

Editors who have had their training in the days of paper and pencil alone with the help of a couple of good dictionaries, and a thesaurus are now becoming rarer. It is the misfortune, so to say, of those who merely have access to electronic editing tools that they have to rely on inputs of creators of editing software! The copy editor has talents that cannot be replaced by computers. Anyway, you will see later, that spell- checks and other tools of word-processing programmes are not a hundred percent reliable. It is, therefore, essential that you go through the discipline of paper-and-pencil editing before you encounter MS-Office and its enchantment. One of these disciplines is the ability to edit copy. Another is the ability to compose headlines. Editing demands many intangibles — judgement, scholarliness, background, memory, aggressiveness, motivation, curiosity, imagination, discretion, cynicism, skepticism and even some genius.

Activity 4

When you try your hand at electronic copy editing, you will discover that the computer cannot distinguish between, for example,

They are eating apples/they are beating apples/they are seating apples (!)

If you use a surname that does not appear in the American or British dictionaries, for example, Bhargava, you will immediately find a red line under the name.

Later, you can try this experiment for yourself. Locate a piece of text with unfamiliar names and see the attempts of the software to correct it. Normally grammatical errors have green underlines on the screen and red underlines if the spellings are incorrect.

(Check your findings with the hints given at the end of this unit.)
1.10 THE PROCESSES OF EDITING

Remember, we have said that there are many ways of classifying editors. Another way, different from the one we have been looking at, is to look at editors from the processes they follow during the course of their work. Manuscript editing can be separated into three processes:

- creative
- substantive, and
- technical

Each of these shades into the next.

1.10.1 Creative Editing

Basically, the editor and referees are involved with creative editing. Creative editing involves the active cooperation of the author or at least his passive approval. Creative editing itself has certain aspects, which are not, strictly speaking, manuscript editing. Pointing out to authors how and where they might reorganize, expand or condense their manuscripts to produce a more logical progression of ideas or say what they have to in the most effective way possible is one of the editor’s responsibilities. Here editors may also call upon referees who are subject experts - editors are themselves generalists to begin with who have acquired a degree of expertise over time but who may not be aware of the latest in a specialized field of knowledge.

1.10.2 Substantive Editing

This means ensuring that authors have said what they want to say as clearly and correctly as possible. Technical and substantive editing are usually done simultaneously to avoid wastage of time and duplication of work.

Substantive editing includes correcting the grammar and spelling, making suggestions about the reorganization, expansion or condensation of the text of the manuscript. It includes suggesting how key terms, abstracts, statistics, tables and illustrations may be better presented. Suggesting how greater clarity and precision may be achieved by revision of style is also the responsibility of the substantive editor. The substantive editor may, if his organization is small or not rigidly structured, interact with the press in which case he has functioned as the copy editor as well.

Copy editing can be done before the manuscript goes back to the author (in case the agreement made between the author and publisher so demands) so that the author can see the changes made or suggested. Alternatively, editors may prefer to return manuscripts to the authors for revision before copy editing. If the copy editing is done after the author has revised his manuscript, the major changes made or suggested must have the concurrence of either the editor or the author.

There are certain advantages in these stages of editing which have not been theoretically devised but which have evolved over a long period of experience, experimentation and practice.

1.10.3 Author Clearance

The advantages of having all major changes cleared by the author are two (1) If any further changes are necessary, it is cheaper that the author makes them before the printing process begins and (2) credit or blame for the content of the publication rests with the author. Copy editors or editors who alter a manuscript can modify the author’s intended message, by mistake. You should also be careful about issues of:
• structural reorganization
• expansion
• shortening
• titles etc.

1.10.4 Copy Editing

The press charges for all corrections made after the initial stages and the publisher usually passes them on, after a certain minimum have been accommodated, to the author. If the copy editor can show a ‘dummy’ to the author, the author too knows how the final book will look – size, shape, feel.

Proofs: A proof is defined “as a first printed copy of something, for example of a page of a book, that is made so that mistakes can be corrected before more copies on printed” (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary). While there are many other persons who contribute to the production of a book or a journal or newspaper we shall look at their responsibilities at relevant points of this course.

1.10.5 Proof Reading

Proof reading showing the author the proofs has two advantages: eliminating author’s/copy editor’s mistakes and eliminating printer’s errors. Most large organizations have proof readers too but they are not required to be too educated and qualified. Mostly, they check ‘proofs’ against ‘copy’. They do not and are not expected to, intervene and make corrections. Of course, they are not machines but men, and, after a certain length of experience, proof readers too can catch obvious errors and point them out.

1.11 SUMMING UP

In this unit we looked at the various kinds of editors, classified according to hierarchy and according to responsibility. The kinds of editing that the various kinds of editors do were also briefly discussed so that, later on, where you look at their jobs with a view to acquiring some of their skills you are able to associate that task with the post.

1.12 AIDS TO ANSWERS

Activity 1

Some of the reasons could be — To give it the final layout and shape, to check the tone and tenor. To make it publication-worthy, in short.

Activity 2

A cool head is necessary so that he can take a reasoned and balanced view. Physical fitness is perhaps necessary because an editor’s job is both mentally and physically demanding, involving long hours hunched over manuscripts.

Activity 3

Did you find the topic inadequately covered, factual mistakes, unreadable sentences or too many difficult words? Make your own list.

Activity 4

To be undertaken as an ongoing activity. Meant to prove to you that no machine can truly replace experience and wisdom of man.