UNIT 10(A) COPY MARKING
10(B) PROOF READING

Unit 10 (A) Copy Marking

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10A.0 AIMS

In this unit, we shall tell you about how a manuscript is made ready with appropriate instructions for the printer. We shall separately look at two stages of this activity: copy marking, and proof reading. Each of these activities is performed by specialists who have been trained to do these jobs and so it is important for you to understand the importance of these and to handle these tasks competently.

This unit is therefore in two parts: (10A) Copy marking and (10B) Proof reading. These activities are separate but closely interlinked hence they form part of the same unit.

We have also provided you the basic proof reading symbols. We may add that these are not exhaustive and refer you to where you can get a complete set of these. For copyright reasons, we cannot reproduce the entire set here.

Part A: Copy marking: Here you will be introduced to the concept, role and importance of copy marking along with some basic instructions for how to mark proofs. The ‘copy’ is marked by, usually, a copy editor, who has a vision of how the manuscript is to be printed in a book form finally.

You will be also be introduced to the important activities that go into the preparation of ‘copy’ which will go to the printer. You know, of course, that before a printer begins his work, he needs detailed instructions from an expert who will indicate precisely how the end result or the printed book should look— its cover, binding, printing, format, margins, page layout, etc.

Part B: Proof Reading: Here we shall be talking of how to mark proofs and how to
read proofs. The two activities are necessarily concurrent but we are trying to show how important both of them, by themselves are.

At the end of this unit, you will be able to describe copy marking and proof reading, their role, importance and be able to do a basic amount of both the activities. Remember that this unit is only an introduction to both the activities. In order to learn these in detail, you will need to do an entire course.

10A.1 INTRODUCTION TO COPY MARKING

Here we shall be looking at sending to, and then getting the manuscript through, the press. Two functionaries are required here: the copy editor (who also marks 'copy') and the proof reader (who checks the proofs against 'copy').

The copy editor makes the mss ready for printing. For making the copy (or mss) ready for printing, he closely scrutinizes it and decides as to how the various portions of the book are to be handled. (Though, nowadays, with computers and word processing programs, the task has been simplified to a great extent, and the copy marking decisions can immediately be seen on-screen, not all necessary information can be handled via machine alone.)

As you would perhaps know, the persons who set, compose or key in the mss are generally not highly educated people. Their knowledge of the language is perfunctory and modest, to say the least. In such a situation, therefore, the publisher has to make certain that, to begin with, the mss should be set (for printing), composed or keyed-in in such a manner that there is minimum wastage in the process. For this purpose, it has to be ensured that the manuscript contains clear-cut, unambiguous and simple instructions. Such directions will help expedite the production of the book. These are copy marking instructions.

The parts to be given guidelines about:

If you study closely any book or a standard publication, you would observe that it has been systematically divided in certain clear-cut parts. It generally contains the following distinct parts in the order indicated below:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents (or list of contents)
- Foreword
- Preface
- Introduction
- Dedication, etc.
- Text Matter (divided in chapters, crisp chapter headings (or sub-headings)
- Tables, Charts, Diagrams, Illustrations
- Notes, Citations, Footnotes
- Glossary
- Appendices
- Bibliography
- Index

The copy marking must ensure that all these parts have been covered in his instructions to the press.
10A.2 WHO MARKS COPY?

The copy editor first edits the copy from the point of view of the house style of his publishing house. He ensures grammatical correctness, consistency, and checks that the document is ‘clean’ from the point of libel, plagiarism and so forth. After that, he has to clearly mark instructions to the printer regarding how he wants the text or ms to be printed. What does this involve? This involves instructions regarding margins, typefaces, use of colour, layout, etc. In fact, the copy editor, through various instructions, has to interpret the artist’s (designer’s) vision of the layout for the printer.

10A.3 WHAT IS COPY MARKING?

Copy marking is preparing the ms for printing with the help of standard copy marking symbols that are understood universally. In addition, instructions are to be given in the language you will be functioning in, English here, so that the person who is working on the ms (the compositor) can produce the result you want.

10A.4 WHY MARK THE ENTIRE ‘COPY’ OR MSS?

Since the printer may not be using only one person to set the type, the instructions to the press have to be marked on each and every single page of the ms. Different persons may be responsible for different chapters or sections of the ms and the copy editor cannot assume that once he has explained what margins he wants; he need not mark it for every page.

Copy marks then are the written instructions to the press given by the copy editor via standardized signs and symbols that are universally understood.

10A.5 WHERE IS THE COPY MARKED?

The copy is marked in the body of the text. This marking must be done throughout the entire ms since more than one person will be keying-in the text. Usually, the printer divides up the ms into four or five parts so as to keep all the operators busy and to thus expedite the work. In this case, it will be risky to assume that once the first chapter or ten or so pages have been marked, the rest will be done the same way. (Proofreading symbols are marked in the nearest margin with a sign in the body of the text to indicate where the correction is to be made).

In case you mark the first ten pages and leave the rest, the compositor will follow ‘copy’ and set the rest, as they are if there are no markings on the following pages.

Briefly, as copy marker you should

- In the left margin, mark ‘fresh-page’ or ‘right-hand page’;
- Indicate sub-headings;
- Point out passages to be set in different type with vertical lines from the first line to the last of the particular passage;
- Give instructions for placement of illustrations;
- Indicate new paragraph, if this is not marked in the body of the ms; and
- Give measurements of margins to be left to the top, left, right and bottom of the page.
10A.6 WHEN IS THE COPY MARKED?

The copy is marked right as soon as it is received by copy editor from the editor from the beginning to the end before being sent to the printer. This means that you must have in hand all the parts of the book. When this is not possible, then you can either wait for the complete ms (often not possible) or mark the pages (‘folios’ since pagination is done at the very end) in running numbering and add later pages as 67a, 67b indicating on page 67 that ‘pages 67a and 67b follow’.

10A.7 CAMERA-READY COPY

With the facility of word processing, you can generate what is commonly called a camera-ready copy (CRC) in which the facility of WYSIWYG is available. The hitch here is that actually this is not a CRC but a word processed document prepared using the program MS Word.

To prepare the actual CRC the printer usually uses a program called PageMaker. On converting your document to a CRC in PageMaker, the formatting is often changed. Illustrations may shift and placements, page numbering may change.

From the CRC, the printer will produce a negative, then plates, then a positive and if you want, give you a printout. In case there is only text you need not worry but if there are illustrations then you must ask to see a ferro or blueprint from the negative.

10A.8 DIFFERENT TYPE FACES

We have talked of different parts of a book’s manuscript earlier in this unit. Why should a book have different parts? Normally, division of the ms in the parts as indicated earlier simplifies the reader’s task in using/consulting the publication without much loss of time.

Different parts of a book or different types of books may be prepared using different type faces. This is done as per the content of the book, the publisher’s decision, the author’s requirement. The copy editor indicates the different type faces to be used to guide the printer.

Thus, in order to generate smooth production of the book/publication, each item in a chapter or section (number, title, sub-title, etc.) is to be marked in type specifications that are indicated or translated into symbols or codes, signs, etc.

Type specifications are marked in the margin as finalized by the designer or the layout artist. Occasionally a separate dummy of the book/publication is made available to the publisher. On it are marked clearly the typefaces for chapter headings and subheadings, placements of illustrations, charts, tables, diagrams, photographs or drawings. In electronic typesetting, typeface specifications are translated into symbols or codes that can be deciphered by the machines.

Besides these, placement, location or accompaniment of a particular requirement, such as ornamental rules or other devices used in the design are also indicated in marking the ms.

Copy marking has to specify the treatment of the first time a first para, first page of the chapter, etc. are prepared.

Page numbering of the entire book/publication is also an important consideration which has to be indicated while marking the copy. While page numbers are usually given on
the top corners — instructions are given on left and right or bottom right or centre in a single sequence throughout the book requiring the matter to be set in a particular type. The numbering of the text may exclude appendices or other items of the book.

10A.9 DIFFERENT COPY MARKING FOR DIFFERENT PUBLICATIONS

Since books and publications vary in their contents, their subject matter requires different types of copy marking. For example, for books and publications on science, i.e., physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, geology, genetics, microbiology, all medical areas, engineering and technology, management and all the newly-emerging disciplines, such as space engineering, aero-sciences or bio-technology, copy marking attains prodigious significance. A time will come soon; in fact, it is already here, when copy marking will require subject-specific training. There are further complications ahead when colours are to be used in copy marking.

In addition to the above, there are several markings on the copy that must be followed while setting the copy. To ensure standard production of a standard book, copy marking is extremely crucial and essential. For, if the copy is not composed or set in a particular style or manner, the mss will not be printed in a presentable manner which neither the reader will enjoy reading nor will it be good enough to look at.

Copy markings by the copy editor or the sub-editor are also aimed at presenting the printed matter skilfully and tastefully to the best satisfaction of the reader and also of the author.

10A.10 MEETING INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Now that the standard books and publications have global markets, their printing and production also have to meet certain international requirements. Often the authors use foreign words — Hindi, Latin, Greek, German, Arabic or any other language in their text. The copy containing such words has to be marked in different characters — italics, bold, in brackets or in any other way.

It is the copy marker’s responsibility to make sure that the copy-setter understands his markings. He has also to see to it that the reader faces no problem in understanding the meaning and the context of the foreign language word used in the copy. Again, the foreign word is to be printed in the manner in which it is used in that language.

10A.11 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRINTERS

In marking for printing all kinds of names and titles, the copy marker has to use caution in avoiding spelling errors, using capitals, etc. For examples, D’Souza, McMohan, McQuail, Sad’ullah, MacDonald — particularly words from Arabic, Spanish, Italian or other foreign languages.

- The same also applies for titles and designations such as Lt. Governor, Air-Cdr. (Air Commodore), Maj.-Gen. Writing it as Major-Gen., though correctly conveying the designation, is against the accepted style of writing.
- Similarly, writing one’s academic degrees. For example, the correct style of writing the following degrees is: M.A., LL.B, Ph.D., LL.D, D. Litt., M.S., M.D., B.Tech., B.Sc. (Engg.), B.Arch., M.B.B.S., etc., etc.
Using abbreviations is a common practice nowadays. UNESCO, UN, WHO, FAO, WARC, ILO is considered the right style. Inserting period (or full stop) is avoided as it saves spaces, makes reader comprehension easy and fast. So, marking such abbreviations is to be done in the internationally accepted style.

Since copy markers have also to use marks for printers, directing them to follow a particular style for composing, setting or keying in notes (also called footnotes), endnotes, citations/references, index and bibliography, adequate care has to be observed in this regard also.

Here are a few examples of cases where special care has to be taken:

1) Footnotes or notes
2) Endnotes
3) Citations/References
4) Bibliography
5) Index

Remember then that consistent copy marking plays a significant role in making the book or publication a standard work to be accepted and used internationally. A copy marker, therefore, has to be amply alert and cautious. He has to serve the publisher’s interests in that a well-printed book will sell; the printer’s interests so as to save him time; use his resources optimally and prevent the irritation of multiple corrections and proofs; the author’s interests so that his book is well-received; and the reader’s interests in that he has spent money and his money should be well-spent.

10A.12 SUMMING UP

In this section (10A) we have introduced you to copy-marking. We have told you why it is important that the copy should be clearly and consistently marked before the mss is sent for printing. We have also briefly told you about some of the elements that need to be taken special care of while marking copy. Finally we have told you of how crucial the role of the person marking copy is in serving the interests of the various persons associate with bringing out a publication.