Editors’ Association of Canada

Copy Editing Study Guide

Editors’ Association of Canada Certification

test overview | practice test | marking guidelines

BASED ON PROFESSIONAL EDITORIAL STANDARDS – 2009
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INTRODUCTION TO THE COPY EDITING TEST

The Copy Editing test for EAC Certification is based on standards A1 to A12 and D1 to D18 of PES, available in Appendix 1 and on the EAC website (www.editors.ca). Like other certification tests in the program, the Copy Editing test examines your knowledge, skills, and judgment as an editor. The test assesses your understanding of the publishing process and your ability to consistently apply spelling, usage, grammar, punctuation, and style rules. In addition, the test assesses your ability to judge when not to make changes and when to query an author about a particular change. If information is missing or a passage is confusing, more than a simple revision may be needed.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS TEST

The Copy Editing test, like the other certification tests, is intended for editors who have at least five years’ experience and can, in the words of section D of PES, “ensure correctness, consistency, accuracy, and completeness.”

If you wish to become a Certified Copy Editor, you must write and pass the Copy Editing test. If you wish to obtain full certification and become a Certified Professional Editor, you must pass all four certification tests: Structural Editing, Stylistic Editing, Copy Editing, and Proofreading.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU TAKE THIS TEST

The Copy Editing Practice Test in this study guide is typical of the test you will actually write. It is presented here as a study aid to help you prepare for the real test. Like the Practice Test, the real test will have two parts. The first part will consist of short-answer questions and should take approximately one hour to complete. The second part will consist of a passage to edit. The passage will be preceded by a scenario that represents what your employer, client, or supervisor would tell you in preparation for completing the work: what specifics you should concentrate on, what additional materials you should submit, what to do if you have questions, and so on. The passage should take approximately two hours to edit.

The real Copy Editing test will be invigilated. You will have three hours to complete your work. You will be expected to bring the following items to the test:

- pens and pencils (a photocopy of your test will be reviewed by markers, so make sure the pens and pencils you bring will produce clear marks for photocopying; note that the test is photocopied in black and white, not colour, so do not mark up or code by colour)
- eraser(s)
- ruler(s)
- one calculator (simple mathematical functions only; no data storage or communication functions permitted)

You will also be allowed to bring the following items if you think you may need them during the test:

- pica ruler
- magnifying glass
- earplugs
- seat and/or back cushion
- bottled drinking water

The Copy Editing test has been set with the expectation that candidates will use reference books during the test. You will be allowed to bring one Canadian dictionary, Editing Canadian English, and up to three additional current style guides:

**Dictionaries (choose 1)**

- Canadian Oxford Dictionary
- Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language
- Gage Canadian Dictionary

**Style guides (choose up to 3)**

- The Chicago Manual of Style
- The New York Public Library Writer’s Guide to Style and Usage
- The Canadian Style
- The Canadian Press Stylebook and its companion, CP Caps & Spelling
You may add tabs to your reference books to mark particular sections, but you may not insert additional pages or attach extensive notes. You will not be permitted to use other reference materials or editing aids, including computers, during the test. You will be provided with scrap paper.

In addition to your writing supplies and reference books, you may need other equipment or items not mentioned here. If this is the case, please submit your written request to use anything not listed above to the National Office at least 15 business days before the test. Also, if you will need to eat or take medication during the test, please indicate this when you register for the test (see the “special needs” section of the registration form).

If you have any questions about what is and is not permitted during the test, please submit your question(s) in writing to the National Office at least 15 business days before the test.

**How to Prepare**

With the Copy Editing test, as with the other-certification tests, it’s very important for you to prepare by doing some hands-on exercises. Since the test is skills-based, your chances for success will increase the more you practise.

Becoming familiar with PES and your reference books is essential. You may find it helpful to take courses or EAC seminars on copy editing. Working through EAC’s Copy Editing: Meeting Professional Editorial Standards (CE: MPES) is another excellent way to prepare. You will certainly want to brush up on using standard hard-copy markup if that is something you lack experience in or do not do on a regular basis.

One of the best ways to prepare is to take the Practice Test in this study guide. It will familiarize you with the test format and instructions; it will also give you a sense of how much time you will need. Follow these steps to review the knowledge and skills you will need.

**Step 1: Try the test**
- Study the standards found in PES (see Appendix 1 or the EAC website).
- Complete the Practice Test (beginning on page 7), marking the text with standard editing symbols. Allow yourself three hours to complete the test.
- While taking the test, consult a Canadian dictionary, *Editing Canadian English*, and whatever style guides you usually use, but keep in mind that the Practice Test and the real test have been set with the expectation that you will use at least one of the style guides listed on page 5.

**Step 2: Assess your performance**
- Consider the Standards and Tasks section (page 28), and note that each question or problem in the test has an answer or solution that corresponds to a particular standard.
- Read the General Marking Guidelines section (page 30).
- Compare your test with the Answer Key (beginning on page 33).
- Use the blank Marking Sheet (beginning on page 54) to assign yourself marks.
- Calculate your grade. If you score at least 280 out of 350 (80%), you will have earned a pass on the Practice Test. In the real test, the precise pass mark will vary a little from one administration to the next, but it will be close to 80%.

**Step 3: Learn from your results**
- Take note of any standards you had difficulty with and work to improve your performance on those standards.
- Undertake research and study in areas where you were weak. PES and CE: MPES can help you.

**Step 4: Learn from the sample responses**
- Study the pass and fail results in the Sample Responses and Markers’ Assessments section (beginning on page 65).
- Consider whether you overlooked any of the same points overlooked in the sample responses.
- Note particularly any comments made by the markers that apply to your test.
Copy Editing Practice Test

Section A: Questions

For questions 1 to 12, put a check mark beside the option that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. If you were asked to use "American" spelling in the document, which of the following would you use? (2 marks)
   - a) labour, favourite, neighbour
   - b) traveling, counseling, marveling
   - c) organise, recognise, democratise
   - d) none of the above

2. For which of the following materials is permission for use definitely NOT required? (2 marks)
   - a) a half-page excerpt from a paper in an online journal, quoted in an academic essay
   - b) a three-line poem, quoted in its entirety by a character in a novel
   - c) 10 lines from a 20-line poem, quoted by the writer of a book review
   - d) two verses of a popular song recorded within the last two years, quoted in a teacher's resource guide

3. "Leading" is (2 marks)
   - a) the space between the last line of type and the footnote.
   - b) the space between words in a line of type.
   - c) the space between lines of type.
   - d) the space between letters in a line of type.
You have agreed to copy edit three articles for a new community newspaper. The design and length have been set, and the managing editor has completed structural and stylistic editing.

“What I’m giving you now,” she tells you, “are what I expect to become three regular columns, and I’ve assigned each a standard head. But they’re certainly not copy edited. And I haven’t had time to set an editorial style sheet, so I’d like you to begin a rudimentary one. On a separate sheet, record your decisions about spelling, hyphenation, punctuation, and style for dates, times of day, money, and so on, as well as the dictionary and the style guide you used.

“By the way,” she adds, sighing, “you should know a couple of things about these writers, none of whom is being paid. The hairdresser, who tells me he has time to do a column only quarterly, thinks he’s an artiste who can write. My deal with him is that we won’t mess with his style. You may have to do so occasionally, but if you do, jot an explanation in the margin.

“The librarian is quite reliable, but you will have to watch for consistency of presentation in her column.

“The professor is actually a pretty good writer, and he seems to expect editing. But he moved from England only a few years ago, so you may have to watch for some terms and idioms that aren’t Canadian.”

For the style sheet you are asked to supply, use the page provided at the end of the test.
From Hair On

by Alberto Sassanno

(Mr. Sassano is the principle hair stylist, skin consultant and owner of a local beauty salon. He also is working part-time for a major cosmetics company.)

Here it is—your annual list of beauty do’s and don’ts for New Year’s. Following these guidelines, your inner beauty will emerge. You will be healthy and glowing—and your husband will be happy too!

Do’s

- Do book time for yourself from your busy schedule. Regularly treat yourself to a relaxing facial, manicure and scalp massage.
- Do take advantage of the new liquid hair-shaping tools that give your hair more shine, more volume, and more style.
- Do remember to step-up your skin and hair-remoisturizing routine, indoor heat and outdoor cold pull out moisture, even if your skin and hair tends to be oily. Good packs and lotions are available in salons.
- Do remember your fingernails too. Salons can provide nail-care systems that guarantee longer, stronger nails in just 10 days.
- DO make up your face with this season’s splendor of colours that are warm. Cocas, mochas, and chestnuts look simply wonderfully in Winter.

Don’ts

- Don’t get carried away with a ton of hair-styling aids—too much hairspray dulls hair. To remove buildup of spray, gel or mousse, a good clarifying treatment (available from salons) is available.
Copy Editing Study Guide

Editors’ Association of Canada Certification

This is the primary resource for anyone who wants to become a Certified Copy Editor.

Inside you will find information on the certification program and testing process, a practice test and marking guidelines, and practice test results from both a successful and an unsuccessful candidate. Whether you use this guide for independent study or in a workshop setting, you will learn more about the knowledge, skills, and judgment required to earn your Certified Copy Editor credential.

Since 2006, EAC has administered certification tests across Canada and awarded credentials in Proofreading, Copy Editing, Stylistic Editing, and Structural Editing. EAC certification credentials are now recognized by both government and industry as proof of editorial excellence. Further information about EAC Certification can be found online at www.editors.ca/certification.

OTHER GUIDES IN THIS SERIES:
- Proofreading Study Guide
- Stylistic Editing Study Guide
- Structural Editing Study Guide