

Editors' Association of Canada

Editors' Association of Canada

Stylistic Editing Study Guide

Editors' Association of Canada Certification

test overview | practice test | marking guidelines



BASED ON
PROFESSIONAL EDITORIAL
STANDARDS – 2009

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction to the Stylistic Editing Study Guide	1
EAC Certification	
Why Become Certified?	2
The Certification Process	3
The Certification Tests	3
Introduction to the Stylistic Editing Test	
Who Should Take This Test	6
What to Expect If You Take This Test	6
How to Prepare	7
Practice Test	
Section A: Questions	10
Section B: Passage	17
Marking the Practice Test	
Standards and Tasks	24
General Marking Guidelines	26
Answer Key	27
Marking Sheet	42
Sample Responses and Markers' Assessments	
Sample One—Pass	49
Completed Marking Sheet for Sample One—Pass	64
Sample Two—Fail	71
Completed Marking Sheet for Sample Two—Fail	86
Appendix One: Professional Editorial Standards	93
Appendix Two: Certification Policies	103

INTRODUCTION TO THE STYLISTIC EDITING TEST

The Stylistic Editing test for EAC Certification is based on standards A1 to A12 and C1 to C15 of PES, available in Appendix One and on the EAC website (www.editors.ca). Like other certification tests in the program, the Stylistic 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 improve sentence construction and make appropriate word choices, rewrite material as required, and eliminate wordiness. 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 Stylistic 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 C of PES, "clarify meaning, improve flow, and smooth language."

If you wish to become a Certified Stylistic Editor, you must write and pass the Stylistic 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 Stylistic 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 Stylistic 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 Stylistic 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 and 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 EAC 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

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 stylistic editing. Working through EAC's *Stylistic Editing: Meeting Professional Editorial Standards* (SY: 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.

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 One or the EAC website).
- Complete the Practice Test (beginning on page 9), marking the text with standard editing symbols. Allow yourself three hours to complete the test.
- While taking the Practice 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 6.

Step 2: Assess your performance

- Consider the Standards and Tasks section (page 24), 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 26).
- Compare your test with the Answer Key (beginning on page 27).
- Use the blank Marking Sheet (beginning on page 42) to assign yourself marks.
- Calculate your grade. If you score at least 121 out of 151 (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 SY: 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 49).
- 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.

For more information on preparing for writing certification tests, please see the EAC website.

STYLISTIC EDITING PRACTICE TEST

Section A: Questions

For questions 1 to 3, put a check mark beside the one option that best answers the question.

1. Which of the following is not the job of a stylistic editor? *(2 marks)*
- (a) reorder sentences within a paragraph.
 - (b) improve sentence construction.
 - (c) ensure smooth transitions between paragraphs.
 - (d) reorder paragraphs within a piece to improve flow.
2. The problem with using clichés in writing is that *(2 marks)*
- (a) they are not predictable.
 - (b) they change the tone.
 - (c) they deprive writing of freshness.
 - (d) they have inherent intellectual property issues.
3. A manuscript you have been asked to edit, written by a philosophy professor from a local university, is full of biased language. You choose to *(2 marks)*
- (a) accept it as common to the field.
 - (b) suggest to the author that she change it.
 - (c) change the terminology yourself.
 - (d) leave it for the copy editor.

SCENARIO**STYLISTIC EDITING PRACTICE TEST***Chapter 1, “The Courthouse,”**from The Courts and You, by Portia Mortmain**(92 marks)*

To: candidate@eac.ca

From: assigning_editor@bookpublisher.com

Re: “The Courthouse,” from *The Courts and You*

Thanks very much for agreeing to do this rush job for me. As I mentioned on the phone, this text, “The Courthouse,” is the first chapter of *The Courts and You*, an introductory textbook on the Canadian court system by Portia Mortmain. She teaches a course entitled *Working in a Legal Environment*, and her book is based on her lecture notes. The book is intended for first-year community college students who hope to work in the court system after graduation.

I’m attaching the text for the chapter and also the photo chosen by the production department to appear in the chapter’s opening spread. A copy editor and proofreader will review this chapter, and our designer will make page-setting decisions, so please do not take the time to do these tasks. You’ll see, though, that the chapter poses significant stylistic challenges. Please complete a stylistic edit to ensure that the content is written as clearly and with as much grace as you can manage in such a short time.

Please enclose a point-form list outlining what you’ve done. Please also summarize your queries—point-form is fine. Let me know when you’ve finished the job and I’ll have it picked up. Thanks again for helping me deal with this unexpected crunch.

For the list you are asked to supply, use the page provided at the end of the test.

1

The Courts and You

Portia Mortmain

[Photo: European courthouse (with flag – very obviously not Canadian).]

5

Chapter 1: The Courthouse

10

- 1 The courthouse is full of history, symbolism, and protocol. It's in the courthouse that the fruits of your labour are decided. Whether the matter is a Small Claims Court action, a family dispute, or a first degree murder jury trial, this is where all the proceedings occur. If you work in the legal field, you must get comfortable with the courthouse and the way business is conducted within it.

15

History of the Courthouse

20

- 2 Entire books have been written on the evolution of courthouse architecture, its symbolism, and various construction styles over the years. The most important aspects of courthouse design are those that have remained constant. These books tell us that the structure and ornament of these important buildings reflect the political ideals, religious and cultural beliefs, and tenor of the times in which they were built.

24

- 3 In Europe in the olden days, court proceedings were

**OTHER GUIDES
IN THIS SERIES:**

Proofreading Study Guide

Copy Editing Study Guide

Structural Editing Study Guide



Stylistic Editing Study Guide is authored and co-published by the Editors' Association of Canada/Association

canadienne des réviseurs (EAC/ACR), the voice of Canadian editors. EAC's membership includes both in-house and freelance editors, whose work enhances the quality and readability of all forms of word-based communication. With more than 1,600 members across the nation, EAC promotes effective communication among editors and between editors and their clients, and works to develop and maintain professional standards of editing. More information on EAC/ACR is available online at www.editors.ca or www.reviseurs.ca, or by contacting EAC/ACR at info@editors.ca or info@reviseurs.ca.



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Editors' Association
of Canada Certification

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