



Copy Editing Syllabus

SESSION 1

Lesson 1: An overview of copy editing (video)

Assignment 1: Copy test

Assignment 1: Answer key

SESSION 2

Lesson 2: Stylebooks and other resources: What is style? The two major stylebooks, and significant differences between them. The dictionary. Creating and updating an in-house style guide

Assignment 2: AP style v. Chicago style

Assignment 2: Answer key

Visuals: Proofreaders' marks, marked-up copy

SESSION 3

Lesson 3: Comma issues: essential and nonessential elements, compound predicates v. compound sentences, coordinate adjectives, introductory elements, serial comma

Assignment 3: Medical text

Assignment 3: Answer key

SESSION 4

Lesson 4: Working as a copy editor: resume, copy test, job-hunting sites, freelance v. staff, going rates

Assignment 4: Spelling test

Assignment 4: Answer key

SESSION 5

Lesson 5: Em dash, en dash, and hyphen usage

Assignment 5: Press release

Assignment 5: Answer key

SESSION 6

Lesson 6: Commonly misused words, agreement, parallelism, capitalization, and headline style

Assignment 6: Newspaper story, write hed and dek

Assignment 6: Answer key

SESSION 7

Lesson 7: Modifier issues: dangling modifiers/participles, modifier placement, antecedent problems

Assignment 7: Fiction excerpt

Assignment 7: Answer key

SESSION 8

Lesson 8: Additional skills: Fact-checking—How to do it, fact-checking resources; computer skills, errors in typography

Video: Fact-checking

Assignment 8: Fact-checking

Assignment 8: Answer key

SESSION 9

Lesson 9: Other punctuation usage: semicolon, period, colon, ellipsis, exclamation point, question mark, single quotes

Assignment 9: Marketing materials

Assignment 9: Answer key

SESSION 10

Lesson 10: Review of common problems: lay/lie, who/whom, that/which, possessives

Assignment 10: Fill in the blanks

Assignment 10: Answer key

SESSION 11

Lesson 11: Considerations for different media: magazines, newspapers, press materials, books, online, academic, technical, medical, legal; writing headlines; copy-editing quotes

Assignment 11: Online story

Assignment 11: Answer key

SESSION 12

Lesson 12: Copy flow, common questions, hours, office politics, fashioning a career, networking, further preparation for becoming a copy editor

Assignment 12: Magazine feature

Assignment 12: Answer key



INSTRUCTOR BIO

Cheryl Della Pietra is a freelance copy editor for *Elle*, *Us Weekly*, *LIFE*, and *Fast Company*, where she not-so-quietly obsesses over comma splices and misplaced modifiers. She has previously copyedited at SmartMoney.com and also supervised the copy department at P.O.V. magazine, where she was the research editor. Yearning to have her work copyedited for a change, she has written for *Redbook* and *Marie Claire*. Many moons ago, she was Hunter S. Thompson's editorial assistant, a job that honed her margarita-making skills.