



THE COPYEDITOR'S HANDBOOK. A GUIDE FOR BOOK PUBLISHING AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS. AMY EINSOHN. BERKELEY, LOS ANGELES, AND LONDON: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS; 2000. XII + 560 PAGES. HARDCOVER \$35.00, SOFTCOVER \$19.95. ISBN 0-520-21834-5 (HARDCOVER), 0-520-21835-3 (SOFTCOVER).

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With this handbook, Amy Einsohn has done a big favor to beginning copyeditors and their supervisors. Experienced copyeditors will also be glad she has written this handbook. The best explanation is given by the author in the preface: "The manuals [those from CSE, the University of Chicago, and so on] are filled with rules, preferences, exceptions, and examples, [but] they assume that their readers already understand what copyeditors do, why the rules matter, and how and when to apply, bend, or break the rules. Second, because the manuals are addressed to both copyeditors and authors, they do not discuss the procedures peculiar to copyediting. . . ." Having spent the better part of a career training copyeditors, I can confirm her rationale and welcome the publication of this handbook.

The text is divided into 15 clearly written chapters, and they in turn are grouped in three parts, "The ABCs of Copyediting", "Editorial Style", and "Language Editing". Part 1 provides an overview of the task, including descriptions of basic procedures, and lists reference books and resources. Part 2 covers the subject matter of copyediting: punctuation; spelling and hyphenation; capitalization; numbers and numerals; quotations; abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols; tables, graphs, and art; references; front and back matter; and typecoding. Each chapter in part 2 closes with a set of exercises whose answer keys appear at the end of the book just before the index. Part 3 covers advanced skills selectively in a chapter on the principles and pitfalls of grammar and a chapter on more peripheral matters. Command of these two chapters characterizes the experienced copyeditor whose credentials and skills are in demand.

Besides the answer keys, the appendixes include glossaries of copyediting terms and grammatical terms. They would be especially valuable to copyeditors in training and to their trainers. The checklist of editorial preferences would help editorial staffs devise comprehensive styles and create style sheets for individual books. The checklist contains entries on mechanics, formatting, and documentation. The sec-

ond entry demonstrates its usefulness:

- Delete periods in acronyms and abbreviations for organizations except U.S. and U.N.
- Delete periods in acronyms and abbreviations for organizations including US and UN.
- Use periods in acronyms or abbreviations for organizations.
- Follow the author's preference.

A copyediting handbook without a good index might just as well be a bad novel once it is time to put pencil to paper (or cursor to screen). The index in this handbook is typographically clear, and a spot check showed the entries to be logical, intelligent, and accurate. The shortcut of listing entries for subheadings and their inversions is supplemented by good synonym entries. Ideas that lack subheads in the text are also well indexed. These features should make it possible for the copyeditor to find quickly what he or she knows must be there somewhere.

A handbook typically is designed to systematize a procedure, and certainly this handbook accomplishes that goal. Of added significance to me are Einsohn's friendly tone, her open-minded assessments of how to evaluate and repair language difficulties, and her descriptions of the challenge of copyediting. She is not Miss Thistlebottom and not a teacher of the game of "gotcha", an all-too-frequent, debilitating exercise. Instead, Einsohn lays out the copyeditor's obligations with humor, style, and perspective. Talented men and women with interest in language would learn well how to copyedit from this book and a good mentor. And the book would help them see the value of the profession and work hard to learn it. I even imagine that tired hands would be rejuvenated by this handbook; perhaps we would extol our work in the face of the dead silence that so often follows our answer to the party question, What do you do for a living?

Walter Pagel