

## Conventions and Presentation

### Editing Level 1: Conventions

# Making Editing Manageable

**W**hen faced with a job that seems really BIG—a report on your state’s history, an essay on a 1,000-page novel, cleaning your garage—it’s easy to feel overwhelmed. You’re not sure where to begin, and you can’t imagine finishing. Many writers feel this way about editing. They’ve already worked so hard doing their research and getting a draft on paper. And then, there’s more! Checking the spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage, paragraphing . . . Does this list ever end? Our best advice is to break editing down into several small jobs. Taking things step by step is one good way to make any big task manageable.

## A Warm-Up

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Here’s a step-by-step guide that makes editing simpler to handle. Read the whole thing through and decide how much or how little you want to do at one time. Either way, you get a full minute for each step.

### Editing Guide

**Step 1:** Read the passage for meaning.

**Step 2:** Edit carefully for spelling errors.

**Step 3:** Edit carefully for punctuation errors.

**Step 4:** Edit carefully for errors in grammar.

**Step 5:** Edit for repeated or missing words.

**HINT:** Carefully reading a passage before doing any editing helps your brain size up the job and begin working subconsciously. (And that’s a good thing.)

i just dont get the whether around here. yesterday, it was 84  
degrees and today it chili and raining Spring weather can be be so  
confusing around here I gess that's why they say, "if you don't  
like the weather, wait five minutes" It's probably also why their's  
a whole Chanel devoted just the weather

**HINT:** Go back through the passage one more time, pencil in hand. Give yourself a gold star (just in your mind) if you find even one error you missed. Most editors do!

## Share and Compare

Compare your editing results with a partner's by counting the number of errors you each found. Do your totals match? Your teacher will share the number of errors in the passage so you know if you missed anything.

## Sharpening the Old Editor's Eye

Here are four short writing examples for you to edit. As you go through the examples, you'll be asked to look for a little more each time. This gradual increase in difficulty helps train your editor's eyes and ears to see and hear more and more. Use the following guidelines.

- Read aloud, slowly, so you do not miss anything.
- Have a writing handbook or other resources handy so you can check things out.
- Use the correct marks from the copyeditor's poster.
- Go back for one more look to be sure you didn't miss anything.

### Example 1

**Editing Focus:** Spelling

What a bussy weekend! My parents piked my bother and me up from school early on Friday, so what we cud fyl to St. Louis for a family wedding in Satruday.

### Example 2

**Editing Focus:** Spelling; capitals to start sentences; punctuation to end sentences

my oldest cuzin, the one getting married, asked my brother and me to be the ring barers this happened onec before when i was littel back then I thogt I was going to be a "ring bear," so I asked my mom if I could be a Grizzly Bear?

### Example 3

**Editing Focus:** Spelling; capitalization; punctuation; grammar

my brother and me are only about a Year apart we look alot like twins my cousin thought therefore that weed look cute in maching tuxedoes with tails and top hats achually, we did look pretty good, but black tuxedos on a hot day was pretty uncomf torble, expecially during the long photo shoot befor the Wedding

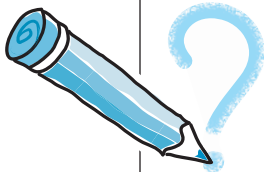
### Example 4

**Editing Focus:** Spelling; capitals; punctuation; missing or repeated words; EVERYTHING!

i can't weight to see the pitcher were they posed all the Guys  
in Tuxedos wearing cool sunglasses it it was hard because we  
wasn't suppose to smile everyone's freinds was taking pictures  
at the the same time for a moment it felt as though we were  
fameous people at press Conference but then I could feel the  
swet dripping down my back all i wanted rite then was to get to  
get into some reglar close

### Share and Compare

Compare your editing of each example with a partner's. Did you find the same errors and the same number of errors? If your partner found something you missed or used a copyeditor's symbol you had forgotten, mark those changes on your paper, too. Then coach your teacher as he or she models the editing of each passage.



#### A Writer's Questions

When you're writing on a computer, you have spell check and grammar check to help you. Is that enough? If it's not enough, why bother with it at all?

## Editing Level 2: Presentation

# Getting to Know You (in a Nutshell)

**M**ost people are curious about other people's lives and love looking for details from magazines, websites, blogs, and TV programs. Whole sections of library and bookstore shelves are filled with biographies—books about people's lives.

A good biography is the result of in-depth research and extensive interviews with the person (if alive), relatives, friends, coworkers, classmates, and the husband or wife. Bio authors strive to hunt for informational tidbits curious readers might want to know, without being too intrusive.

Writers who create author bios for book jackets have another challenge. They have to fit all this fascinating information (usually with a photo) into a small space. Book bios often run less than 100 words. That's not much copy in which to sum up a person's life! But author bios, even short ones, serve an important purpose. Getting to know the person behind the words can enrich your reading experience and help you understand the author's point of view. Suppose YOU wrote a book. What would you want your bio to say?

### A Warm-Up

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Take time to look at some author bios. You may wish to look at the inside back panels of various book jackets. Or you can do an online search. Many websites offer biographical information on authors.

Your focus here is not on collecting specific details about particular authors. Instead, ask yourself what kinds of information does a good bio usually seem to include? What makes an author bio informative or just plain fun to read? With your partner or in a writing circle, make a list of various things you think should appear in a well-written bio.

**HINT:** Don't forget visuals!

**“Must-Include” Information for Author Bios:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Share and Compare**

Discuss your lists as a class. If someone mentions an important feature you didn't think of, add it to your list.

## Whittling a Bio Down to Size

Following is a very rough draft of an author bio for a book that's almost ready to go to print. The editor needs an expert to revise it. With your partner or writing circle, review your list of things included in strong bios. Then review the editor's notes for this book: title, genre, intended audience, and length requirement. (The current rough draft runs 226 words.) As you revise, feel free to cut copy, change the order, or add details. You can suggest any visuals you think are needed.

**HINT:** Don't forget to do a final word count!

Editor's Notes for Samantha R. Connors

Book Title: *The Silver Sword of Sammarrkahn Trilogy, Part One*

Author: Samantha R. Connors

Genre: Fantasy Adventure

Target Audience: Ages 12–15

Maximum Word Count: 100 words

### Samantha R. Connors

Visited Disneyland at age five but didn't like the crowds. Has a cat named Lancelot and a dog named Gila. Is the author of the acclaimed Bronze Hammer series, which won the coveted Tweedle Award for Young Adult Literature. First book was published at the age of 15. Currently lives in a castle in the mountains of Romania with her husband, Herbert, and their twin sons, Thor and Wulff. She collects medieval armor and weapons. Her collection

is on loan to a museum in Topeka, Kansas. Her father was a coal miner in West Virginia until the age of 22, when he met his future wife, Patsy. They moved to British Columbia where he did forestry work. Samantha was born in Victoria, B.C. in 1978. When she was young she loved to read King Arthur stories and anything involving dragons. She collects dragons to this day and has over 2,000 in her collection. Samantha spends her free time mountain climbing, doing extreme mountain biking, photographing lizards, and writing poems about dragons (none of which are yet published). She would like to write a screenplay for *The Silver Sword*, provided someone purchases the film rights. In her own words, "I write the kinds of books I would love to have read when I was fourteen or fifteen. Teens make the best audience because their imaginations are limitless."

(226 words)



### A Writer's Questions

Are there certain kinds of information that should not be included in a bio? Might some questions be inappropriate for an interview? How so?



## Presentation Matters

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Now it's your turn to write a bio from the ground up. That means you will have to choose the person you'd like to write about, do some research/interviews, and decide what goes in and what does not. You may choose to write about one of the following.

- An author whose work you admire
- Someone you know, famous or not (His or her book can be hypothetical!)

Plan to complete the following steps.

1. Collect information through research and/or interviews.
2. Include information suitable for a bio.
3. Include details that would interest readers.
4. Select a font and layout both eye-catching and appropriate for the featured person. (Photo or art may be included.)
5. Complete your final draft on the computer, if possible.
6. Limit your bio to 100 words. (It should fit the inside panel of a book jacket.)

**NOTE:** To add visuals, you can import non-copyrighted art from the Internet or borrow photos from a personal collection, provided you have permission to do so. Simpler yet, just insert a rough sketch, indicating the kind of photo or other artwork you would like to see.