

## **Copy Editing/Proofreading Symbols**

Copy editing refers to the handling, processing or treatment of copy after it has been submitted by the writer or reporter.

Copy editing involves a number of activities. These involve the following, among others:

- Copy tasting,
- Reading and re-reading copy,
- Re-arranging copy,
- Re-writing copy,
- Cutting and trimming copy,

### **Copy tasting**

This is the very first step in copy editing. Once a material is received, it is 'copy-tasted' to see if it should be accepted or rejected.

This involves taking a decision on whether that particular material is suitable for the publication or not. If a material is rejected at this first stage, it dies a natural death.

If it is considered acceptable, then a decision needs to be taken on which section of the publication it can be considered for.

### **Reading and Re-Reading Copy**

After copy has successfully scaled through the first stage called copy tasting, it now faces a new challenge. This second challenge involves reading and re-reading copy.

There are three main reasons for reading and re-reading copy. These are:

- (a) For the purpose of adding anything that may have been left out;
- (b) Removing any unnecessary or inappropriate material that is still contained in it;
- (c) Generally making it polished.

### **Re-Arranging (or Rejigging) Copy**

Often, copy needs to be re-arranged to make it more meaningful or more logical.

This may involve moving some portions (e.g. lines, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words, etc.) away from where they were originally.

- While some are moved forward, others may be moved backwards.
- It is like “juggling”, but the main aim is to ensure that copy is excellent, appropriate and suitable.

### **Re-Writing Copy**

Sometimes, the whole copy or portions of it may need to be rewritten.

There are different reasons why they may be re-written.

These include;

- a. The need to make them more explicit or more meaningful
- b. To make them conform with the publication’s house style
- c. To make them fit into the available space, and so on and so forth.

### **Cutting and Trimming**

Sometimes copy is too big and needs to be cut or trimmed to avoid boring the reader. At other times it has nothing to do with boredom but space.

- Sometimes the story is cut, and the concluding part (or its continuation) is carried in the next edition.
- This means that the copy is cut into several “*bite-sizes*” (or acceptable lengths)

### **Writing Headlines**

- Most people read newspapers because of catchy headlines. This is true of Tanzanian as it is true of people of other countries.

Symbol	Meaning/Instruction	Usage
	Remove space	Introd <u> </u> uction
	Remove a letter and close up	rememb <u>er</u>
	Remove word(s) and close up	It was <u>exceedingly</u> wonderful
	Put space between words	The Nigerian <u> </u> society
	Insert word (s)	The man <sup>will</sup> <u> </u> come
	Delete word	The rain fell <del>fell</del> heavily
<u>Stet</u>	Retain portion, Leave as it is	The man <del>is</del> dead <u>  stet</u>
	Transpose letter or words	Mag <sup>l</sup> z <sup>a</sup> <u> </u> ine He was <u>the/at</u> party
	Change to capital letter	<u>n</u> igeria
	Change to small letter	<u>J</u> ump
	Indent	<u>  </u> The car is coming down the road
	Run on, no paragraph	James thrilled the audience with his song. He also danced very well.
	Insert full stop or period	The man crossed the road <u>  </u>
	Insert comma	All he wanted to do was eat <u> </u> drink and sleep.
	Insert apostrophe	Mary <u> </u> 's car
	Insert hyphen	socio <u> </u> economic
	Insert quotation marks	The Oba said, <u> </u> We want our community to be developed <u> </u>
	Spell out figure	<u> </u> 5 students were caught cheating
	Change to figure	We have <u> </u> fifteen students in each class
	Spell out word	Brian goes to the <u> </u> gym everyday
	Abbreviate word	<u> </u> Reverend Philip was here
bf or	Set in bold face	Egypt is in <u> </u> Africa
Ital or	Set in italics type	<u> </u> Ewedu

Figure 11: Editing Symbols Chart