

SUBMITTING A MANUSCRIPT FOR COMMENTS

Gordon L. Godshalk – October 15, 2023

Thanks for the opportunity to help you with your manuscript. This handout explains how we will do that. I will ask you for a specific format that allows for generous and legible comments. I include two lists of the marks you might encounter when I return your document. Finally, there is a humorous excerpt from Dave Barry that I have marked up as an example.

What format do I want?

I can best help you if you help me by providing your document in a format that allows plenty of room for comments. My specifications are very similar to those of the OSU Grad School for theses and dissertations. Follow these steps:

1. Make a separate copy of the working file in your word processor (so we don't alter the format you might be following for a specific journal).
2. In the copy, set these formats:
 - ☐ Margins: 1.5" (more room for my comments)
 - ☐ Font: 12 pt (necessary for tired eyes)
 - ☐ Lines: numbered and double spaced (not 1.5x spaced; again, more room for markups)
 - ☐ Change and comment tracking: off and hidden
3. Export as a PDF file to give to me.

What do you want me to look for?

I can do copy editing or proofreading. The former considers the big picture of organization and content and is most useful earlier in your writing project. The latter focuses on details of word choice, punctuation, etc., and is most appropriate just before submitting your manuscript for publication. Doing both in the same manuscript is neither effective nor efficient. Telling me specifically what you want is very helpful.

What will I give to you?

I'll use my tablet to directly mark your PDF electronically. I will send that marked PDF back to you. It will probably be accompanied by an email message in which I list longer (perhaps numbered) notes that I did not put on the PDF and also my overall observations and suggestions.

How long will this take?

My goal is to get back to you in a week.

What do I ask from you in return?

Manuscript development is vastly different from what it was when I started writing. I benefit from critique, too. So, I am asking for your feedback – any feedback – on how to make the process better for you. I earnestly solicit your suggestions!

MY COMMON PROOFREADING MARKS

Mark in margin	Mark in text	Meaning
/		look in text on this line for markup
^	^	insert suggested text
^	⊙ ⊙	insert period, colon
^	↗ ↘ ↙ ↘	insert comma, semi-colon, subscript; change to subscript
^	√ √ √	insert apostrophe, quotes, superscript; change to superscript
^	#	insert space
~	~ / ~	delete; delete between slashes (inclusive)
/	↪	close up, delete space
Cap.	≡	uppercase letter(s) underlined
l.c.	/	lower case letter(s) under slash
¶	¶	new or no paragraph
tr	↺	transpose
/	↻	move text
/]	indent right
/	[indent left
/	⌈	center
/	⌋	align margin, column, decimal points, etc.
^	⊢	insert or change to hyphen
^	⊢	insert or change to dash (longer than hyphen)

MY COPY EDITING MARKS

These marginal marks will refer to passages that are circled, underlined, or shaded.

Mark	Meaning
	Wording of list is not parallel
?	unknown definition, meaning, or intent for indicated item
ABR	Abbreviate, or abbreviation is unknown, incorrect, or inappropriate (e.g., spell out)
AGR	Agreement lacking between noun & verb or pronoun & antecedent
ANT	Antecedent of pronoun is unclear or ambiguous
AWK	Awkward wording
CIT	Provide a citation, authority, or other substantiation for this statement
CONT	Continuity: logic, idea, or argument does not flow between sentences or paragraphs; coherence weak
DEF	Definition needed
DEV	Develop / explain / elaborate this passage, topic, or idea. There is a gap in your story.
etc.	As a suffix to another markup, this means I will no longer mark this problem
LOG	Logic of this argument / passage is unclear; train of thought not apparent
NA	Noun string as adjective ('noun cluster'); difficult to parse. Consider replacing with a prepositional phrase.
OBT	Obtuse: passage is muddled, convoluted, rambling, confusing, or ambiguous. What do you want to say?
ORG	Organization: your story is not clear; I am unable to follow your lead. The point of each sentence should lead to the next.
P	Punctuation error: missing or extra comma, apostrophe, hyphen, period, exclamation point, question mark, ...
POV	Point of view: I, we, they; consistent?
RED	Redundant, repetitive, has been stated previously
REL	Relevance; does this point contribute to your main idea?
SO	Spell out: not a numeral, abbreviation, or acronym
SP	Spelling error
SS	Sentence structure: fragment, run-on, too long
UNC	Meaning or point is unclear, ambiguous
V	Voice: active, passive; consistent?
VAG	Vague, general, contributes little, not focused
VT	Verb tense: present, past, inconsistent?
W	Wordy; extraneous words do not add to your point; be concise
WC	Word choice: colloquial, jargon, pretentious, 'scientificese.' Different word(s) may be clearer or more appropriate.

How Computers Work *

Most of us are intimidated by computers. This is because computers involve electricity. Which totally baffles us. We're still not sure how come it doesn't dribble out of the wall socket when we unplug an appliance. ** Answer: Air pressure prevents this from happening. (Source: Stephen Hawking)

We know nothing about technology, and cannot explain the principles involved in even the most basic labor-saving devices, such as the Salad Shooter. Radio is a good example. We know that if we turn on a radio, it will start producing sounds, such as the song "Wooly Bully" by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs. So we naturally assume that computers are way beyond our comprehension. But that is not necessarily the case. In fact, computers operate on simple principals that can be easily understood by anybody with some common sense, a little imagination, and an IQ of 750.

The first thing that happens is, electricity goes into the computer. The electricity is supplied by the wall socket, which is in turn connected to the electrical company via big overhead wires with squirrels running on them.

A question many people ask, after a couple of martinis, is: How come the squirrels don't get electrocuted? There is no need for you to worry about squirrels; believe me, they are not worrying about you.

What's going on inside that "magic box" on your desktop? To answer these questions, we really do need to explore, in depth, the question of ~~HOW COMPUTERS WORK~~. Unfortunately, it's very difficult to answer a complicated question like this in the small amount of space remaining in this chapter. Briefly, though, what appears to happen is this: The electricity goes into the computer, where there are "parts" that do the actual computing. I frankly have no idea how they do it, but if I had to guess, I'd say it involves radio waves.

* This text has been adapted from Dave Barry's book, *Dave Barry in Cyberspace*, as posted at <https://www.idictate.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/5-Dave-Barry-in-Cyberspace-Medium-Reading-Humour.pdf> My apologies to Barry for tainting his writing just so I can mark up issues; I hope he will just consider me an editorial squirrel. — G. Godshalk, August 8 2020