

# HOW TO GET YOUR DREAM JOB ON THE WEB

#ACES2016

# Hello!



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Copy Chief at BuzzFeed

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Deputy Copy Chief at BuzzFeed

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We'll discuss...

Important Skills

Networking  
& Your  
Personal  
Brand

Job  
Hunting

Increasing  
Your  
Chances

# 1.

## Important Skills

i.e., the basics you should have in your toolbox, plus the things that can be taught



# You should...

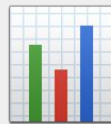
- Here's to the crazy ones, The misfits,  
The rebels, The troublemakers,  
The round pegs in the square holes,  
The ones who see things differently,  
They're not funded. They're not hired.  
They have no budgets or business plans.  
You can quote them, quote them right.



## What else?

### **A few secondary skills:**

1. CMS and Google Analytics
2. Basic HTML
3. Basic fact-checking/sourcing
4. Knowledge of/presence on social media
5. A solid grasp of ~webspeak~ and the internet
6. Awareness of global audience

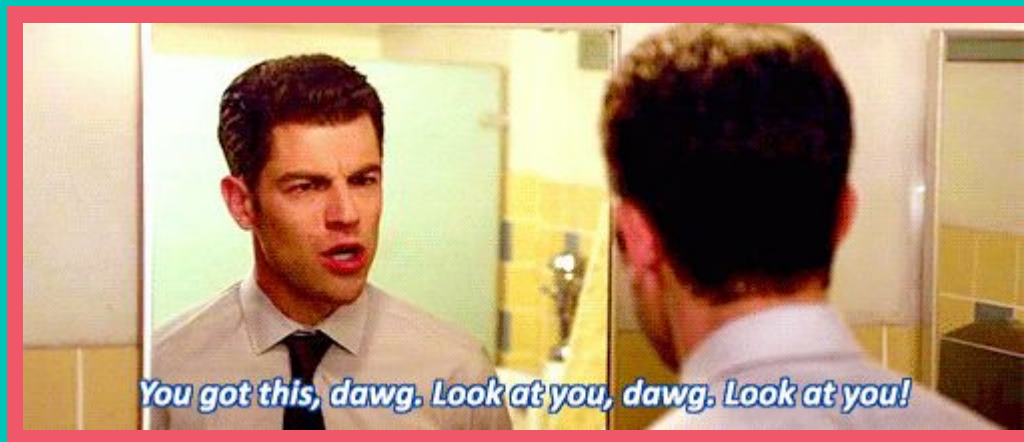


*\*These are all things you can learn!*

# 2.

## Networking & Your Personal Brand

i.e., making and maintaining contacts, and presenting your best self



**Don't let networking scare you!**

**It's just socializing with the people you want to work with.**

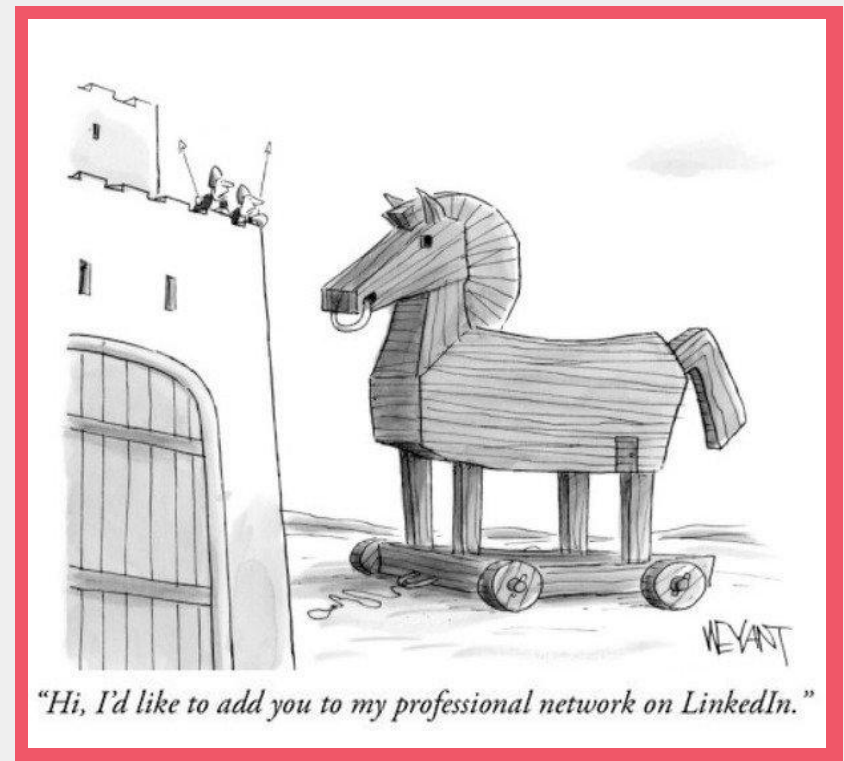
- Be yourself, and let your personality shine.
- Be truthful and sincere, and really try to get to know people beyond helping you with an “in” somewhere.
- It's OK to reach out to people in the absence of a job listing — in fact, you probably should!



## How do I build my network?

**Use the tools you probably already use every day.**

- Sign up for meetups via local professional groups, your alma mater, ACES, LinkedIn, Meetup, etc.
- Check your social networks.



## Meeting with a contact — IRL and virtually.

### **Do your research and be prepared.**

- If you ask someone to meet with you (or to spend time answering an email), do your research, know the company basics, and have specific questions.
  - YES: “What went into the decision to make the BuzzFeed style guide public?”
  - NO: “Tell me about BuzzFeed.”
- Be sure to send a thank-you note/email.

## Maintain your contacts.

### Follow up.

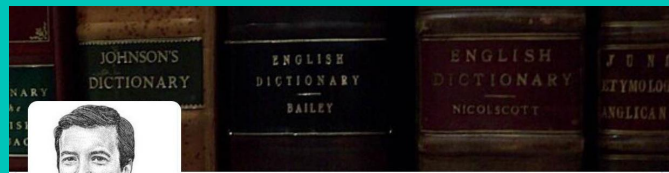
- Remind them that you exist!
  - A simple **one- or two-line email** — to say hello, to tell them what you've been up to, or to share a link — can go a long way.
- Take them to coffee the next time they're in town.



## Create your personal brand.

### **Think about how you look to someone who might hire you.**

- Follow editors and organizations that you admire; emulate them.
- Craft your bio to show employers what you're passionate about.
- Share your thoughts on ~word stuff~, and be consistent in what you post.
  - Remember: 70% professional, 30% personal.
- Have a complete, up-to-date LinkedIn profile — with a professional-looking headshot.



**Ben Zimmer**

@bgzimmer

Linguist/lexicographer/word nerd. Exec editor of @VocabularyCom+@VisualThesaurus. @WSJ columnist, ex-@GlobeIdeas/@NYTmag. @LanguageLog-ger, @lexiconvalley-er.

Jersey City, NJ · [benzimmer.com](http://benzimmer.com)

1,585 FOLLOWING 18.1K FOLLOWERS

 Follow



**Emmy Favilla**

Copy Editor at BuzzFeed

United States | Publishing

Current Buzzfeed, MediaBistro Education

Previous Alloy, Conde Nast, Every Day With Rachel Ray magazine, Natural Health magazine, POZ magazine

Education London College of Fashion

[Send a message](#)

379  
connections

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emmyfavilla>

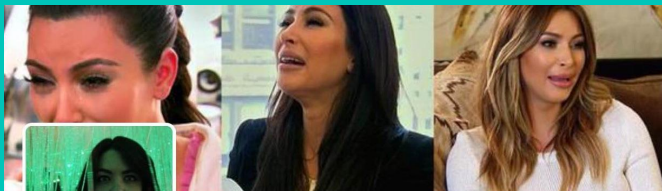
LinkedIn  
(more professional  
and straightforward)

#### Background



#### Summary

- Copy chief at BuzzFeed and creator of the BuzzFeed Style Guide
- Manager of an international copy team spanning three bureaus
- Familiar with regional language differences across various English-speaking countries
- Writer (focused on humor, essays, health, and New York-centric stories)
- Copyediting instructor
- Member of the American Copy Editors Society
- Active in local animal rescue and animal welfare initiatives



**Megan Paolone** ✓

@meganpaolone

I like words, the ocean, and pop culture. Deputy copy chief @BuzzFeed. @NewhouseSU and @SUNYGeneseo alum. Always looking for an excuse to use an en dash.

Sunnyside / NYC · [buzzfeed.com/meganp25](http://buzzfeed.com/meganp25)

1,041 FOLLOWING 1,336 FOLLOWERS

 Follow



**Erin McKean**

@emckean

Founder, Wordnik. I really like words (especially the word 'lexicographer'). You might like my TED talk:

[ted.com/talks/erin\\_mck...](http://ted.com/talks/erin_mck...)

Cal-i-for-n-i-a · [wordnik.com](http://wordnik.com)

2,329 FOLLOWING 9,246 FOLLOWERS

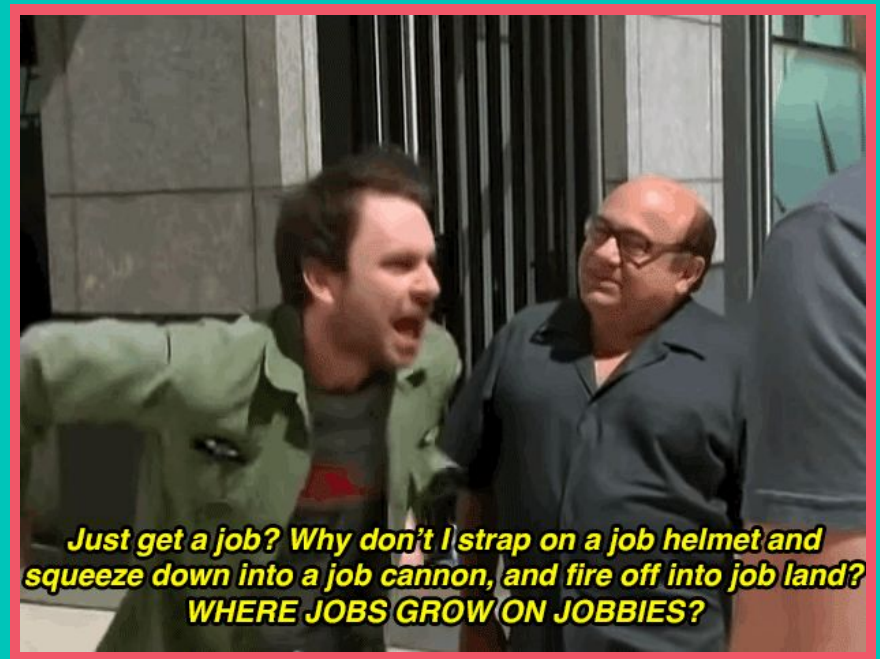
 Follow

Twitter  
(room for more  
personality and fun)

3.

## Job Hunting

i.e., crafting your résumé,  
writing a cover letter, and  
following up



## What should my résumé look like?

### **Break down your relevant experience and skills clearly and concisely.**

- Tailor your résumé — it's OK (and probably necessary) to have more than one version!
- Use plain language and keywords; mirror the language you see in the job posting.
- Keep it to one page.

How ever can my  
brilliance be captured  
in a one-page resume?





## And what about my cover letter?

### What it should NOT be is a carbon copy of your résumé.

- Answer: Why are you the *right person* for *this position* at *this company*?
- Be brief and enticing, and show off your personality.
- DO YOUR RESEARCH; address your letter to a human.

We'd love to hire you, but your spelling mistakes and poor grammar show you're not as "detail-oriented" as you claim.

Sorry.



- Any connection to the company? Talk about it.
- Be specific about your availability.
- No typos, inaccuracies, or inconsistencies.



# Sample Cover Letter

Find a person.

Using a PDF?  
Link to your  
work.

Show off your  
personality.

Expand  
your résumé.

Tout non-  
résumé  
achievements.

Use your  
connection to  
the company.

Dear @em\_dash3,

An obituary that described my cold, dead hands clutching an *Associated Press Stylebook* marked my retirement as managing editor of my college paper. The *Chicago Manual of Style* loomed over my body, a jilted lover symbolizing the life of a history major I was leaving behind to become a journalist.

My sick obsession with style, grammar and punctuation is something that I've carried out of that newsroom and applied to every editorial role I've held since. I'm the type of person who gets [featured on Jim Romenesko's blog](#) after tweeting how excited she was about getting an *AP Stylebook* T-shirt; someone who *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof retweets after she [found his name misspelled](#) in the paper; the person whose relatives buy her [usage guides](#) and [grammar books](#) for Christmas and her birthday. I thrive on the minutiae of copy editing that many find exhausting, and when I read BuzzFeed's description of the copy intern position, I knew I was a perfect match.

I'm motivated, hardworking and ridiculously organized. Even though I'm taking five graduate-level journalism classes, I still make time to work as the lead entertainment producer for the award-winning, multimedia site [TheNewsHouse.com](#) and copyedit [GreenRoomReviews.com](#), obliterating Oxford commas every chance I get. On these sites, I'm able to combine my love for culture writing and editing in a fast-paced environment.

I'm a pop culture and Internet addict across multiple platforms. I'm writing a magazine story about the Internet fan communities and cult TV status of "Arrested Development," and [interviewed Aaron Carter](#) (yes, the "Aaron's Party" one) in February. I also recently [did my first BuzzFeed post](#) — "15 Pieces Of 'Arrested Development' Merch You Need Right Now" — and it's made it to both the DIY and front pages of the site with over 100,000 views.

But I don't only consume BuzzFeed's content; I'm also interested in how the company works. I met two editors — Mike Hayes and Matt Stopera — when they spoke at [Newhouse this year](#). Hearing Mike discuss the site's shift toward wider news coverage just a few short weeks before BuzzFeed's blanket coverage of the Boston Marathon, coupled with Matt's talk on Internet virality, confirmed that BuzzFeed is not only what's next, it's also what's now.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,  
Megan Paolone

Use an anecdote —  
and humor where  
it's appropriate.

State your  
purpose.

Mirror language  
from the job  
posting.

"I know how  
this publication  
works!"



"I want to work  
here because..."

Use a simple,  
straightforward  
closing line.



## What if I don't get a response?

### Try not to worry too much.

- **DO:**

- Send a follow-up email to the hiring editor/manager.
- Find a specific email address rather than just HR or via a contact form. Do a little sleuthing! 
- Send a (handwritten!) thank-you note to everyone you spoke with (after your interview). 

- **DON'T:**

- Contact someone via their personal email. 
- Email more than once if you haven't heard back. 

## What about when I get the interview?

### **Most of all, make sure you're prepared.**

- Do some background research on the company and make sure you have a few questions to ask.
- Be humble — even if you know you've got this.
- Be ready to answer questions about your editing style, how you deal with other editors, and what you enjoy about copyediting and language.
- Dress the part — even if you're interviewing on the phone or via Skype.



# 4.

## Increasing Your Chances

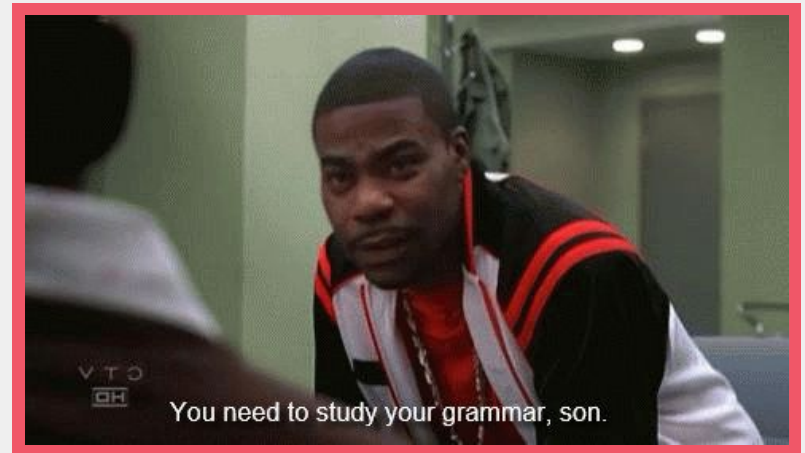
i.e., enhancing your skills and  
acing your copy test



# I don't have much experience — what can I do?

## There are a few things.

1. Consider volunteering some of your time.
2. Ask if you can help keep mistakes from the copy at your favorite local publication or website.
3. Offer your services to friends or colleagues.
4. Enroll in a copyediting class or certificate program.



## How else can I increase my chances?

### Do...



- Familiarize yourself with doing basic HTML, using a CMS, and understanding sourcing standards.
- Know your grammar rules and copyediting basics.
- Familiarize yourself with common style manuals.

### Don't...



- Include any typos or inconsistencies in formatting and style in your résumé/cover letter.
- Point out how many errors/typos you've noticed on the site you're applying to.

# So what's the copy test like?

## Copy tests can take a variety of forms.

- In-person paper tests:
  - Typically an hour in length.
  - May include a combination of sentences/stories to edit, an InDesign component, and a headline-writing exercise.
  - You'll usually have the necessary resources: an in-house style guide, a style manual, and a dictionary.
- On the web:
  - Format here depends on the publication.
  - Often, you'll edit and track changes (with instructions for style manuals/dictionaries to use) in a Word doc on a set of sentences and stories and return it in a fixed time.





## And what about headlines?

### **Headlines compel readers to click — it's an invitation to read.**

- Many writers and section editors write their own web headlines (and lines for Twitter, Facebook, etc.), but copy editors are often asked to weigh in.
- Simple and straightforward is best.
- Many online news organizations optimize headlines to see what performs best (traffic-wise), and simple tweaks can make a big difference.





## Take these examples.

Original hed:

“I Dressed Up And Dressed Down For A Week As A Black Man And This Is What Happened”

TOP POST  
1,089,037 VIEWS



### A Black Man Wore Different Kinds Of Clothing To See If People Treated Him Differently

Many black men dress up to avoid being seen negatively. Every day, we are [dressing for survival](#).

posted on Mar. 8, 2016, at 11:01 a.m.



**Pedro Fequiere**  
BuzzFeed Junior Staff Writer

### 27 Hilarious Words For Groups Of Things That Should Exist

*An agglutination of linguists.* Bless the [#ModernCollectiveNouns](#) hashtag.

posted on Mar. 30, 2016, at 11:43 a.m.



**Megan Paolone**  
BuzzFeed Staff

Original hed:

“27 Hilarious Modern Collective Nouns That Actually Exist”

# So, to get that job you want, you should...



## Work on your skills.

Fine-tune the core skills you already have (editing, communication, reading) and pick up a few others you might not (HTML/CMS, sourcing, web stuff).



## Network with people whose jobs you want.

They'll have the best advice to help you get where they are.



## Build your brand.

Be active on social media; follow the editors and organizations you admire, participate in conversations, and share your thoughts.



## Do your research and be prepared.

This goes for networking, applying to jobs, and interviews — show you cared enough to go the extra mile and learn a little more.



## Be yourself.

Network genuinely. Tailor your résumé and cover letter to each position to let your personality shine.



## Avoid typos and inconsistencies.

Most hiring editors will immediately disqualify any potential copy editors who have these.



# Thanks!

## Any questions?



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megan.paolone@buzzfeed.com

@styleguide

BuzzFeed Style Guide