

## How to Get Your Dream Job on the Web

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### What can I do to increase my chances of being hired as a web copy editor?

- **Do** familiarize yourself with basic HTML, with using a CMS, and with sourcing standards (e.g., question Imgur as the source of an image that looks like professional photo, know that you should never link facts to Wikipedia, etc.).
- **Do** know what credible sources to go to in order to fact-check certain information. Fact-checking is its own (time-consuming) skill, but knowing where to check the veracity of simple facts is important. And if you can get experience helping a research desk with their fact-checking, even better.
- **Do** know your grammar rules! If you don't have much professional copyediting experience, enroll in a class or a certificate program; check out Mediabistro or local universities/colleges for online classes or continuing-education programs.
- **Do** some research on copyediting (some recommended books: *The Elephants of Style* and *Yes, I Could Care Less* by Bill Walsh, the *Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation* by Jane Strauss, *Woe Is I* by Patricia O'Conner); quiz yourself in areas in which you feel you can improve (grammarbook.com is a great resource).
- **Do** familiarize yourself with commonly used style manuals, like *Associated Press Stylebook* and *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- **Do** tailor your résumé and cover letter to each job you are applying for.
- **Don't** use wacky fonts, a photo, images, or a font size smaller than 11 in your résumé. One page is ideal (especially if you don't have a ton of professional experience), but a two-page résumé is just fine if the other option is using a 9-point font to cram in relevant information. Always lead with professional information rather than education.
- **Do** show some personality in your cover letter: an anecdote related to the position you're applying to, what it is about the company you admire, or something on the site you've read recently that you loved. Also, if you perhaps don't have all of the qualifications listed in the job posting, this is a place where you can explain why you should still be considered.

- **Do** create a cohesive image on on social media that best reflects you/your personal brand.
- **Do** find the contact information of the copy chief or managing editor at a place you'd love to work, and ask if you can have an informational interview or take a copy test. Being proactive before a job listing even goes up can make a lasting impression on a hiring editor.
- **Do** spell the name of your contact correctly!
- **Don't** include any typos or inconsistencies in formatting/style in your résumé and cover letter.
- **Don't** point out how many typos and errors you've noticed across the site.
- **Do** offer to volunteer your services (as much time as you can afford) in terms of offering pro bono copyediting work for a website or a newsletter you love.
- **Do** follow up after an in-person interview with a handwritten thank-you note.

**Sample Cover Letter**

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

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.

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.