



The ACES Guide for New Editors

Welcome

Are you new to editing or transitioning to editing from another career?
This guide is for you.

The ACES Guide for New Editors is a first stop for anyone interested in pursuing a career in editing, just starting out in the field, or transitioning from a previous career. This guide provides an introduction to types of editing, how you might begin your career, important topics editors consider in their roles, and further resources.

This guide was created by a task force of the ACES Communications and Publications Committee. [Acknowledgments and more about the creation of the guide](#) are on page 23. The guide is rooted in advice from more than 1,000 new and experienced editors who responded to an ACES survey in 2022, as well as the experience and research of task force members. The quotes that appear throughout this guide come from the survey responses.

Much of the information provided and linked within this guide is available for free. However, some webcasts and publications may be exclusive to dues-paying ACES members or require an access fee for nonmembers. Visit the [Membership page](#) of the ACES website to learn how to become a member.

[A curated list of articles on the ACES website is also available.](#)

For any questions about this guide or additional resources for new editors, please contact acescommpubcommittee@aceseditors.org.

**“Remember that you are for both the writer and reader
and when possible, step out of the way.”**

ACES: The Society for Editing

[ACES: The Society for Editing](#) is the nation's leading organization of editing professionals, educators, and students. ACES is dedicated to improving the quality of the written word and the working lives of editors. ACES sets standards of excellence and gives a voice to editors in academia, business, fiction, government, journalism, medicine, and beyond through top-notch training, networking, and career opportunities.

ACES members are united by a love of language and an interest in building skills and becoming the best editors and communicators they can be. If you call yourself a new editor or would like to be one, let us start by saying, "We're glad you're here!"

Table of Contents

The ACES Guide for New Editors	1
Welcome	1
ACES: The Society for Editing	2
Table of Contents	3
Exploring Possibilities	4
Career opportunities	4
Transitioning careers	5
Types of editing	5
Launching Your Career	9
Education and training	9
Mentorship	10
Freelance or employee?	11
Advice from established editors	12
Ethics	13
Diversity and Equity in Editing	15
Conscious language	15
Editors from marginalized communities	16
An International Perspective	18
English dialects	18
Canadian English	18
Australian English	18
Indian English	18
South African English	19
Singaporean English	19
New Zealand English	19
Oxford English	19
Multilingual writers, translation, and localization	20
Author communication etiquette	21
ACES Resources	21
Getting Started: A Checklist	22
Acknowledgments	23

Exploring Possibilities

Career opportunities

Editors are everywhere. Of course, editors work at newspapers, magazines, book publishers, and university presses. Freelance editors are hired for individual projects and those who run their own businesses with multi-member teams. Beyond those roles, many businesses, government agencies, and organizations employ editors, even if they don't always use that specific title.

Here are just a few places ACES members work in their roles as editors:

- Daily and weekly newspapers
- Fintech
- Member association and trade magazines
- Lifestyle magazines
- Health care communications
- Medical and science journals
- Digital media websites
- Meal-kit companies
- Museums
- Consulting
- National retailers
- Nonprofits
- Fiction and nonfiction books
- Government agencies
- Higher education communications
- Secondary and elementary school communications
- Technical manuals
- Course materials
- Think tanks
- Publishing houses

As you look through job descriptions during your job search, pay attention to duties and requirements like “knowledge of [insert preferred style guide],” “attention to detail,” and “ability to review/edit/proofread content across print/online/social platforms.” These can be signs that the hiring manager is looking for an editor even if that is not said outright.

We also recommend looking at the [ACES Job Board](#) for open positions and exploring the [Editors for Hire page](#) to see what your peers are listing as their skills and qualifications. (Note: These pages are accessible to ACES members only.)

“The only stupid question is the one you don’t ask.”

Transitioning careers

While some editors go straight into the editing field for their first professional job, others make their way into editor roles from previous fields or from volunteering. The great news is that having a breadth of knowledge is a valuable skill for an editor. You never know what topic might show up in a piece you need to edit.

In a 2022 ACES survey, those who considered themselves new editors who were transitioning into the field shared their previous jobs and industries. These were the most frequent answers:

- Academia
- Corporate communications and marketing
- Government
- IT
- Librarian
- Medicine and health care
- Natural resources
- Project management
- Research scientist
- Retail
- Teaching
- Writing — technical, copywriting, freelance, unspecified

Are you a horticulturist? An art curator? A project estimator? A legal secretary? ACES editors reported these previous roles and more. If you're looking to transition into the editing industry, we hope this encourages you to look at your previous experience as a benefit and to bring your unique skills and knowledge to join thousands of ACES members in the editing world.

Types of editing

“Editing” is a broad term that can encompass many types of work. The type of work editors do has been broken down into three primary types: developmental editing, copyediting, and proofreading. That said, it is always important to clarify expectations with a client, supervisor, or hiring manager.

Developmental editing

Developmental editing is also known as content editing, concept editing, structural or substantive editing, and stylistic editing, among other names. It is more often used in book publishing but is also valuable in other industries too.

In book publishing for academic, education, and other nonfiction content, developmental editing occurs during the editorial rather than the production phase and may begin with the initial project proposal before a complete draft is written. The developmental editor often starts by assessing proposal reviews and working with the author(s) on a sample chapter and any features before the author moves forward with writing or revising additional manuscript. The sample chapter is then used to finalize the approach for the manuscript as a whole.

Good developmental editing is market-based editing, meaning the editor is aware of content trends in the particular field or industry and of any competing books. The developmental editor may also write peer-review questionnaires to seek feedback to position the book as the new industry leader or to maintain the book as the current industry leader and to ensure accuracy. Information from these sources is used when assessing manuscript, posing editorial queries, and making recommendations for revision.

Edits are focused on organization (overall structure), content, identifying red flags such as plagiarism or revisions needed for conscious language — see the [Ethics](#) and [Diversity and Equity in Editing](#) sections in this guide — and line editing, such as ensuring that paragraphs and sentences are clear with appropriate transitions and reading level. This occasionally includes some rewriting. A good editor will usually preserve the author's voice, but sometimes a developmental editor may be tasked with creating a consistent voice across a book or product written by multiple writers.

Developmental editing often includes several passes. The number of these revisions is determined by whether the book is a first edition or a revision, the level of edit required, the number of authors involved, and the abilities of the author(s). Optimally, there are two primary rounds of editing with a final cleanup stage. It is very important to consider the schedule and the budget and to inform the publisher of any problems as they arise to limit any impact on the book's ideal publication date.

In fiction developmental editing, the developmental editor assesses the story's plot, characters, themes, pacing, and other big-picture elements to help the writer identify strengths and areas of improvement. The developmental editor may suggest ways to strengthen characterization, increase tension, or restructure the plot so that the story works well according to the author's goals and genre conventions. The developmental editor usually provides feedback in a detailed report and in manuscript comments throughout the entire story, and some will make in-line edits to show solutions to identified problems.

Manuscript critiques, or manuscript assessments, are similar to developmental edits in that the client receives big-picture feedback, but the editor typically provides only a report and no manuscript comments.

There are opportunities for developmental editors across various genres and fields. In the ACES Blog, you can learn more about [developmental editing for fiction](#), review Tanya Gold's [recommended reading list for fiction developmental editors](#), or learn more about [medical developmental editing](#) from Vee White.

“Always keep in mind that even if you can’t make it ‘perfect’ it will be better after you’ve worked on it!”

Copyediting

The depth of copyediting can vary depending on the author’s writing skills; how much developmental or line editing, if any, has already been done; and the author’s/client’s budget. The level of edit affects the number of pages one can edit in an hour and must be considered when determining costs and realistic turnaround times.

- **A light edit**

Generally focuses on spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage; checking any cross-references; editing any references and ensuring their appropriate citation within the text (per style); editing any figures and tables and ensuring their placement is appropriate; and applying any particular style points required.

- **A medium edit**

Includes all the tasks of a light edit in addition to smoothing transitions; changing passive to active voice (if requested and depending on the type of material); ensuring syntax and usage are appropriate; and ensuring consistency throughout the piece.

- **A heavy edit**

Includes all the tasks of a medium edit as well as wordsmithing to eliminate ambiguity and to tighten wording so it’s more concise and active, ensuring bias-free language, and avoiding redundancy and jargon. (Note that a heavy copyedit is different from a structural or developmental edit and that expectations for various levels of editing can vary from client to client and employer to employer. Clarity is key.)

In fiction copyediting, tasks can also include tracking character names and descriptions, place names, world-building details, and story timeline; light fact-checking to make sure story details are accurate or plausible (Does it really take two hours to walk from point A to point B? Was there actually a full moon on this date?); and ensuring that details such as character names or descriptions are consistent throughout the story. Whatever level of editing your content requires, a copy editor's main goal is to preserve the author's voice and intended meaning.

For all types of editing, it's helpful to create a checklist for yourself in addition to being familiar with the appropriate style guide. Samantha Enslin from Dragonfly Editorial provided an [overview on checklists](#) that included an example at an ACES presentation. Editors also often review images, and Adrienne Montgomerie discusses a "[Checklist for Editing Captions](#)" in the ACES Blog. There, you can also learn more about copyediting for fiction and nonfiction. The [Copyeditors' Knowledge Base](#), curated by Katharine O'Moore-Klopf, offers a wealth of additional information.

**“Editing is not about what is prescriptively correct.
It’s about what people can easily understand.”**

Proofreading

Proofreading is usually the final stage in the production process, just before content is published. It is the last chance to catch any errors and layout issues before print in book publishing or other methods of distribution. This is often done in PDF format for books (although hard copies are still sometimes used), but for other types of content this task may be completed via other means such as in a slide deck or content management system.

Proofreading may include the following tasks:

- Inserting author's alterations
- Checking that copyediting changes have been made correctly
- Checking for lapses in style and copyediting, and taking appropriate action
- Checking the integrity of the typeset manuscript against the original manuscript
- Checking for layout errors
- Completing a side-by-side review

Nowadays, proofreading is often done as a cold read — that is, reading the typeset text without comparing it against any previous version(s). The focus during a proofread is different than when editing. Instead of reading for flow or sentence structure, a proofreader must often review at a letter-by-letter, word-by-word level — otherwise their eyes might skip over a misspelled or repeated word, or might not notice a missing period at the end of a sentence.

Sometimes proofreaders may review content for only formatting issues, such as bad line breaks, appropriate heading styles, and justifications. They may also review the changes after they're applied to the proofs.

Note that although nomenclature for levels of editing may differ, most commercial style guides provide some guidance on what elements are included in copyediting and proofreading.

“Take your time and make sure you always spell ‘public’ correctly.”

Launching Your Career

Education and training

Unlike other careers that require a specific degree (e.g., a physician who needs a medical degree), professional editors are rarely required to have followed a particular education path. You may see suggested educational backgrounds in job descriptions, such as writing or journalism, and some businesses or publications may require knowledge of a particular industry that aligns with their content and audience.

You will need to learn industry-related terminology and the appropriate style guide(s) for your audience — and there are many. The ACES Blog lists [several articles about style guides](#). Some of the common guides are the AP Stylebook, The Chicago Manual of Style, the AMA Manual of Style, the Google Developer Documentation Style Guide, and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Even [ACES has its own style guide](#) — all content published by ACES is copyedited to adhere to those parameters. Review [Diversity and Equity in Editing](#) on page 15 for more information on specialized style guides. You will need to keep up to date on changes to the style guide you are using, and, as you grow in your career, you may be asked to create an in-house style guide.

Continuing your education and training focused on editing can be a great way to test and improve your skills, keep up to date on industry trends, and expand your knowledge to other sides of editing, such as a new style guide or emerging media platforms. Be aware that what you might believe to be an absolute rule may actually be a style choice

and differ depending on context. As you become more experienced, you may also find what you thought was fact was actually myth. You can learn more about “zombie” rules from Erin Brenner at [Right Touch Editing](#) and more about editorial myths from Crystal Shelley at [Rabbit with a Red Pen](#). Editors also often become more flexible as they gain experience, learning that sometimes they have to make editorial decisions beyond the realm of existing rules. They see that language changes.

Depending on your time and financial ability, consider the following options for education and training:

- Degree programs such as associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees.
- Professional training or certificate programs, such as the [Poynter ACES Certificates in Editing](#), for which ACES members receive discounted rates.
- Fellowships or cohort programs, such as the [Dow Jones News Fund](#).
- Internship programs, such as the opportunities listed by Karen Parker in the blog article [#PaidinPublishing](#).
- Short-term training opportunities, such as an ACES [conference](#) (in-person and virtual) and [webcasts](#), which are offered at discounted rates to ACES members.
- A vast array of books about editing and language, such as *The Copyeditor’s Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications*.
- Certification exams.
- Editorial discussion spaces.

“Learn all you can about language change and evolution and let go of zombie rules and pet peeves in service of the client.”

Mentorship

Mentorship is another way to grow your skills while connecting with someone in a career to which you aspire. Mentoring relationships can be formal or casual, short-term or long-term. It’s up to the mentor and mentee to define the relationship and goals. Stay tuned for more information from ACES about upcoming mentorship programs through the organization.

In a 2022 ACES survey, we asked experienced editors about established mentorship programs that could provide connections. Here are some of the opportunities frequently mentioned by survey participants. Note that these are not sponsored by ACES:

- [CIEP mentorship program](#) (United Kingdom)
- [Editors Canada mentorship program](#) (Canada)
- [IPEd mentoring program](#) (Australia and New Zealand)
- [LGBTQ+ Editors Association mentorship program](#) (US-based; international)
- [Northwest Editors Guild mentoring program](#) (United States)

Freelance or employee?

Editors can become very successful as freelancers (also referred to as “independent contractors”), and such work has numerous benefits. Editors can control the size of their workload, decide what types of projects they agree to work on, choose when and where to do their work, and in many ways determine the pay rate for their work. This control and flexibility are big draws for many freelance editors.

But being a freelancer comes with some challenges as well. The editor must handle all of the business-related aspects of their work, including:

- Deciding whether to do business as a separate entity apart from themselves as an individual and filing appropriate documentation with the government.
- Potentially obtaining an employer identification number for tax purposes and then saving for and paying estimated and annual taxes.
- Marketing themselves or their business.
- Managing client relationships.
- Managing any subcontractors the editor might work with.
- Obtaining and paying for insurance, such as health and liability, as needed.

Networking and maintaining a good work-life balance can help any freelancer — whether established or just getting started — to navigate the exciting but often challenging freelance landscape.

An editor can also be employed by a wide range of places, such as a publishing house, publication, nonprofit, business, institution, agency, and more. Each will have its own requirements and expectations of a staff editor, but you can expect them to provide direction on an editing style, pay the editor at a salaried or hourly rate, take out applicable taxes and benefit deductions, and generally assign the projects the editor works on.

While the differences between freelance editors and editors employed by another entity are many, all editors share certain attitudes, skills, and goals, such as the following:

- An attention to detail.
- An inquisitive nature that encourages questions and discussion.
- A mindset that puts the reader's comprehension and experience first.
- A respect for the writer's/organization's voice, needs, and ownership of a piece.
- An ability to follow, and sometimes create or maintain, a style guide and/or style sheet.
- And of course, a love for the written word.

Advice from established editors

In a 2022 ACES survey, we asked established editors what advice they would give to editors who are just starting out. Among the 300-plus responses, many shared similar themes, such as being flexible, knowing yourself, and turning to trusted resources. This list summarizes the themes found throughout the responses:

- Be kind to yourself and to clients.
- Be professional and approachable.
- Get training and continue to do so even when established.
- You don't have to be perfect. We're all human.
- Have a specific reason for edits.
- Find a trusted community or mentor. Learn from others and ask for help.
- Join professional editing organizations.
- Find a niche.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- Double-check everything — or have someone else check your work.
- Read anything and everything to get a feel for different kinds of writing. Read style guides, books on language and craft, etc.
- Find different ways to spot errors, such as rereading headlines and captions, reading aloud, or reading from the end to the beginning.

- Be flexible and understand that the rules we often learn aren't really rules.
- Style guides are recommendations, not set in stone.
- Language and style change over time and it's important to keep up with those changes.
- Use tools to help you edit: create style sheets, follow checklists, use Word's Read Aloud feature, use macros, text expanders, and editing software.
- If you're starting your own business: make sure to have proper training first, set rates according to what you need, track your time, build your portfolio (consider doing pro bono work if you need experience), understand the business side of freelancing.
- Understand the differences between the types of editing.
- Go with your gut: look things up, figure out why something feels off, etc.
- Make sure you're on the same page with clients.

“When in any doubt, query kindly. Remember that your author is also another human on the other end of the words.”

Ethics

Although there is no existing organization to hold editors accountable to ethical standards, it is critical for editors to make an intentional effort to understand them. Some examples of ethical considerations include but are not limited to:

- Artificial intelligence (your own use and the evaluation of author/writer use)
- Author voice
- Bias
- Libel
- Plagiarism
- Transparency (e.g., additional charges, use of subcontractors)
- Working with students

These links offer a range of thinking about editorial ethics:

Codes of ethics from other editing-related organizations

- American Medical Writers Association: [Code of Ethics](#)
- Board of Editors in the Life Sciences: [Code of Ethics](#)
- Chartered Institute of Editors and Proofreaders: [Code of Practice](#)
- Council of Science Editors: [Recommendations for Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications](#)
- [Committee on Publication Ethics](#)
- Editorial Freelancers Association: [Code of Fair Practice](#)
- Editors Canada
 - [Guidelines for Ethical Editing of Student Texts \(undergraduate and graduate\)](#)
 - [The Ethics of Online Portfolios](#)
- Society of Professional Journalists: [Code of Ethics](#)

From the ACES Blog

- [“Leading with Integrity in the Digital Age”](#) by Jill Geisler
- [“In Digital Age, Copy Editors Still Uphold Journalistic Responsibility”](#) by Jan Leach
- [“Plagiarism Summit: It’s All About Trust”](#) by Gerri Berendzen and Rhiannon Root
Includes a journalism focus.
- [Links to Recent Articles About Plagiarism, Fabrication](#)

From blogs by editors

- [“The Ethics of Editing,”](#) An American Editor
- [“Ethics for Editors—With Mary Schendlinger,”](#) Iva Cheung
- [“Ethical Issues in Editing: What the Professional Standards Say,”](#) Right Angels and Polo Bears: Adventures in Editing

Includes comparisons across various editorial associations

- [“Do Editors Need a Code of Ethics?”](#) Right Touch Editing
- [Plagiarism Survey](#), Vee White Editorial

Includes a resource guide to better understand cultural considerations and current education practices, and the results of a 2019 international survey on plagiarism with forthcoming article analyzing those results.

Diversity and Equity in Editing

Conscious language

Language or framing that unintentionally excludes, stereotypes, or stigmatizes can have a harmful effect on readers. Editors are often tasked with helping writers identify these types of issues so they can decide whether to make a change. In many editorial spaces, there are ongoing conversations about inclusive and conscious language. Remember that editing for diversity and equity can go beyond individual words and can address transparency, how and what content is included, images used, or whether accessibility is addressed.

“Conscious language” is a term Karen Yin coined “to describe language that is rooted in critical thinking and compassion, used skillfully in a specific context.” Through her website [Conscious Style Guide](#), Yin suggests editors consider these questions about the writing they work on:

- What are my assumptions about my audience?
- Will this cause harm to historically excluded communities?
- How will history alter the impact of my language choices?

In addition to using Yin’s website or book “The Conscious Style Guide: A Flexible Approach to Language That Includes, Respects, and Empowers” as a resource, editors can turn to the many guides that address the language often used to describe historically marginalized or vulnerable groups. Examples of these resources include:

- [Ableist language list](#), Lydia X. Z. Brown
- [Bias-free Language](#), American Psychological Association
- [Diversity Style Guide](#)
- [GLAAD Media Reference Guide](#)

- [The Language Project](#), the Marshall Project
- [National Association of Black Journalists style guide](#)
- [National Center for Disability and Journalism style guide](#)
- [Trans Journalists Association style guide](#)

The ACES website provides more details on [Diversity & Inclusion Resources](#).

Editors from marginalized communities

In the essay “Widening the Gates: Why Publishing Needs Diversity” in “What Editors Do: The Art, Craft, & Business of Book Editing,” Chris Jackson discusses the vitalness of diversity in publishing. He writes, “I believe in book publishing, in its capacity to help us all retrace our paths back into history, to see the present in all of its complexity, and to imagine different futures. To do that we have to build a publishing industry — at all levels of publishing — that honors the potential, the complexity, and the fullness of the world itself.”

According to the Lee & Low Books [2019 Diversity Baseline Survey](#), however, about 76% of those in publishing are white, 97% are cisgender, 81% are straight, and 89% are non-disabled. (Lee & Low Books had an [open call](#) in 2023 to update these statistics.) The New York Times also looked at the issue in “[‘A Conflicted Cultural Force’: What It’s Like to Be Black in Publishing](#).”

Various organizations and resources aim to make book publishing and the wider editorial profession more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

Organizations and resources include:

- [Asian American Journalists Association](#)
- [Association for Women Journalists](#) (Chicago)
- [Black Editors, Coaches, & Proofreaders Directory](#)
- [Editors of Color by Conscious Style Guide](#)
- [Indian Copyeditors Forum: Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- [Indigenous Editors Association](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Editors Association](#)

- [National Association of Black Journalists](#)
- [National Association of Hispanic Journalists](#)
- [NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists](#)
- Northwest Editors Guild (see its [events calendar](#))
 - Editing With Disability/Chronic Illness (coffee chat)
 - Editors of Color Coffee Hour
- [People of Color in Publishing](#)
- [Trans Journalists Association](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books](#)

Fellowships and scholarships include:

- [Richard S. Holden Diversity Fellowship](#), the ACES Education Fund in collaboration with the Dow Jones News Fund
- [Diverse Editors for Diverse Books Scholarship](#) and [Diverse Editors for Diverse Books Business Coaching Scholarship](#), Tanya Gold's scholarship program

Ways to get involved within ACES:

- Connect with the [ACES Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#) at ACESDiversity@aceseditors.org.
- Contribute articles, conference presentations, and webcasts that center diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, or include it within another topic.
- Ensure editors from marginalized backgrounds feel welcome and have a sense of belonging within the larger organization.

Ways to get involved at work:

- Plan how your freelance enterprise or company can purposefully implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into how you run your freelance business.

“Be curious. Language is so much richer, weirder, and mysterious than you may think.”

An International Perspective

English dialects

[Dialects](#) are varieties of language that differ in key linguistic aspects. Awareness of the variations in spelling and punctuation is key from an editing or a proofreading point of view, whereas knowledge of local grammar and vocabulary also comes into play. There are [more than 150 English dialects](#) in use, with US and UK English likely being the most frequent ones. Here are a few things to look out for when you are editing some of the other dialects.

Canadian English

Canadian English style is a mix of US and UK styles, thanks to Canada's proximity to the United States as well as its inclusion in the British Commonwealth. Brush up on your French lexicon, especially in translations.

Further reading

- [Wordapp Canadian English Style Guide](#)
- [Canadian English: Wikipedia](#)
- [Editing Canadian English \(3rd Edition\)](#), Editors Canada. Recommended.
- [Canadian Oxford Dictionary](#), Oxford University Press
- [“Only in Canada, You Say: A Treasury of Canadian Language,”](#) Katherine Barber

Australian English

Australian English mostly follows UK English conventions, with a hint of US style. Influences from Aboriginal languages are minimal. Expect a lot of unexpected words and phrases in slang, as well as words borrowed from other dialects.

Further reading

- [Lingoda: Australian English](#)

Indian English

Indian English is a mix of US and UK styles (slant toward the latter), due to the lasting influences of the British Raj and the use of English as a lingua franca. Expect a lot of borrowed words.

Further reading

- [Introduction to Indian English](#)
- [OED: Indian English](#)

South African English

Style and spelling of South African English generally follow the UK, with the exception of a preference for a 12-hour clock, per the US. Some borrowed words from African languages.

Further reading

- [A Serendipitous African](#)
- [Encyclopedia.com](#)

Singaporean English

The most important aspect to remember is that Singaporean English is [different from Singlish](#), which is considered a separate language. Style is mixed with a leaning toward the UK. Watch out for Malay, Hokkien, and Tamin words.

Further reading

- [Singapore English: Wikipedia](#)
- [Singlish: Wikipedia](#)

New Zealand English

Unlike its cousin across the Tasman Sea, New Zealand English primarily follows UK style. It is influenced by Australian English, Scottish, and Maori languages.

Further reading

- [New Zealand English: Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [Guide to Kiwi Language](#)

Oxford English

Not a dialect but a style followed by the [Oxford University Press](#), often referred to as OUP. It's most famous for the [Oxford comma](#).

OUP publishes documents in both the US and UK, depending on source, topic, and audience. It recommends consistency and to use [The Concise Oxford Dictionary](#) for UK spelling and grammar and the [New Oxford American Dictionary](#) for US.

Further reading

- [OUP Style Guide \(two-page PDF\)](#)
- [OUP House Style](#)

Multilingual writers, translation, and localization

Some editors specialize in working with multilingual writers and others in localization work — revising a book or document from one type of English to another type of English, such as Canadian English to Indian English. For example, this can include changing spellings (“color” in American English and “colour” in British English), units of measure, or terminology, and ensuring any idiomatic expressions are clear in the new context.

Editors often encounter multilingual writers when they are editing academic pieces. Although these are published overwhelmingly in English, many authors are from multilingual backgrounds and diverse geographies.

In all of these cases, chances are high of working on poorly localized or machine-translated documents, teeming with linguistic artifacts — elements of the source language that pose challenges due to cultural differences or lack of direct equivalents, like puns, idioms, or offensive expressions — and idiosyncrasies based on the original source language.

When working with multilingual writers or translated text, therefore, the editor needs to be aware of cultural context and language idiosyncrasies. Shared vocabulary, syntax, and grammar play a significant role in what to watch out for, but, in general, pay special attention to:

- Articles
- Singular/plural
- Tense
- Casing
- Pronouns

You may need additional training and experience, as there are many specifics related to the source language and culture that are important to consider. For example, you may need to check for inexplicable nouns (e.g., such as from someone writing in Spanish or Italian source languages), different approaches to sentence structure (e.g., longer sentences from someone writing in a Korean source language), or cultural differences that affect phrasing (e.g., different understandings of politeness and respect from someone writing in a Japanese source language).

Watch out, too, for Creole artifacts, which are full languages, and pidgins, which are not. [Linguist John Holm](#) noted, for instance, that Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) drops tense markers, using the example, “Dem go market” for “They went to the market.”

In his classic “Roots of Languages,” [Derek Bickerton](#), an expert in Creole languages, used the example of the Hawaiian Creole word “pau,” meaning “finished,” doubling as “dead,” which he said reflects a historical focus on survival and completion of tasks.

Editors who pursue work in language localization need to be aware of specific differences between the two English dialects they’re working with. The ACES Blog post “[The translator-editor collaboration: From ‘parliament’ to ‘congress’ and beyond](#)” offers more details.

Author communication etiquette

As with any client, communicating with multilingual writers requires the editor to be kind, courteous, and constructive. Be aware of sociocultural differences, and consider educating yourself on your client’s culture through media, books, or travel. When writing queries, pay special attention to larger sociocultural differences. To ensure clarity, use a simpler lexicon while avoiding idioms, jokes, and sarcasm.

ACES Resources

ACES offers [editing scholarships through the ACES Education Fund](#):

- [Richard S. Holden Diversity Fellowship](#)

(in collaboration with the Dow Jones News Fund)

Dedicated to advancing early- and mid-career professionals in their work as editors and aspiring industry leaders, and to promoting diversity and inclusion in our ranks.

For undergraduates and graduate students:

- **Bill Walsh Scholarship**

Given in honor of the late editor, author, and ACES guiding spirit to a junior or senior college student or graduate student who demonstrates excellence in the editing of news. The cash award is \$3,500.

- **ACES Scholarships and Aubespın Scholar**

Given to five students who excel in critical thinking about written materials in any field and aspire to a career involving editing. Four of the awards come with a \$1,500 cash prize. One student is chosen to be the Aubespın Scholar, which comes with a \$2,500 cash prize. Given to junior or senior college students or graduate students.

Please see the ACES website for additional resources.

“Think beyond the stylebook.”

Getting Started: A Checklist

Ready to get started as an editor? There are countless ways to do that, and each editor’s next steps are different, so use this checklist as a resource and reminder of some of the options:

- Read The ACES Guide for New Editors.
- Explore the links and resources in this guide and on [ACES: The Society for Editing](#).
- Determine what kind of editing you’d like to do (fiction vs. nonfiction; developmental editing vs. copyediting vs. proofreading; staff vs. freelancer).
- Evaluate your skills to determine if additional training would be beneficial.
- Learn the appropriate style guide. Some style guides have Q&As you can follow to stay updated or quizzes with answers provided. See for instance [CMOS Shop Talk](#) and the [AMA Manual of Style quizzes](#).
- Build a portfolio or resume showcasing your editing skills and qualifications.
- Connect with other editors in person, on social media, and in other gathering places.
- Find a mentor.
- [Become an ACES member](#) to stay up to date on the industry, trends, and opportunities to connect.

Acknowledgments

The ACES New Editor Guide was written by the ACES New Editor Guide Task Force, a sub-committee of the ACES Communications and Publications Committee. The task force was led by [Vee White](#), who was joined by ACES Board members [Lauren Filippini](#) and [Crystal Shelley](#), and ACES member [Andrea Klingler](#).

In addition to their own research and expertise, the task force drew upon the results of a 2022 ACES survey that had more than 1,000 responses. The Types of Editing section on page 5 includes repurposed content from a prior editorial internship program offered by Klingler and White, with content for fiction added by Shelley.

[Dr. Krishna Kumar Venkitachalam](#), an editor and writer based in India, wrote the International Perspective section on page 18. [Kimberly Grow](#) provided a follow-up audit of available ACES resources.

For questions about this guide or additional resources for new editors, please contact acescommpubcommittee@aceseditors.org.

###