

# Do you need an editor or a proofreader?

## The differences between editing and proofreading

I find there is some confusion among potential clients about when you need an editor and when you need a proofreader. What's the difference between the two? What do they do? Does one cost more than the other?

This guide answers those questions, plus includes a checklist so you can work out the level of assistance you should be seeking.

Do you have any feedback on this article? Send it to me at the email below.

I hope you find this information useful and easy to understand. If you have a question, please feel free to email.

### Paula Ruzek

Senior commercial writer, editor and proofreader

Professional Word Services

[info@profwordservices.com.au](mailto:info@profwordservices.com.au)

June 2013

Updated: 18 January 2018

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- Writing
- Editing
- Proofreading
- Website content
- Publication management
- Tender writing

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you need them to say*

Professional Word Services  
ABN 81 449 151 453

M 0418 532 114  
E [paula@profwordservices.com.au](mailto:paula@profwordservices.com.au)

T +61 3 9583 5884  
F +61 3 9585 0430

P PO Box 382, Mentone VIC 3194, Australia

S 2/4 Wilkins Ave, Beaumaris VIC, Australia

W [www.profwordservices.com.au](http://www.profwordservices.com.au)

# Do you need an editor or a proofreader?

## The differences between editing and proofreading



### Checklist: editor or proofreader?

If your publication ...	Editor	Proofreader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has articles coming from many different sources/ writers</li> <li>• Is using a mix of professional writers, subject matter experts, managers, division heads, etc.</li> <li>• Has an in-house style book, or no style book</li> <li>• Has an editor whose role is to set the editorial tone, commission articles, coordinate writers and liaise with management/clients, but no hands-on text editing</li> <li>• Has no in-house or contract subeditors/text editors</li> </ul> <p><i>Then you need ...</i></p>	X (first)	X (second)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has articles coming from many different sources/ writers</li> <li>• Uses in-house/contract subeditors/text editors</li> <li>• Has some form of in-house style book</li> <li>• Has an editor whose role is to set the editorial tone, commission articles, coordinate writers and liaise with management/clients</li> <li>• Has no in-house/contract proofreaders</li> </ul> <p><i>Then you need ...</i></p>		X
If your article ...	Editor	Proofreader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is written by you as a subject matter expert, manager, CEO, communications specialist, marketing professional, university student, or any other non-writing specialist</li> </ul> <p><i>Then you need ...</i></p>	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has already been edited by a professional editor, but you are still noticing a few errors</li> </ul> <p><i>Then you may need ...</i></p>		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is written by you as a professional writer</li> </ul> <p><i>Then you still need ...</i></p>	X	

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We charge the same hourly rate for editing and proofreading, so you can select the service that best meets your needs. Our specialist professionals have decades of experience across business and media and can shape and polish an article or publication that will reflect well on you or your organisation and impress its intended audience.

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## Introduction

Editing and proofreading are two distinct and complementary phases within the publication production process ('publication production' being the process that takes the written word from the original writer to the public – or its intended audience – in any format).

Editing and proofreading are equally essential for business documents, reports, websites, marketing collateral, letters, manuals and proposals – anything in written form that needs to clearly inform and impress its intended audience.

## What is editing?

'Editing' (by a professional editor/subeditor/copy editor) does the heavy lifting. Depending on the quality of the original material, it may involve:

- correcting grammar, spelling and punctuation
- imposing publication or company 'style' (e.g. how certain words are spelt, capitalisation, etc.)
- smoothing out patches of rough or poor writing
- replacing poor or incorrect word choices
- spotting and inserting missing words or words that are spelt correctly but are the wrong word (e.g. short words such as 'of', 'is', 'a' or 'the' may be missing, and words such as 'of', 'if', 'is' or 'it' may be used inappropriately)
- checking possible factual errors and noting queries for the writer
- reorganising the content sequence
- completely rewriting the material into publishable form
- rejecting the material as unsalvageable and unsuitable for use.

If the writing is of good quality, the editing may be light, with only a few changes here and there and other changes made for reasons of style (e.g. capitalisation). If the writing is poor, the tracked word-processing file will be a sea of coloured changes.

The editor is an excellent 'wordsmith', a good writer in their own right with an eye for detail who enjoys the order, clarity and correctness they can bring to the written word through their superior language skills.

Editing can be a time-intensive process, depending on the document length and quality, so enough time should be allowed before the scheduled release or publication date. If there are multiple documents or articles, a 'flow' should be established so the editor receives material progressively, rather than in one large lump close to the deadline.

For a single report or document, editing time depends on the length and quality of the original. The editor will want to go through the material carefully at least twice. The first edit will catch 90-95% of the changes needed, and the second edit allows the editor to double-check, confirm or change their earlier editing decisions, and have fresh eyes for anything they may have missed. Allow time before your deadline for the editor to get through their process and send the document back to you so you can check the tracked changes and attend to any queries.

[See an example of an edited article on pages 5-7](#)

## What is proofreading?

'Proofreading' (by a proofreader) happens at some point after the editing is completed. Traditionally, in a publication such as a magazine, it comes after the articles have been laid into their pages by the graphic designer with any related photos, photo captions, tables and figures.

It can also be done in the word-processing file before layout to avoid having the graphic designer/IT professional making fiddly text changes and introducing new errors.

Proofreading is best done when the publication's articles are in their pages with their photos, captions, tables and figures in place (or when a report has been formatted with its graphics and checked by relevant internal stakeholders). The proofreader then comes in as a dispassionate third party, who has not seen any of the material before, and reads it cold.

Assuming the article has been through editing, proofreading is an essential double-checking process. No editing is perfect; the more work an editor has done on an article, the greater the need to have it independently checked. Proofreading should be a 'light' job, with the heavy work already done by the editor.

[See an example of a proofread article on pages 8-9](#)

The proofreader looks for what the editor has missed or perhaps got wrong:

- grammar, spelling and punctuation errors (particularly use of apostrophes as possessives and incorrect contractions)
- missing publication 'style' (e.g. capitalisation)
- any remaining rough/poor writing
- poor or incorrect word choices
- missing words and incorrect words that are spelt correctly
- possible factual errors
- editing 'strays' (e.g. sentences that end in the middle of nowhere, words that have been left in that should have been removed, or commas that should have been deleted when text was removed)
- wrong symbols
- use of hyphen, en dash and em dash
- consistency of writing tense
- use of singular and plural
- plus much more.

The proofreader now also has an overview of the report or article that the editor/subeditor may not have had, because they can see the accompanying photos, captions, tables and figures with the words in near-final format. Do the captions match the photos? Are the tables and figures referred to in the text? Do they make sense? Have the tables/figures been reproduced correctly? Are there any missing? Are the headings spelt correctly? Are there any problems in the overall layout?

The proofreader has an acute eye for detail, from the five-point text notes under the table to ensuring the correct spelling of the 72-point heading, plus everything in between. A good proofreader adds the polish that takes the report or publication from 85-90% to as close to 100% as possible in such a detail-oriented field.

Proofreading is quicker than editing, but slower than ordinary reading. Depending on the size and publication format (paper or electronic), allow

between one to four weeks before the publication date for the proofreading and subsequent corrections required. For example, a 24-page A4 magazine/report might take 3-6 hours over 1-2 days and a 48-page A4 magazine/report might take 6-12 hours over 3-4 days.

For a single report or article, turnaround time depends on the length and quality of the document. It can range from same day or overnight (for, say, 2000-5000 words) to 3-4 days (say, 10,000 words), to a week (say, 50,000 words).

### **Book an editor or proofreader today**

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## Section 1 – LATEST INTELLIGENCE

### INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

~~Worker productivity is a key determinant of whether Australia can achieve its economic potential will be determined by productivity. This will be Productivity is~~ underpinned by a skilled workforce and improve ~~d~~ ~~ments in~~ workforce participation. Skills Australia ~~says has suggested~~ that ~~a 69% the~~ workforce participation rate ~~is~~ ~~needs to reach 69% ed~~ by 2025 to lift productivity and improve social inclusion.<sup>1</sup>

~~In addition to increased workforce participation, T~~he Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) advocates that changes to patterns of participation in education will also boost a nation's productivity.<sup>2</sup> ~~In fact, T~~he Australian Government has suggested that ~~an additional year of education~~ may raise productivity by 3-6%.<sup>3</sup>

According to Skills Australia's *Skills for prosperity – a road map for vocational education and training*<sup>4</sup>, the argument for continued investment in skills is clear. While driven by the need to improve workforce participation, particularly in the context of an ageing workforce, other key drivers include:

- the requirement to better use **existing skills**
- continued **skill needs in critical areas**
- ongoing demand for **additional skills**
- unacceptably low levels of **fFoundation skills** within the working population.

**Comment [P1]:** Go back to source to define this better. Does it mean an extra year of high school, e.g. Year 13, or does it mean that if someone left in year 11 instead of year 10?

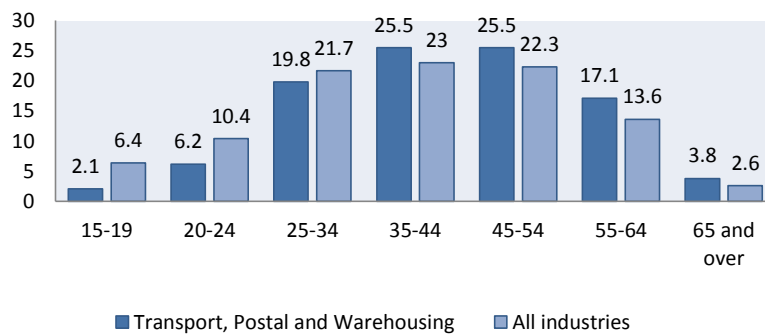
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The Transport and Logistics Industry recognises the need to tackle these important issues, especially given the ~~industry's~~ contribution ~~that transport and logistics makes~~ to economic productivity. ~~With its large land mass and geographic isolation from As the sixth largest country in the world and one which sits geographically isolated from its~~ key overseas markets, Australia's ability to sustain economic growth relies heavily on efficient transport and logistics systems. ~~There are more than Over~~ 165,000 businesses ~~in Australia's Transport and Logistics Industry, make up the industry,~~ which in 2010-11 was worth \$100 billion.<sup>5</sup>

~~The a~~Ageing of the ~~transport and logistics~~ workforce ~~across the industry~~ is becoming a critical ~~workforce~~ issue. Compared with other industries, the Transport and Logistics Industry has a higher concentration of workers aged 35 years and older. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of new, ~~skilled~~ entrants ~~to replenish the skills gaps~~. Employers are seeking new ways to preserve and pass on knowledge and skills; ~~with a number of several~~ strategies ~~are~~ already in place ~~across the industry~~ to address this issue.

**Figure 1.1: Employed ~~p~~Persons by ~~a~~Age ~~C~~ompared with ~~a~~All ~~i~~ndustries (% share of employment) – 2009**

**Comment [MSOffice2]:** Check in January if there is a more recent graph



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey cat. no. 6291.0.55.003 (four quarter average)

The ~~issues of problems associated with~~ an ageing workforce ~~and insufficient new entrants~~ are compounded by the 'pull' of the resources and construction ~~sectors industries~~, which ~~have high demand for~~ continue to attract workers to fill the continued demand for skilled and semi-skilled employment workers and a more attractive marketplace image. The Transport and Logistics Industry needs to combat this by promoting the attractions of its job opportunities and ~~With an outdated image of the industry and its opportunities further exacerbating this issue, a focus on~~ improving the culture and career paths ~~within the Transport and Logistics Industry is needed.~~

To build a vibrant workforce, the industry will need to turn casual or part-time workers into skilled full-time workers and recruit more people from categories that are under-represented (e.g. women). Improved language, literacy and numeracy skills will be important in this to assist with the ~~Optimising the potential of people marginally attached to the workforce or those under-represented within the industry will be required to build a vibrant labour force.~~ New and emerging technologies that will call require for higher-order skills. Demand for improved language, literacy and numeracy skills is set to further increase in importance as supply chains become more integrated, transparent, accountable and agile.

The need for energy efficiency will increase, particularly with the introduction of ~~a the new c~~ Carbon ~~t~~ Tax. This brings with it a requirement for the industry to adapt ~~its S, with accompanying skill s~~ sets evolving to new demands.

Adaptability of the workforce will provide long-term benefits to the nation. ~~Workers will need to be equipped with~~ sa skills s ~~sets set~~ that allows them to adjust to changes ~~that will be required of them in the future.~~ ~~In the United States, some technical colleges have introduced programs to train individuals for jobs in the transportation industry that have not yet been identified. -This is in recognition that the field is constantly evolving and demand for a highly skilled workforce is continuing to grow.~~

## INDUSTRY SECTORS

Transport and logistics involves almost every type of occupation, from crews of vehicles, trains, vessels and aircraft to staff involved in engineering infrastructure, tourism, hospitality, security, retailing, warehousing, administration and ~~i~~ information ~~t~~ Technology.

| For the purposes of analysis in this *Environmental Scan*, the following sector breakdown has been used:

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- Logistics Management, Road Transport and Warehousing
- Aviation
- Maritime
- Rail
- Ports.

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