

Copy Editing Check List

CHECK FOR SOURCES

1. Are there a minimum of two sources quoted in the article?
2. Does the article require more than two sources in order to represent all concerned parties?
3. Check the assignment sheet and see if the reporter has adequately interviewed and quoted people for the article.

CHECK FOR CONTENT

1. Does the article capture the essence of the story and cover the major points.
2. Is the information complete? (Does the article answer the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?)
3. In addition to the What, does the article answer the So What?
4. Is the coverage fair and balanced? (Does it address all sides of the issue)
5. Unless it's an opinion piece, has the writer avoided editorializing?
6. Does the article include a decent headline?

CHECK FOR STRUCTURE

1. Is the article well organized? Does it prioritize information according to inverted pyramid style? Or, for some features, does it tell the story in chronological order?
2. Does it include transitions before the quotes?
3. Are the quotes interesting and used effectively to support the story?
4. Does the article include an attention-grabbing lead? (Leads should be no longer than 35 words.)
5. Is the article written in third person? Exceptions include columns and some feature stories.
6. Are there redundancies in the article that can be eliminated?

CHECK FOR ACCURACY

1. Has the reporter done his/her fact checking to make sure that the information is accurate? If anything seems suspect, point it out so the reporter can double check the information prior to publication.
2. Does every person's name include his/her title? (If a student, the title is his/her major.)

CHECK FOR GRAMMAR, SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION

1. Find any grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors. (The back of the AP Stylebook has a section on punctuation.)
2. Identify any awkwardly worded sentences.

CHECK FOR AP STYLE

1. Turn to the Style Guidelines pages in The Signal Stylebook and circle any AP style errors so that the reporter can look them up and become familiar with the rules.
2. Common errors include: Courtesy titles, how to attribute quotes, dates and time.
3. Where does the attribution go?!