## UNIT STRUCTURE


8.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 What is Editing?

9.4 Language Editing

9.5 Writing and Editing Photo Caption

9.6 Language for explaining graphs, charts, maps

9.7 Proof Reading

9.8 Let Us Sum Up

9.9 Further Readings

9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress


## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- describe the intricacies of editing,
- discuss the skill of writing photo caption,
- explain the art of illustration and proof reading.

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

In a news organization, editing plays a vital role. News reports written in a hurry by reporters have to be checked and improved by a team of editors. These copies are checked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures and sense. Editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size using the right kind of expressions and symbols. A copy is edited to highlight the 'news sense' in a story and to bring uniformity of language and style in an issue of a newspaper. Editors look out for certain news values in a copy like proximity, timeliness, prominence, consequence and human interest while selecting a news item for publication. A news item is selected keeping in view its interest to a large number of readers and its impact on them. As you know that we have dealt extensively in unit 4 and unit 5 and also in unit

**(iii) Prominence:** Names make news and newspapers like to use as many local names as possible. News about public figures and celebrities make more, interesting reading.

**(iv) Consequence:** A reader's interest is aroused if an event or occurrence affects him. He is eager to know how it will affect him and his family. Say for instance a news item on proposed hike in fuel prices.

**(v) Human interest:** Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities make for wider readership.

A news story has to be newsworthy and interest a large member of readers. A story's worth is determined by its impact on the readers. All these factors have to be kept in mind while editing. In the next section, we will discuss about editing from the point of view of language.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. What are the characteristics of news ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Define editing ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 9.4 LANGUAGE EDITING

Words are the basic building blocks of journalism. One should respect the words and follow the way these are arranged and strung together. Misplaced words could twist the meaning of a sentence. Hence, one should pay attention to punctuation marks, grammar and syntax. All these are important in sentence construction.

A newspaper reader in the morning is in a great hurry. A news story should be in a familiar language so that it runs smoothly through the average reader's mind. Simple, direct sentences are more attractive. Long sentences with clauses, exclamations, interjections, quotations, allusions, metaphors etc. should be avoided.

Unfamiliar words and jargon (expressions used in a particular discipline like law, medicine etc) should be avoided as far as possible. Words not commonly used should be explained in simple language.

Some Latin and Greek expressions used in law, medicine, biology etc. have become part of the English vocabulary through usage. If these are readily understood they may be used without explanation, but if they have a popular English equivalent that should be preferred.

Obscene and vulgar language should be totally avoided. They should be cut out even from direct quotations. Slang and colloquialism should at best be avoided.

Active voice is preferred to passive voice in writing as passive voice have a deadening effect. For example, the sentence, 'The directors will meet next week' is preferable to 'A meeting will be held by directors next week'. However, in certain circumstances the passive voice is useful, where the deed is more important than the doer. 'A general strike has been called for tomorrow by …… to protest against ……' is better than 'The …. has called a general strike for tomorrow in protest against…'.

All names in the copy should be properly identified as far as possible. Where the subject of a copy has multiple identification, that is, he or she is currently holding should be mentioned in the first instance, the others can be suitably mentioned in later parts of the copy. If the subject does not hold any office currently, he or she has to be identified by the former office.

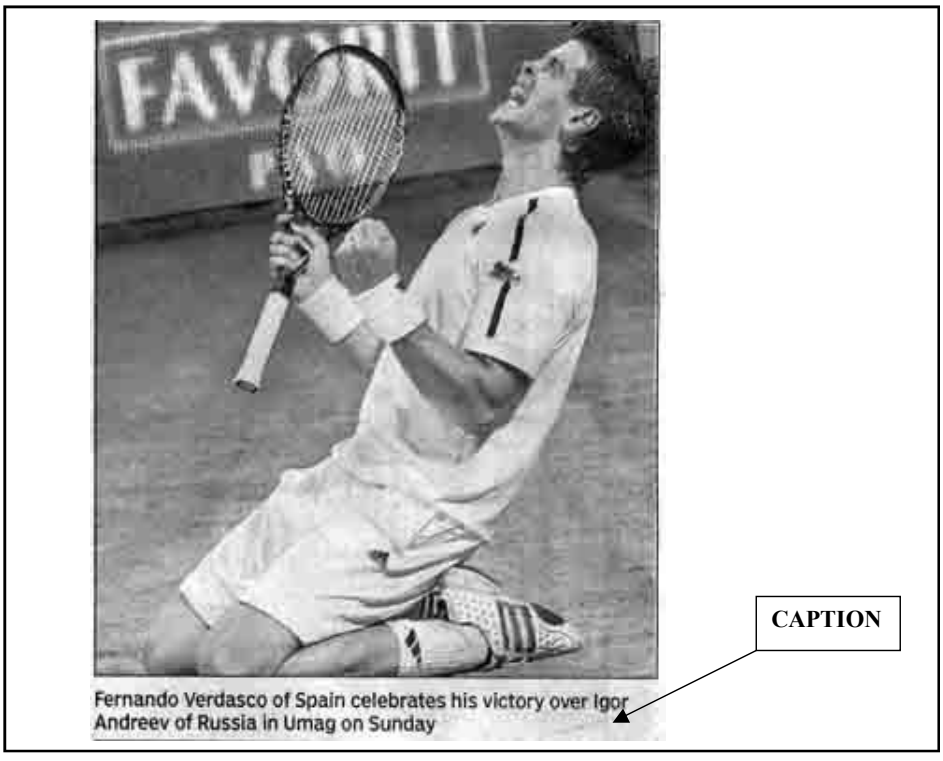
Adjectives and epithets should be used in proper context and sparingly. No adjective or any other expression that smacks of bias, involves a value judgement should be used. For example, while reporting a police

Take the case of a picture showing an important person getting down from a car. The caption instead of saying that such and such a person is 'getting down' from the car should rather say so and so is 'arriving' at the particular venue or place for doing a particular activity, as the case might be.

If a picture shows a person eating, there is no need to say in the caption that the person is eating. One should say why, where and what he is eating and on what occasion.

When a photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the picture could hang in between the paragraphs. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer a box to a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to turn it into photo-story.

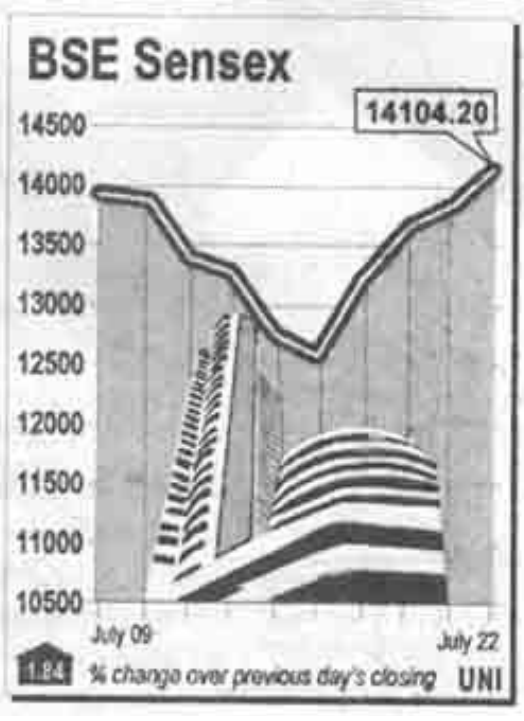
Captions for the sports pictures are important. Most photographers simply prefer to say something like 'a melee in the goal mouth', which should actually say who is doing what. For example, it should read as 'X who scored a hattrick, scoring his third goal in a row beating defender Y'. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer not to give any caption and the picture simply hangs under the headline, which itself serves as a caption.



## 9.6 LANGUAGE FOR EXPLAINING GRAPHS, CHARTS, MAPS ETC

In most news coverage's, photographers reach the spot only after the incident takes place and is able to take only the result or consequences if what had already happened. In such cases, the newspaper or magazine might have to depend upon graphic illustrations to detail the activities that had taken place at a particular spot earlier.

The news desk, with the help of illustrators or artists, sketches out from the information available, the original sequence, so as to give the reader the reader a clear idea of what the news story is about, such graphic illustrations have been used in depicting incidents of varying degrees like accidents, fire incidents etc. In an assassination case, a graphic illustration could show the position of the assassin, the victim and others in the vicinity. For mountaineering expeditions, the routes taken by the mountaineers could be sketched out, adding all the necessary information regarding the routes. Similar, graphic illustration could be made for space exploration rockets. The language used in such graphics are simple and highlight different aspects of the incident or expedition.




**World's top 10 varsities**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Harvard University |
| 2 | University of Oxford |
| 3 | University of Cambridge |
| 4 | Yale University |
| 5 | Imperial College, London |
| 6 | Princeton University |
| 7 | California Institute of Technology |
| 8 | University of Chicago |
| 9 | University College, London |
| 10 | Massachusetts Institute of Technology |

**Ranking of Indian varsities**

| | |
|---|---|
| Delhi University | 254 |
| IIT-Bombay | 269 |
| IIT-Delhi | 307 |
| IIT-Kanpur | 431 |
| IIT-Madras | 432 |
| IIT-Roorkee | 433 |
| University of Calcutta | 410 |
| University of Mumbai | 456 |
| University of Pune | 469 |

Graphics come in handy for the tabloids and magazines where detailed stories are published with illustration - pictorially and graphically.

## 9.7 PROOF READING

Starting from the days when the first printing press came into existence, proof readers have played an important role in ensuring that a clean and correct copy came out of the printing presses. With the advent of the newspaper, proof readers also became an integral part of the newspaper.

The proof readers have to compare the 'printed' copy with the original, to find any possible mistakes. The proof reader's task is to ensure that the proof tallies with the copy. Proofs come in different forms depending on the kind of publication process. Proofs appear as single-columns of type printed on long strips of paper in case of letterpress or offset newspapers using typeset copy. Typed stencil serves as the proof for mimeographed papers, while for offset papers prepared with a computer, the finished job of typing must be proofread. It has to be noted that the methods of marking for the last two processes is different from that used with a printed proof.

Proofreading is usually done by a team of two, a copyholder and a proofreader. The copyholders read aloud from the copy, indicating paragraphs, commas and other punctuation and spelling out proper names. The proofreader follows on the proof, marking corrections.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4

1. What is the role of proofreader?

.....

.....

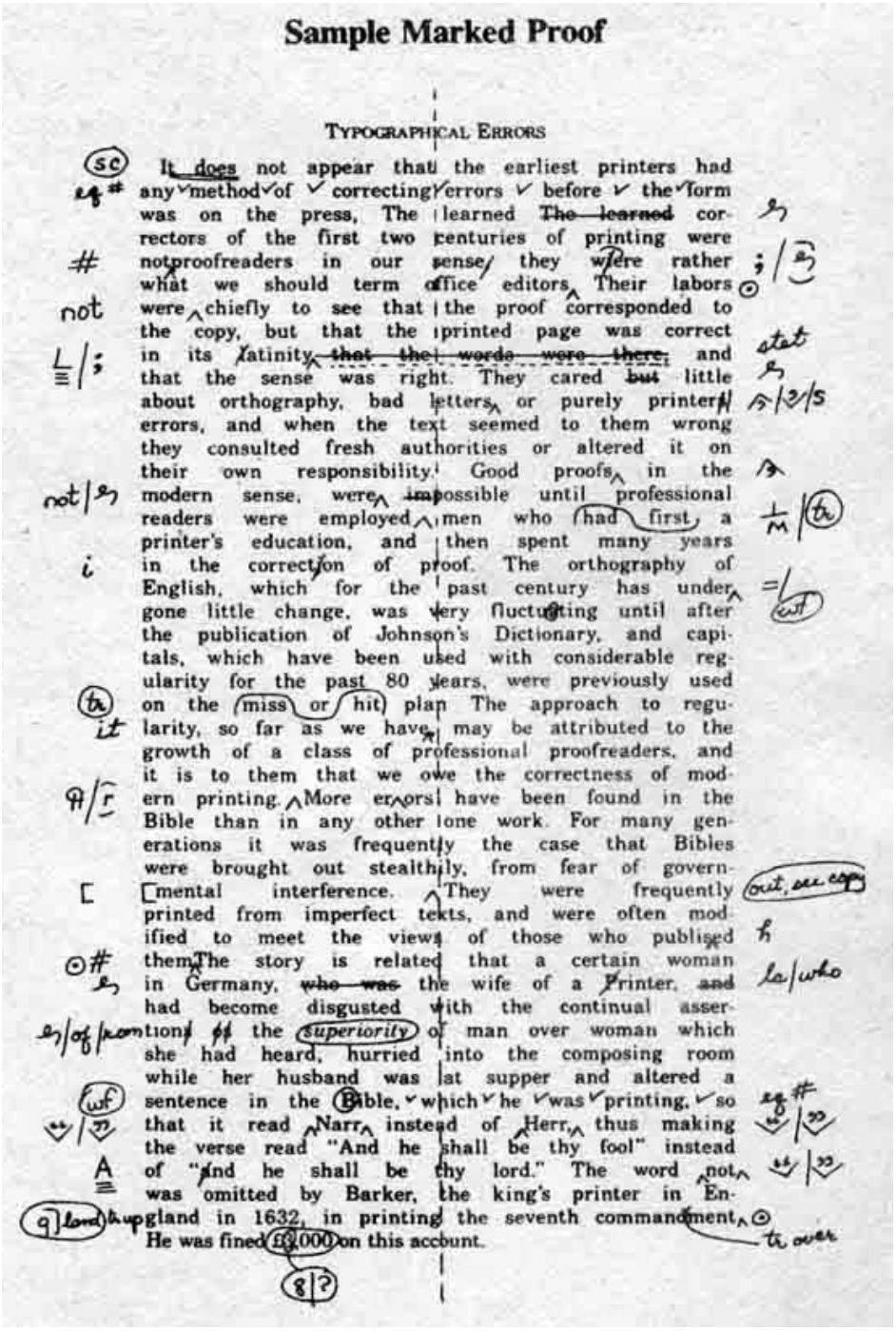
.....

2. When do we use graphics?

.....

.....

.....



**Sample Marked Proof**

TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

It does not appear that the earliest printers had any method of correcting errors before the form was on the press. The learned ~~The learned~~ correctors of the first two centuries of printing were not proofreaders in our sense; they were rather what we should term office editors. Their labors were chiefly to see that the proof corresponded to the copy, but that the printed page was correct in its latinity ~~that the words were there~~ and that the sense was right. They cared ~~but~~ little about orthography, bad letters or purely printer's errors, and when the text seemed to them wrong they consulted fresh authorities or altered it on their own responsibility. Good proofs in the modern sense, were ~~impossible~~ until professional readers were employed, men who had first a printer's education, and then spent many years in the correction of proof. The orthography of English, which for the past century has undergone little change, was very fluctuating until after the publication of Johnson's Dictionary, and capitals, which have been used with considerable regularity for the past 80 years, were previously used on the miss or hit plan. The approach to regularity, so far as we have, may be attributed to the growth of a class of professional proofreaders, and it is to them that we owe the correctness of modern printing. More errors have been found in the Bible than in any other one work. For many generations it was frequently the case that Bibles were brought out stealthily, from fear of governmental interference. They were frequently printed from imperfect texts, and were often modified to meet the views of those who published them. The story is related that a certain woman in Germany, ~~who was~~ the wife of a printer, ~~and~~ had become disgusted with the continual assertion of the *superiority* of man over woman which she had heard, hurried into the composing room while her husband was at supper and altered a sentence in the Bible, which he was printing, so that it read Narr instead of Herr, thus making the verse read "And he shall be thy fool" instead of "and he shall be thy lord." The word not was omitted by Barker, the king's printer in England in 1632, in printing the seventh commandment. He was fined £3,000 on this account.

items attract the readers to the story. Care should be taken to write headlines with economy of words within a limited space. Writing photo caption is also an art which has to learnt to describe the news in the photograph. As the electronic media is today making rapid strides, the importance of photography is also increasing in the print media. Graphs, charts and maps are today being widely used in the print media to help the readers understand better the subject in the news. These are

affect him and his family. Say for instance a news item on proposed hike in fuel prices.

(v) **Human interest:** Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities make for wider readership.

2. Editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size using the right kind of expressions and symbols.

3. The comma plays an important role in punctuation. This little mark causes more trouble than the rest put together. For example :

Ram says Raj is an idiot.
Ram, says Raj, is an idiot.

Observe how the placement of the comma has changed the meaning of the sentence. We should remember that commas define relationships within a sentence.

Punctuation marks bring in clarity and make a piece of writing readable. However, too many punctuation marks may clutter up a story. There should be no comma after a verb, unless it is immediately followed by a parenthesis.

4. Newspaper language has to be simple and precise. The language has to be adjusted to the style of the newspaper.. Obscene and vulgar language should be totally avoided. They should be cut out even from direct quotations. Slang and colloquialism should at best be avoided.

5. It is said that a photograph speaks a thousand words. Even then one should say where and when the incident took place. This is called a caption

6. When a photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the picture could hang in between the paragraphs. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer a box to a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to turn it into photo-story.