

# PROOFING vs. EDITING vs. REWRITING

A HANDY GUIDE TO HELP YOU  
GET EXACTLY WHAT YOU  
WANT FROM AN EDITOR

**Y**ou send a piece of content out for editing that's due to the printer tomorrow, and it comes back so marked up, you can barely sift through all the red before press time. And the invoice was much higher than expected. Or maybe you wanted an editor to really make a piece of content sing and were disappointed when all he or she did was correct a few typos. Editors have many roles, but unfortunately, mind reader isn't one of them.

▶ **HERE ARE THREE KEY TERMS TO KNOW TO MAKE SURE THERE'S NO CONFUSION.**



## PROOFING

### COPY STATUS:

**Excellent**

★★★★☆

You're happy with the copy the way it is, which has already been approved by sources and stakeholders. You just need someone to check for grammatical errors, typos and misuse of punctuation, and to ensure it adheres to your organization's stylebook.

### TIME COMMITMENT:

**Low**



### EXAMPLE:

*Before proofing:*

Our Hospital specializes in multi-disciplinary care

*After proofing:*

Our hospital specializes in multidisciplinary care.



## EDITING

### COPY STATUS:

**Decent**

★★★☆☆

You've received copy that's in pretty good shape, but you'd like it to be clearer and more concise. You'd like someone to suggest where to make cuts without sacrificing the message, help the piece flow better and punch up the introduction before you share it with stakeholders.

### TIME COMMITMENT:

**Moderate**



### EXAMPLE:

*Before editing:*

Our widgets are better than other widgets, as evidenced by the fact that we have won awards.

*After editing:*

Our award-winning team makes better widgets than anyone else.



## REWRITING

### COPY STATUS: **Disastrous**

★☆☆☆☆

You're asking yourself why you didn't hire a different writer. Sure, all of the important details are on the page, but the information is disorganized, and it needs serious help. Or perhaps it does not reflect your organization's voice or is too technical for the intended audience. You want someone to really go to town on the piece by writing a new introduction, rearranging sections and giving the copy a new tone before it ever sees the light of day.

### TIME COMMITMENT: **High**



### EXAMPLE:

*Before rewriting:*

We sold them a JK5000 for redundancy - it's the only thing that would work with their old Innov8 360 system (8 years old) which they wouldn't get rid of. We gave them a discount because we have a contract with Intel.

*After rewriting:*

The client uses an 8-year-old Innov8 360 system and wanted to keep it. So we determined the JK5000 was the best choice for backing up their files because it offers upgraded speed but is compatible with all generations of Innov8. We were even able to work with our vendor to get the client a discount to meet their budget requirements.