

Beyond Spellcheck: How copyediting guarantees error-free submission

Author

Anagha Nair

Post Url

<https://www.enago.com/academy/what-is-copyediting/>



Submitting a manuscript is a complex and often an emotional experience for researchers. Whether it's your first manuscript or tenth, each submission offers a unique learning experience. Every submission is a reflection of countless hours of dedication and effort. As a researcher or a student, what was the most towering challenge before presenting your work to a journal's critical eye? Undoubtedly, it would be sculpting your first draft to a final polished masterpiece! But, which draft is the final draft? How much editing is too much editing?

This is an unsolved riddle that perplexes even the most experienced researchers. Many students and researchers engage hours in [self-editing](#) in pursuit of perfection. Yet, they receive heartbreaking rejections that end up casting shadows of self-doubt. Eventually, they begin to question the very essence of their research prowess. But, is only basic [grammar check](#) and edits or using a non-proficient [AI tool](#) enough? Researchers often overlook the transformative power of copyediting in enhancing the manuscript's quality. Little do they realize the magic of copyediting.

What Is Copyediting

Copyediting is reviewing a text to improve its readability in order to offer the best version of a document. Additionally, it checks various aspects of writing such as grammar, punctuation, clarity of thought, consistency, etc. to make the document more professional and presentable. Moreover, it holds the power to increase the credibility of your research and increase the chances of acceptance by the journal of your interest.

Why is Copyediting Important

[Copyediting plays an indispensable role](#) in various areas of research publishing. It holds the power to abate your submission as it ensures an effective delivery of the content. It enhances the overall impact of the manuscript by enhancing the consistency in writing. Therefore, it can play a make-or-break game for your submission. The ultimate goal of copyediting is to polish your draft and make it publication-ready. It presents your research in the best possible light. Additionally, it makes it easier for readers to engage with and understand your findings.

When to Copyedit?

Copyediting is a critical step in the editorial process that should be undertaken after the completion of the initial draft of a written work. Additionally, copyediting is best carried out once the [substantive editing](#) or developmental editing and revisions have been completed, ensuring that the content is well-structured and coherent. It is the third [stage of editing](#), usually done before [proofreading](#) the document. Furthermore, it aligns the structure of the text and makes the information comprehensible. The process fixes technical errors without changing the context; thus making it easier for [proofreading](#).

Copyediting and proofreading are two different steps in editing serving individual roles. Therefore, understanding the difference between these steps can be helpful in making a wise choice while editing a manuscript.

Difference Between Copyediting and Proofreading

Copyediting and proofreading are often used interchangeably, leading to confusion about their different roles. [Proofreading](#) is usually done in the final stages of editing to check grammar and punctuation. It is done for a quality check of the document. Although both the steps are crucial to ensure accuracy of the text, each of them serves a different purpose.

Here's a tabular comparison between copyediting and proofreading:

Copyediting

Proofreading

Improves the overall clarity and quality of content
Involves a comprehensive checking of content and style
Looks for grammar, punctuation, syntax, [style and consistency](#)
Ensures consistency in adherence to the style guide
Organizes the logical flow and coherence of the content
May rephrase or reorganize sentences
Typically done before proofreading
Improves the manuscript's readability and quality
Uses style guides, dictionaries, and references
Prepares the document for publication or submission
Copyeditors are hired for copyediting

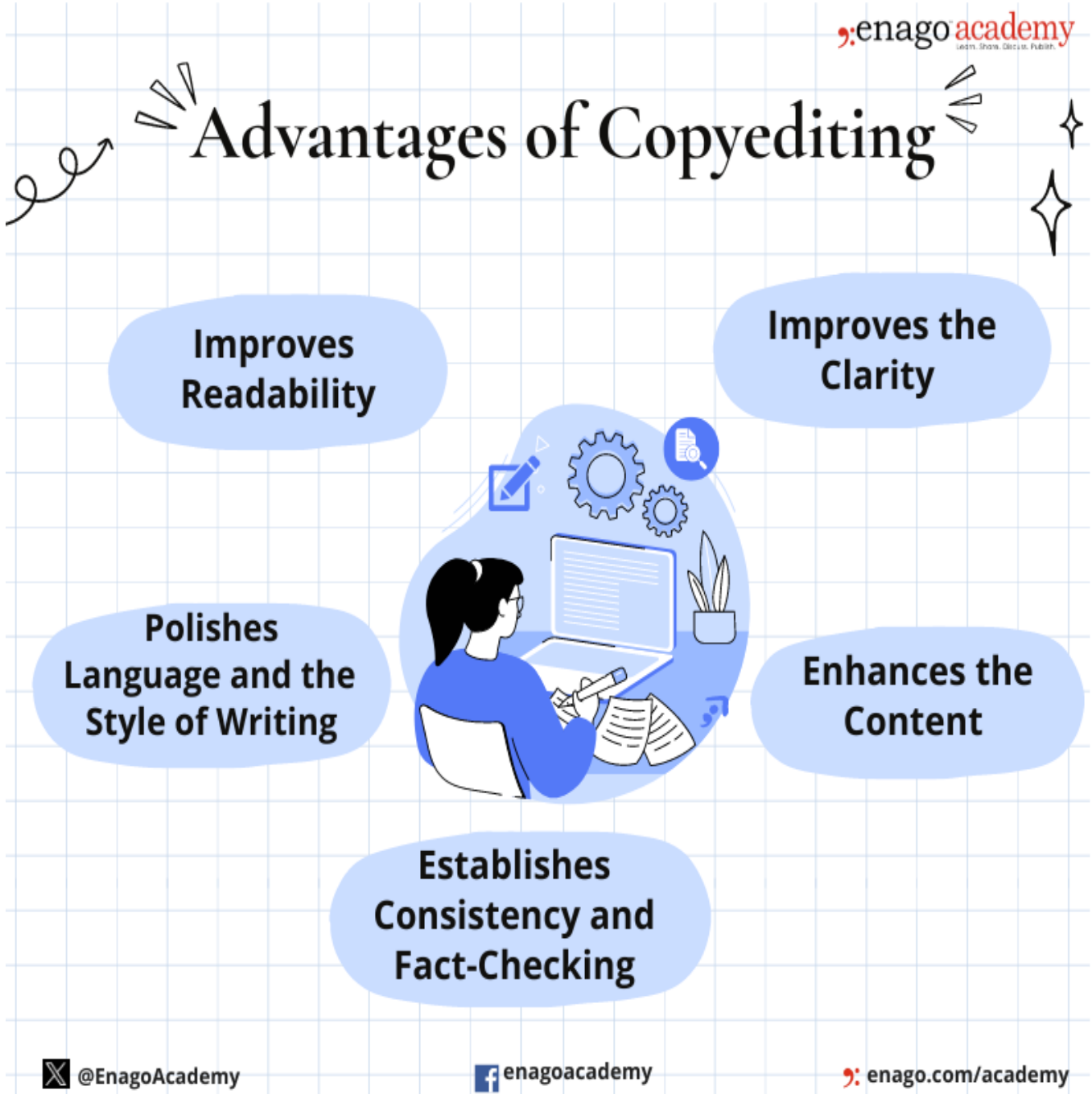
Corrects errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation
Involves a limited checking; wh
Checks spelling, punctuation, a
Ensures consistency in languag
Does not review or modify cont
Focuses on corrections without
The final step, after copyediting
Ensures accuracy
Focuses on proofreading marks
Polishes the document for error
Proofreaders are hired for proo

Remember that although copyediting and proofreading have distinct roles, they are often part of the same editorial process, with copyediting preceding proofreading. The two processes work together to ensure a high-quality, error-free document.

Advantages of Copyediting

Copyediting makes the document more readable by adding a logical flow to the text. Additionally, it offers comprehensive revision, language and style polishing, consistency checks, and content enhancement that goes beyond the scope of traditional proofreading.

Some advantages of copyediting are as follows:



1. Improves Readability

Copyediting delves deep into the content and makes the text more coherent. The step examines clarity and consistency of the text. Furthermore, it fixes the overall structure, organization of ideas, and flow of the writing, and ensures that the message is conveyed effectively. By addressing issues related to logic, copyediting improves the overall readability of the document to grab the reader's interest to your text.

2. Polishes Language and the Style of Writing

Copyediting refines the language and style of the text. It ensures that the writing is concise and suitable for the intended audience. Furthermore, it improves the sentence structure, word choice, and grammar, resulting in a more polished and professional output.

3. Establishes Consistency and Fact-checking

Inconsistencies in writing can distract the readers and undermine the authority of your content. Copyediting fixes these issues by ensuring consistency in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and formatting throughout the text. Moreover, it includes fact-checking to verify the accuracy of information in the content. This establishes credibility and minimizes the risk of misinformation in the material.

4. Improves Clarity

One of the primary goals of [copy editing](#) is to enhance clarity and coherence of writing. A copy editor will rephrase or restructure sentences that are ambiguous. Additionally, they bridge gaps in the content to make it more logical and cohesive. This eliminates the scope for any confusion for readers; thus, making the document more engaging and enjoyable to read.

5. Enhances the Content

Copyediting elevates the overall quality of the content. It polishes the content and style, and increases the overall impact of the manuscript.

Example of Text Before and After Copyediting

Copyediting holds the power to enhance the overall value of a written work. Here is an example of a text before and after copyediting.

Original Text:

Lung Cancer is second most common type of cancer accounting approximately 2,36,740 new cases and 1,30,180 deaths according to the statistics of 2022 in united states by the American Cancer Society. This disease was associated with a poor prognosis. Chronic stress raises the load on the operating range of the physiological systems (McEwen, 1993). The two major histological types of lung cancer: non small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC). The identification of predictive biomarkers helps at tumor identification and targeted therapy against them (Kerr et al., 2014). Smoking, alcohol intake, obesity, chronic stress has effect on cancer progression and fatality (Antoni et al., 2006a; Chida et al., 2008a; Hamer et al., 2009a).

Copyedited Text:

Lung ~~Cancer~~ cancer is second most common type of cancer. According to the statistics of 2022 by the American Cancer Society, it accounts for ~~accounting~~ approximately 2,36,740 new cases and 1,-30,-180 deaths according to the statistics of 2022 in the ~~United states by the American Cancer Society.~~ There are two major histological types of lung cancer: Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and Small cell lung cancer (SCLC). ~~This~~ The disease ~~was~~ is associated with a poor prognosis. The ~~i~~ identification of predictive biomarkers helps at ~~in~~ tumor identification and targeted therapy against them (Kerr et al., 2014). A study conducted by McEwen suggests the role of ~~Chronic stress~~ in ~~raises~~ raising the load on the operating range of the physiological systems (McEwen., 1993). ~~The two major histological types of lung cancer: non small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC). The identification of predictive biomarkers helps at tumor identification and targeted therapy against them (Kerr et al., 2014).~~ Additionally, several other studies have confirmed the effect of ~~Smoking, alcohol intake, obesity, chronic stress~~ has effect on cancer progression and fatality (Antoni et al., 2006a; Chida et al., 2008a; Hamer et al., 2009a).

Final Text:

Lung cancer is the second most common type of cancer. According to the statistics of 2022 by the American Cancer Society, it accounts for approximately 2,36,740 new cases and 1,30,180 deaths in the United States. There are two major histological types of lung cancer: Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and Small-cell lung cancer (SCLC).

The disease is associated with a poor prognosis. Identification of predictive biomarkers helps in tumor identification and targeted therapy against them (Kerr *et al.*, 2014). A study conducted by McEwen suggests the role of chronic stress in raising the load on the operating range of the physiological systems (McEwen., 1993). Additionally, several other studies have confirmed the effect of smoking, alcohol intake, obesity, chronic stress on cancer progression and fatality (Antoni *et al.*, 2006a; Chida *et al.*, 2008a; Hamer *et al.*, 2009a).

Copyediting can be most effective when approached with fresh eyes, as this allows the work to be viewed more objectively. However, for an error-free submission, researchers can hire professional copyeditors to improve quality of their written work. They possess a deep understanding of grammar, syntax, punctuation, and style guidelines, ensuring that the text is not only error-free but also consistent and cohesive. Investing in professional copyediting services such as [Enago Copyediting Services](#) can make your [manuscript submission](#)-worthy by maintaining the credibility of your document. With a two-editor system and specialized subject area match, Enago ensures that the quality of the written work is enhanced without changing its context.

Although copyediting holds the power to make a document publication-worthy, different journals have different editorial processes for publishing a paper. If you want to have an in-depth understanding about journal editorial process, check out this **FREE** informative webinar by Enago Academy titled "[An Insight Into Journal Editorial Processes](#)" to walk through the entire editorial process and increase your chances of acceptance.

Do you have any other tips for copyediting? Also, what are the other hurdles that you faced during your manuscript submission? Write an article to [Enago Academy's Open Platform](#) to share your experiences in the form of a thought piece and remain discoverable in the academic community.

Cite this article

Anagha Nair, Beyond Spellcheck: How copyediting guarantees error-free submission. Enago Academy. 2023/08/31. <https://www.enago.com/academy/what-is-copyediting/>