

## Proofreading and Quality Control Guidelines

A proofreader should conduct a full read on each proof unless indicated otherwise. A full read consists of reading the proof word for word against the original manuscript. A full read begins at the top left of the front cover and ends at the bottom right of the back cover. Differences between the original copy and the first proof are marked using standard editorial marks (or track changes if marked electronically). A document must be proofed each time any text has to be reflowed into a design or more than just simple edits have been made. The proofreader checks the document for punctuation, design consistency and legal compliance. The standard reference guide for proofreading is *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

### Proofreading Guidelines

- Review designer layout against original copy.
- Check for any words that have dropped off or changed during the edits.
  - Conduct general read-through for grammar, spelling and style.
  - Make sure legal line is included, if needed, and trademark/copyright information is complete and accurate.
  - Ensure consistency in font type, size and color across all heads and subheads.
  - Ensure consistency of punctuation across all heads and subheads.
  - Ensure consistency of leading in body copy.
  - Check that styles are consistent across text.
  - Check pagination.
  - Check spacing – heads and subheads should be close to the text that it refers to.
  - Make sure all fonts and styles comply with publication standards.

### Quality Control Guidelines

Note - definitions and use of most punctuation can be found in the Punctuation section of the Style Guide.

- No two-letter hyphenations at the beginning of a line (at least three letters must carry over); they are permissible at the end of a line.
- No hyphens between pages.
- No hyphens between columns.
- No hyphens in a ragged right line measuring over 20 picas.
- No more than three hyphens in a row at the beginning or end of a line.

- Use en dashes to separate numbers and hyphens to separate compound words.
- No widows, if possible; no hyphenated widows ever. (Widows are allowed in justified copy if necessary). A widow is a word or portion of a word that is left alone on a line at the end of a paragraph.
- No double-spaces after periods.
- No double hyphens; use em dash.
- At least two lines of text must overrun to next column/page; a single line cannot stand alone at the top or bottom of a column or page.
- Keep numerical sequences, such as phone numbers, on one line if possible.
- On numeral lists, align at decimal.

## Fairness Guidelines / Diversity Terminology

### Fairness Guidelines

All material should comply with the following six guidelines:

- Treat all people with respect.
- Minimize the effects of construct-irrelevant knowledge or skills.
- Avoid material that is unnecessarily controversial, inflammatory, offensive or upsetting.
- Use appropriate terminology to refer to people.
- Avoid stereotypes.
- Represent diversity in depictions of people (photos).

### Diversity Terminology

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** The country where you were born or which holds the most identity with a person.

**CULTURAL IDENTITY:** The context of one's life experience as shaped by membership in groups which can be based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, abilities, age, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic region.

**CULTURE:** The sum of a group's socially transmitted behavior patterns, thoughts and experiences, and its perceptions, values, and assumptions about living that influence behavior and how those emerge with interactions and communications with other cultures.

**DIVERSITY:** Understanding and valuing the range and variety of characteristics and beliefs of individuals (including those who provide services to exceptional children, youth and adults) who demonstrate a wide range of characteristics. This includes ethnic and racial backgrounds, language, age, abilities, family status, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious and spiritual values, geographic location, and country of origin.

**ETHNIC OR MULTICULTURAL GROUP:** Any group which, because of racial or ethnic origin, constitutes a distinctive and recognizable entity in our society. Examples of such groups include Blacks or African Americans; American Indians, Alaskan Natives, or First Nations; Hispanics, such as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans; Asians; and Pacific Islanders.

**ETHNICITY:** Takes into consideration people's national origin, religion, or language. When applied to a group, it refers to a community within a larger society that is set apart by others or who identifies itself primarily on the basis of cultural characteristics such as national origin, religion, beliefs, language or tradition, that can be influenced by racial identity.

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION:** A physical place where a person is regarded as established.

**MULTICULTURAL:** An understanding pertaining to, and respect for the range and variety of social, political, economic, academic, and historical constructs of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, age, abilities, language, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location, or country of origin.

**RACE:** A social construction, traditionally based on biological/physical features, which may also include an individual's cultural identity.

## Punctuation

As a general rule, use the minimum amount of punctuation necessary for clarity and accuracy. The following are punctuation guidelines; the standard reference guide is *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

### Colon

- Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a list of particulars  
*Your basic emergency kit includes: bandages, antiseptic, gauze and tape.*
- Join two independent clauses with a colon if the second interprets or amplifies the first  
*The squalor of the streets reminded him of a line from Oscar Wilde: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."*
- A colon is often used in the salutation of a letter, *Dear John Q. Sample*; however, if the communication is less formal, a comma will suffice, i.e., *Dear John*,

### Comma

- In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the term before the conjunction.  
*Red, white and blue.*
- Enclose parenthetical phrases between commas  
*He opened the letter, read it, and noted its contents.*
- The abbreviations etc., i.e., and e.g., as well as abbreviations for academic degrees, and titles that follow a name are parenthetical and should be punctuated accordingly: *Letters, packages, etc., should go here. Horace Fulsome, Ph.D., presided. Rachel Simmonds, Attorney The Reverend William Forbes, S.J.*
- No comma, however, separates a noun from a restrictive term of identification:  
*Billy the Kid*  
*The novelist Toni Morrison*
- Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause:  
*The early records of the city have disappeared, and the story of its first years can no longer be reconstructed.*
- Do not join independent clauses by a comma. If two or more clauses are grammatically complete, and are not joined by a conjunction, the appropriate punctuation is a semicolon. *Stevenson's stories are entertaining; they are full of exciting adventures.*

- If a conjunction is inserted, the proper mark is a comma.  
*Stevenson's stories are entertaining, for they are full of exciting adventures.*

### Dash

- To separate words or clauses in text, use em dashes and insert one space on either side of the dash. *We will take a vacation this year – if I get a raise.*

### Exclamation point

- When writing corporate communications, avoid using exclamation points unless they are used to convey the emphasis of a direct quote. For advertising and marketing materials, exclamation points may be used as needed.

### Hyphen

- Use a hyphen to join two or more words to form a compound adjective preceding a noun to ensure clarity. *The chairperson will speak to small-business women.*
- Hyphenate when modifiers occur after a form of the verb to be.
- Use a hyphen when its absence would change meaning.
- Use hyphens for phone numbers appearing on the web. *1-XXX-XXX-XXXX*

### Parentheses

- Avoid parentheses, which distract the reader by raising another line of thought in a single sentence. Consider commas, dashes or breaking the sentence in two.

### Quotation marks

- Generally, save quotation marks for quote use. Don't use quotation marks to mock or express disbelief or skepticism. Periods and commas, dashes, question marks, and exclamation points go inside the quotation mark if they are part of the quoted material.

### Semi-colon

- Use a semi-colon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey but less than the separation a period implies. It can also replace a conjunction such as and or but.  
*The package was due last week; it arrived today.*
- Avoid using semi-colons on the web, as they are difficult to read. Use a period instead.

### Serial comma

- Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple

series: *The flag is red, white and blue.*

### Spaces

- Use only one space between end punctuation and the next clause or sentence.

### Vertical lists with bullets

- Do not use *and* between items in a list.
- Use a colon after such terms as *the following* and *such as*.

If any bulleted items are complete, stand-alone sentences, or if they include complete sentences:

- Make sure items are consistent and parallel with the full sentences in the list.
- Every item in a list that includes a full sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a period.
- If a partial sentence begins an item, it's best to rephrase the item so that it, too, is a complete sentence. If bulleted items are partial sentences completing the thought of the introductory sentence:
  - Make sure the bulleted sentence follows the syntax of the introduction
  - Lowercase the initial letter
  - Omit end punctuation
  - All bulleted items should be parallel in structure.

## Editorial Guidelines

The complete NERA Style Guide contains many additional editorial guidelines; our standard reference guide is *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

- NERA has chosen the Associated Press style because it is simple, accessible, appropriate for much of the work we do, and familiar to readers of newspapers and news-oriented websites, which also rely on it. In addition to being a style guide, the AP Stylebook also contains a business-writing guide and a punctuation guide. The AP also publishes a separate Guide to Punctuation, which we use in conjunction with the Stylebook. Our standard dictionary reference is *Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary*, 11th Edition. For those occasions in which neither AP nor Webster's provide an answer, we look to two other widely used guides, *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *The Elements of Style*, the former in part for its comprehensiveness and the latter for its simplicity and clarity.