

Legal Writing Journal Assistant Editors and Technical Editing¹

When doing a technical edit, the Assistant Editors will review and comment on the technical aspects of the article. As Anne Enquist says in her article, “*how the author expresses his or her ideas.*”²

- I. Introduction
 - a. A team of Board Editors has already completed a substantive edit of the article, and the editors provide guidance to the author about how to strengthen the article.
 - b. With that said, that does not mean that Assistant Editors are only looking at the technical aspects of the article (how the information is presented, grammar and punctuation, and footnote content and format). If you see a substantive correction, please bring the correction to the attention of the team leader and/or the Assistant Editor in Chief or the Managing Editor.
 - c. The Assistant Editor in Chief or Managing Editor will assign an article to a team of Assistant Editors. Each team will have a leader—the Assistant Editor who is responsible for consolidating all the changes into one version of the article and preparing the critique memo.
- II. Before starting the technical edit, look at the sources in the footnotes.
 - a. Did the author cite to any sources that are not readily available on Lexis, Westlaw, Hein Online, the Internet, or at libraries at your college or university?
 - b. Did the author cite to any sources that are “on file with Author”?
 - c. If there are source that you cannot locate, please notify the Assistant Editor in Chief or the Managing Editor immediately and copy the team leader on the e-mail.
 - d. Either the Assistant Editor in Chief or Managing Editor will obtain the sources or he or she will obtain the sources from the author.
- III. What to look for in a technical edit: Focus on the style

¹ This handout is based off of several materials, including Anne Enquist’s article, *Substantive Editing Versus Technical Editing: How Law Review Editors Do Their Job*, 30 Stetson L. Rev. 451 (2000), and materials drafted by previous Board Editors such as Darby Dickerson, Vice President, Dean and Professor of Law, at Stetson University College of Law, and Jill Ramsfield, Professor of Law and Director, Legal Research and Writing Program, at William S. Richard School of Law, at University of Hawaii at Manoa.

² Anne Enquist, *Substantive Editing Versus Technical Editing: How Law Review Editors Do Their Job*, 30 Stetson L. Rev. 451, 452 (2000) (emphasis in the original).

- a. Does the article conform to the most current version of *The Redbook*? (If the matter is not covered in *The Redbook*, does it conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*?)
- b. Small-scale organization
 - i. Are the paragraphs organized in a logical fashion?
 - ii. Do the paragraphs have accurate, clear, and concise topic sentences?
 - iii. Are there transitions between paragraphs and between subsections?
- c. Sentences, phrases, and words
 - i. Are the sentences concise?
 - ii. Is the presentation precise and accurate?
 - iii. Check for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanical errors. For example,
 - 1. Is there typographical consistency (words spelled, hyphenated, and capitalized correctly)?
 - 2. Are apostrophes and quotation marks in a consistent format (curved)?
 - 3. Are headings numbered correctly?
 - 4. Do all open quotation marks and parentheses have matching closing quotation marks or parentheses?
 - 5. Are proper names spelled correctly (in the text and footnotes)?
 - 6. Does the first footnote contain the author's biographical information?
- d. Look at the attribution (the proper attribution of thoughts, ideas, and language).
 - i. Has the author properly attributed others' ideas?
 - ii. Does the article have a sufficient number of footnotes?
 - iii. Are all direct quotes accurate? (Check that alternations and omissions are properly noted.)
- e. Look at the citations (format and support). Items to look at include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Does the citation format conform to the *ALWD Citation Manual* (the most current edition)? (See the *Style Guide of the Legal Writing: The Journal of the Legal Writing Institute* for additional information.)
 - ii. Are the footnote numbers placed in the correct position?
 - iii. Are all the quotations formatted properly (including block quotes, alternations, and omissions)?

- iv. Are publication titles and case names reference in the text of sentences, in the text and footnotes, italicized?
- v. Are numerals and symbols used properly?
- vi. Are all pinpoint citations added when necessary? Are the pinpoint citations precise and accurate?
- vii. Are authors' names spelled correctly?
- viii. Are titles correct (capitalization, spelling, accuracy)?
- ix. Are dates accurate?
- x. Are short citations, including *supra* and *id.*, used properly and in the proper format?
- xi. Are the correct signals used? And for signals besides *see generally* and *e.g.*, are explanatory parentheticals included?
- xii. Are the sources within string citations in the correct order?
- xiii. Is subsequent history included when needed?
- xiv. Are dissents, concurrences, etc. indicated where needed?
- xv. Are cross-references within the article (*infra* and *supra*) correct?

IV. The Corrections and the Critique

- a. Please make all corrections to the electronic version of the article; turn on the "Track Changes" function. (The Comment function may also be used.)
- b. If necessary, you may insert an electronic comment to note where additional information is needed from the author.
- c. Each team member gives his or her notes, about major changes, to the team leader.
- d. The team leader will draft a critique memo summarizing the major changes that were made to the article.
- e. The critique should be presented in a professional manner and provide examples (referring to specific pages and paragraphs), where necessary.
- f. The critique and the article (containing all the team members' changes) should be forwarded to the Assistant Editor in Chief and the Managing Editor.