

# Proofreaders' Marks

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People have been revising and correcting the written word since before the first cuneiform-covered tablet was dry. Once more than one or two people became involved in the process—most notably with the advent of the printing press—it became necessary to find clear and speedy ways to communicate changes.

Traditional proofreaders' marks were developed to satisfy the twin needs for speed and clarity. The meanings of some of the marks shown here are fairly obvious, while others may seem cryptic to those outside Publications. The purpose of this appendix is to present the basic symbols used today, as well as some popular variants, and to illustrate their use.

While Publications does not require the use of these symbols, RAND's editors and proofreaders do use the traditional marks and the principal variants. Publications can generally interpret other markings, but it is helpful when others use the traditional symbols as much as possible.

Note that some marks essentially have two parts: an indicator in the text itself plus a symbol in the margin. Often, though not always, the in-text marking is enough, but it is always a good idea to include the marginal marking for the sake of insurance.

**Insert**

Period	○	He will be in St. Paul next week.
Comma		They visited Staunton, Virginia.
Colon		We found several errors, including the following:
Semicolon		Herb's input was late; consequently, the draft was late.
Question mark		Will the briefing slides be ready in time?
Apostrophe		That was Johnathan's assignment.
Quotation mark(s)		"Hello, he said."
Em-dash —	$\frac{1}{\pi}$	This happened once before around 1992.
En-dash –	$\frac{1}{\pi}$	See pages 29–53 of the article.
Hyphen -	=	He is no stand-up comedian, but he is clever.
	=	He is no stand-up comedian, but he is clever.
Parentheses ( )	( / )	See Gutterman (1921). See Gutterman (1921).
Brackets [ ]	[ / ]	"He was my best friend," she wrote.
Braces { }	{ / }	The cryptic formula was $a + b(2 - [b(23 + j)])$ .
Ellipsis dot		"If you lead a country like Britain you have to have a touch of iron about you." (Margaret Thatcher)
Superscript		They searched about 10 km <sup>2</sup> .
Subscript		Everyone knows what H <sub>2</sub> O stands for.

**Adjust spacing, breaks**

Start new paragraph		That was the limited extent of his math studies. Psychology was another matter. . . .
Run text in with last paragraph	no ¶	The seminar is scheduled for May 1. That, however, may not allow enough planning time.
Run text in with last line		We were seeking a simpler solution.
Delete space(s) here		Why would you take a flight that early in the day?
Add space here(s) here	#	This solution has two important features.
Close up lines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dermatologist</li> <li>• endocrinologist</li> <li>• obstetrician</li> </ul>
Check for uneven word spacing		That is likely to be the last we hear of this matter.
Check for uneven line spacing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ dogs</li> <li>✓ cats</li> <li>✓ parrots</li> <li>✓ tropical fish</li> </ul>

**Adjust alignment**

Center	]	Other [
Move right	102	
	]	23
Move left		blocks
	[	stones
		worse than senseless things
Move up	[	
Move down	]	
Make flush left	<i>fl. l</i>	Dear Mr. McMahon,
Make flush right	<i>fl. r</i>	January 7, 2004

**Adjust content**

Insert material		Unfortunately, this was the <sup><i>only</i></sup> time he could speak to us.
Delete material	<i>only</i>	Unfortunately, this was the <sup><i>only</i></sup> time he could speak to us. It actually did rain for forty days and <del>and</del> forty nights. It actually did rain for forty days and <del>and</del> forty nights.
Spell out		You should consult <u>ICAN's</u> Web site on that. You should consult <u>ICAN's</u> Web site on that.
Check spelling		That is last the thing he should be <u>concerned</u> about. <i>spell?</i>
Transpose words or letters		Is there another way to <u>succinctly</u> put that? Is there another way to <u>succinctly</u> put that?
Move material		If you want his opinion, you will have to call before 6 p.m. <u>He is the expert in his field.</u>

**Adjust appearance of text**

Make letter lowercase	<i>lc</i>	My <del>S</del> hip never seems to come in.
Make multiple letters lowercase	<i>lc</i>	He will be in <del>TORONTO</del> next week.
	<i>lc</i>	He will be in <u>TORONTO</u> next week.
Use uppercase letter(s)		The next step is <u>BDa</u> .
Use Roman type	<i>rom</i>	There is no reason to <u>leave</u> this out.
Use italics	<i>ital</i>	You were supposed to do that the <u>first</u> time.
Use boldface	<i>bf</i>	<u>Approach</u> This element of the analysis proved especially difficult.
Wrong font	<i>wf</i>	This could <u>make</u> things more difficult for everyone else.

**Changing your mind**

Disregard this marking; let the copy stand	<i>stet</i>	Did he really say something as <del>corny</del> as that? .....
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