

Service learning assignment

The final project will be a service learning project, in which you provide editing to a campus or community organization which could benefit from your services. Following Bowdon & Scott's model for service learning, you will work as a professional editor, helping the organization improve existing documents (or documents which are under development).

Overview of project

In class, we've discussed the need for a procedure for copyediting. Hence, I'm sure you'll be able to develop this project overview into a more comprehensive sequence of steps.

1. Find an organization with one large document or several small documents which need editing. Meet and discuss a possible editing project. Inform me of your clients and project selection.
2. Develop a complete plan for editing the document(s) and present it to your clients as part of a formal proposal. Turn in a copy of the proposal to me. Revise the plan based on client feedback.
3. Edit the document(s), communicating with your clients as needed during the process. Review a draft of your in-process editing with me.
4. Deliver the final edited document to your clients, with an accompanying letter of transmittal. Submit a project portfolio to me.

Project components & schedule

Several small "milestone" assignments will help me track your progress. I can shift any of these dates to accommodate your schedule, given a written request submitted in advance of the due date. If you can, turn any parts of this project in early; that'll help me immensely.

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Points</i>
Client & project selection memo	A memo to me describing your clients and the project you intend to edit.	Fri 3/26	25
Proposal & editing plan	A formal proposal which includes an editing plan.	Mon 4/5	75
Project draft	A draft of the edited document, hopefully complete, which we can use to review your editing procedures and propose correctives, if needed.	Fri 4/16	50
Final edited document	The final document, including marked up copy, style sheets, editorial queries, other editing materials, and a letter of transmittal. (Deliver to client.)	Fri 4/30	120
Project portfolio	A portfolio which includes all the project assignments submitted to date, and adds a brief reflective report. (Deliver to me.)	Weds 5/5	80
Project total			350

Detailed component descriptions & assessment

Some of the documents described above need no additional description, and can be produced by following the suggestions in our textbooks.

I will assess the proposal & editing plan, final edited project, and final project portfolio with the help of an evaluation completed by your clients. (The evaluation form I will send them is attached.)

Client & project selection memo

Formatting on this isn't very important; it's for my eyes only. The most critical thing is completeness. Describe the following:

1. Your clients, including full contact information (names, addresses, emails, phone numbers—as much as you can provide).
2. The project you intend to edit, and your reason for selecting that project.
3. The level of edit you anticipate (medium or substantive), and your reason for selecting that level.
4. Any materials you expect to produce (style sheets, etc.) to accompany your edited document.

There is no formal assessment rubric for this memo. You will be assessed on completeness and detail of information provided. Be as complete and detailed as possible.

Since I will be out of town at this time, place the completed document in my mailbox in the English Department by 4:00 pm on the due date. (No door or Coke machine stuff this time, please.)

Proposal & editing plan

The proposal and editing plan will be addressed and delivered to your clients; provide a copy to me. (You should also include a copy, whole or in part, of the document(s) in question.) The proposal will describe the editing process you intend to engage, the schedule you intend to follow, and the outcomes you anticipate. It should provide your clients a complete understanding of what you expect of them, and the product you intend to deliver.

Your proposal should be formatted using the Anderson selection (Ch. 19, 446–9) as a model. However, you aren't required to include every section he develops. Refer to other course texts, such as Rude's "Comprehensive editing," to determine the things you should include.

<i>Area evaluated</i>	<i>Optimal</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Proposal informativeness (15)	Excellent information about project management, contact information, and other details included	One or two sections are not fully developed, and the client will need to contact you to resolve some questions	Information sorely lacking, leaving questions about major areas of the project
Editing plan clarity & presentation (25)	Describes and explains the editing process you envision in detail, establishing clear goals for editing	Editing process and/or goals are clearly established, but some conflicts or inconsistencies need attention	Editing plan is not clear, and the goals for editing not well defined or poorly explained
Editing plan completeness & suitability (25)	All components of the document are addressed, and the plan established matches the documents to be edited	Editing plan does not address the entire editing situation fully, and/or has portions which are not well developed	Editing plan is incomplete in more than one way, and/or does not seem well-suited to the document presented
General presentation (10)	Well-organized and presented—a document which makes you look like a pro	A few problems with presentation, but overall the impression is positive	Problems with formatting or appearance; generally looks unprofessional or sloppy

Project draft

Turn in a document with a substantial amount of completed editing and come to a conference ready to discuss the project status. Present evidence of using a procedure which ensures accurate, complete editing. You are encouraged to submit drafts of your letter of transmittal at this time, as well as any style sheets or other materials you are preparing.

You will be assessed on two factors: (1) the amount of progress you demonstrate—I expect no less than half of the editing to be done; (2) level of preparation for our conference—come to my office ready to discuss your project and spend a productive half-hour discussing your editing progress and any problems with me.

You will not be assessed on your quality of editing, with one exception: if I pointed out problems with your editing methodology in the vulture portfolio, and those difficulties persist on this draft, you will receive no more than 50% of the points allocated for this draft.

Final edited document

The final edited document should include cover pages, bubble query sheets, or other materials which are necessary for me to understand it—e. g. everything that was delivered to the client. At the least, a letter of transmittal should accompany the document (see Anderson 450 and below).

<i>Area evaluated</i>	<i>Optimal</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Thoroughness in editing (40)	One or fewer minor problems which should be addressed are not corrected	Several minor or one major problem remain which should be addressed	Numerous serious problems remain in document
Editing marks and queries (30)	Conventional editing marks used; queries are polite, informative, and consistent	Editing marks sometimes irregular or illegible; a few queries seem rude, or are hard to understand	Editing marks often hard to follow; queries aren't well-differentiated, are poorly stated, or are too aggressive
Accuracy in editing; respect for style (30)	No errors introduced by editing; style and content are altered only if absolutely necessary	Some errors introduced; style or content are affected in minor ways, or strongly in a few places	Editing introduces several new errors; style of author unnecessarily affected
Letter of transmittal: content (5)	Letter impressively sets the stage for reading the final document, providing good context for the edited product	Questions remain after reading the letter; some content which should be included is omitted in whole or part	Letter adds little to delivery; information is incomplete or incorrect; tone doesn't compliment the work of editing
Letter of transmittal: presentation (5)	Letter is professional, using standard business letter format	A few mistakes detract from the professional appearance of the letter	Letter contains misspellings, is poorly formatted, or otherwise appears unprofessional
Overall quality of information provided (10)	Package provides clients all they need to move forward with project	Some problems or handoff which doesn't set the stage for future projects very well	Serious questions remain about procedure for implementation, or future of project

Letter of transmittal

Your final work should be accompanied by a letter of transmittal which somewhat formally tells the client what you are delivering and fulfills Anderson's last guideline, "Hand off the project in a helpful way." This letter should use a standard business letter format.

- Tell the clients what they need to know to implement the editing changes you've made (for example, if you're working with multiple documents or electronic files), and how they can contact you if they have further questions.
- Give one last good impression—be polite, emphasize what you enjoyed about discussing the project or editing it, and thank them for the experience.
- Acknowledge any problems which still exist or any suggestions that you have for the long term, such as integration of the project into other materials.

- If the transition is complicated, you may need to write additional instructions—see me.

As noted above, assessment focuses on two areas: content and presentation.

Final portfolio

Deliver the final edited document and associated materials to me in a portfolio of some kind, with a table of contents and organization which clearly indicates the components indicated:

- 1) The document(s) in original condition, before you started editing.
- 2) A copy of the final document(s), with your editing marks and other corrections and suggestions, as delivered to the client.
- 3) The editing plan/proposal you wrote for the client, with any changes indicated.
- 4) Any drafts which I reviewed.
- 5) Representative communication between you and the client (emails, memorandums, notes from your meetings, etc).
- 6) The letter of transmittal which accompanied the final document (see below).
- 7) A brief report which reflects on the editing experience (see below).

<i>Area evaluated</i>	<i>Optimal</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Client communication (20)	Polite, clear, and businesslike prose which makes requests or asks questions effectively	For the most part, effective and well-toned, but a few errors which detract from appearance or raise questions	Serious problems with presentation or politeness; general lack of purpose
Reflective report: information (20)	Good descriptions of editing experience and complete client evaluation; rich in detail	Lack of detail—too many generalizations, or too much left to reader imagination	Little information included; more of a dry run at requirements—a hasty recap
Reflective report: commentary (20)	Honest commentary on the project; evidence of reflection about editing and management methodology	Some reflection included, but careful consideration of the editing process is limited or weakened by lack of detail	Commentary doesn't really show introspection, careful consideration, or desire to learn from the experience
Professional appearance (20)	Well-organized and presented—a document which makes you look like a pro	A few problems with presentation, but overall the impression is positive	Problems with formatting or appearance; generally looks unprofessional or sloppy

Reflective report

This is a brief text addressed to me, and for me only, which reflects on the service learning project and the success of your engagement with your clients. You are encouraged to provide as much detail as you like. At a minimum, I expect you to cover the following:

- A quick recap of the most important experiences you had while completing the assignment.
- An evaluation of your clients—were they helpful to you? Did they respond to your requests for more information with reasonable speed? Did they offer any insight or assistance which was extremely useful? Did they support the service-learning experience?
- An evaluation of yourself—in what areas did you really excel? What things will you do differently on your next editing project? What things will you do in the same way?

Tips

- Start this assignment early and work on it a little at a time.
- Since there was far too much late work in the first part of the semester, I feel obligated to remind you that late work incurs a point penalty unless you request extra time in advance.
- Your minimum content should be 40 pages for a light edit, or 20 pages for a substantive edit. Adjust this number upward if your document contains a lot of illustrations or is composed with a lot of whitespace. Adjust it downward if you're dealing with something heinous. See me if you are unsure if you've got enough stuff to edit.
- When you meet with a (prospective) client, **be as professional as possible**. You don't have to wear a suit to meetings—but you'll definitely be treated with more respect if you break from the pajamas-and-Cubs-cap which passes for *haute couture* at Western.
- If you are working with a large organization, ask one or two people to be your client representatives. Work directly with them as much as possible—be polite, but avoid getting feedback or directions from other folks. This can cause serious miscommunication problems.
- Make copies like mad—don't mark up the only copy of a document you have. (This lesson learned from the vulture portfolio.)
- I have designed this project with individual work in mind. I'm willing to allow small teams of students to work together, though I will be strict about methodology (e. g. I don't want to have to worry about one student doing all the work). If you want to collaborate, **see me immediately**.
- If you have questions about a document not answered by our textbooks or library research, I have reference books which might be able to help.

Enclosures

1. Letter to prospective client from me
2. Draft of evaluation form