

Vulture portfolio assignment

ENG 483, Spring 2004, Bradley Dilger

In this assignment, you get a chance to be a vulture of a pedantic sort. Assemble a portfolio of six to eight documents which need editing for various reasons. Perform the editing tasks, and write up a brief description of the work you completed for each piece.

Start with one of each of the following documents:

1. A newspaper or magazine article
2. A syllabus (not one of mine)
3. A flyer or other short text from a community or campus organization

Fill out your portfolio with three to five other documents of your choice. You should select a variety of texts, cultivating a wide span of styles and content. Anything is fair game—signage, church bulletins, take-out menus, a textbook excerpt—whatever you come across in your daily life.

You should engage in several types of editing activities. Select one document from the first group for a substantive edit (as described in “The Levels of Edit”). Perform a second substantive edit on a document from the second group. Perform a “triage edit” (described on Einsohn 19-21) on one document as well. For the rest of your documents, perform a “medium edit” (see the table on Einsohn 12 for a quick explanation), or pick a midrange level from “The Levels of Edit.”

Use standard editors’ marks, and follow the editorial practices Einsohn suggests, as well as the editing procedure you are developing based on her work. If you include editorial queries, do your best to conceptualize the writer accurately. However, since you will likely have little access to the writer, you might be better off making changes yourself.

For this assignment, we aren’t concerned with about the management associated with editing. The focus here should be quality and completeness of editing. Also, we will refer editorial queries to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (yes, even for the newspaper article) since it is the manual available to all of us, and since we are learning its conventions this semester. When completing service learning projects, management and appropriate selection of style manuals will be considered.

Presentation

- Place your collected, edited documents in a binder or folder of some kind.
- Create an annotated table of contents which indicates the documents you’ve found, the level of edit applied, and a brief description of the problems you focused on. One or two paragraphs of description should be adequate for each edit-piece.
- If you select documents which are difficult to mark up legibly, use a breakout or bubble technique so it’s possible to understand your edits. Alternately, scan or type the text and edit that copy. See Einsohn and *Chicago* for suggestions.

The draft

Four edit-pieces are required for the draft; you need not complete the editing on all of them. However, I strongly encourage you to complete as much of the work as possible before submitting the draft portfolio.



Note that presentation and document diversity are not assigned point values on the draft. However, I will comment on these areas as I review drafts.

I have not yet had time to do this assignment myself, and will be working on it at the same time you are completing your drafts. Consequently, I might revise the assignment a bit after the draft. If everybody is moving through their editing quickly and accurately, I reserve the right to require a few more edit-pieces. On the other hand, if I've set the bar too high, I'll drop it a bit.

Assessment

Your work will be assessed using the following criteria. Values indicated in parentheses apply to draft and final versions (e. g. draft; final). The draft is worth 50 points; the final 200.

Final portfolios with too few edit-pieces, or which divulge from the formal requirements, will be penalized 20 points per omission.

<i>Area evaluated</i>	<i>Optimal</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Thoroughness in editing, given the level of edit (20; 60)	One or fewer minor problems which should be addressed are not corrected	Several minor or one major problem remain which should be addressed at the given level	Numerous serious problems remain in document—far more than appropriate for edit level
Accuracy in editing (20; 60)	No errors introduced by editing; style and content are altered only if absolutely necessary; conventional editing marks used	Some errors introduced; style or content are affected in minor ways, or strongly in a few places; editing marks sometimes irregular or illegible	Editing introduces several new errors; style of author unnecessarily affected; editing marks often hard to follow
Match of level claimed and performed (10; 40)	Level of edit noted in table of contents clearly shapes editorial decision-making	Editing of document either too intensive or not intensive enough for advertised level	Far too much or too little editing performed
Presentation (0; 25)	Well-organized and presented, with clear and detailed annotations in table of contents	A few problems with presentation, and perhaps low detail, but nothing which interferes with understanding	Problems with formatting or appearance; few or no annotations in table of contents
Diversity of documents selected (0; 15)	A heterogeneous collection of content, several different lengths of text, and a variety of problems and qualities	Two of the documents presented are more or less interchangeable	Little or no diversity in length, content, or quality of edit-pieces

“Vulture portfolio” name inspired by Bill Williamson (wj dot williamson at uni dot edu).