

Problems frequently noted on the vulture portfolio drafts

Handout from Spring 2005—avoid these mistakes the first time!

Here are big problems I noted on multiple vulture portfolio drafts. Do your best to eliminate these mistakes. If you have specific questions about your portfolio, please contact me. I will happily discuss your draft—just email me, come to my office hours, or make an appointment.

Copymarking errors are noted on the other side of this handout.

- x **Selected edit-pieces don't meet base requirements.** Have you included a syllabus? Do you include a *Western Courier* article? Is your *Courier* article a feature or opinion story (no news stories, please). Do your documents need editing? Do you have enough documents?
- x **Table of contents is omitted or not annotated.** The portfolio should begin with a table of contents which shows the level of edit used for each piece and explains your reasoning for selecting that edit level.
- x **Unnecessary material is included.** Newspaper or magazine articles should be cut out and/or copied—don't include whole sections or periodicals.
- x **Presentation needs improvement.** Using recycled folders is fine, and you don't have to use plastic sleeves or fancy binders. But don't throw the portfolio together. Put the documents in order, make sure they aren't ruffled or creased, paper-clip related pieces together, tape loose cutouts to letter-size paper, etc.
- x **Editorial changes introduce new errors.** This is a *serious* mistake—if you aren't sure of a change, write a query, look it up, ask me for help, or don't make the change.
- x **Changes alter the meaning of the author's work.** *Every* change needs to be considered carefully—does it change the meaning? If you aren't sure of the meaning of a problematic section, write a query.
- x **Changes don't match the selected level of edit.** Are you editing too much or too little? Are you bringing the same editorial pressure to bear throughout the document?
- x **Queries include no compliments.** You don't have to pander, but including a phrase or two about the author's success goes a long way.
- x **Queries are unnecessary.** Some changes don't need to be cleared by the author. Also, if you're sure of a change, but want to explain it anyway, don't waffle—assert your authority.

Copymarking mistakes on the vulture portfolio drafts

Mind those copymarks! See the other side of this handout for more substantive problems. Here are some issues I can demonstrate:

1. When deleting or inserting at the end of a sentence, always rewrite the punctuation period.
2. need to capitalize letters? use a triple underline, not a single underline—that's for italics.
3. Deletion marks should be multiple scratch-outs or single strokes with a tail. Be neat!
4. Don't confuse the marks used for deletion marks with marks Used For Lower Case.
5. If you change your mind about an edit, use the "stet" copymark. If the mark creates any doubt, write a query which makes your decision to cancel the change clear.
6. Every insertion should include a caret. Don't just write text.
7. Double check marks which are slightly different than usual like hyphens, parentheses, and dashes. Of course, this is not an inclusive list.

Additionally:

- ✓ At this point, there is no shame in keeping your book open to the page which shows the list of copymarks—you will learn them as we keep editing.
- ✓ You're learning, so don't worry about speed—accurate, systematic editing should be your goal.
- ✓ It's a good idea to differentiate queries from other marks in some way (circling them, including a prefix, highlighting them, etc).
- ✓ If you set up a system of your own for queries, stick to it; don't change it from manuscript to manuscript or in the middle of a document. (Plan your editing in advance!)
- ✓ Use a pencil. If you erase any marks, make sure to erase them completely.
- ✓ Stray marks made by the author or by another writer need to be erased, whited out, or otherwise labeled to prevent confusion.