



Chartered
Institute of
Editing and
Proofreading

CIEP Syllabus for the Basic Editorial Test

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1 Introduction

The CIEP basic editorial test covers:

- Professional practice
- Editorial knowledge and judgement.

The test is based on typical practice in English-language publishing, as covered in sources such as those listed in Section 4. The CIEP basic editorial test can be used by various editorial professionals, including project managers, production editors, commissioning editors, subeditors and other journalists, typesetters, designers, trainers and indexers, as well as proofreaders and copyeditors, in their applications to upgrade their membership grades.

This syllabus covers a general range of topics that are considered essential for editorial professionals to know, even if they do not usually, or yet, work on them. While many editors do not work for traditional publishers, or do so rarely, it is important that professionals at the highest grades of CIEP membership are aware of the issues, terminology and practice of traditional publishing and equivalents as a solid foundation in the industry.

The basic editorial test is meant to assess editorial professionals in following typical publishing practice using English, and requires only very limited knowledge of other languages and practice. Someone who has successfully completed the CIEP's Proofreading 1: Introduction to Proofreading and Proofreading 2: Headway courses, or Copyediting 1: Introduction and Copyediting 2: Headway, or equivalents, and gained 500 hours' experience dealing with a range of different editorial matter may be expected to have reached the threshold for passing the basic test (the pass mark is 75%).

Where examples are given, these are not exhaustive, but the relevant test questions will be based mainly on examples similar to those in the current CIEP editorial syllabus.

2 Professional practice

Everyone in the CIEP has agreed to abide by the Membership Codes and should know what they say. This section of the syllabus addresses the professional practice of suppliers or employees, clients or managers, editors, proofreaders and project managers, with basic awareness of the professional practice of typesetters/designers, indexers, translators and permissions specialists.

Members of the CIEP must be able to demonstrate that they:

	Description	Examples
2.1	are aware of and take seriously their responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to client, author, reader • to the CIEP • to self
2.2	understand business management and follow good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • terms & conditions • formal and informal contracts • payment • record-keeping • data protection responsibilities
2.3	understand publishing workflow and production	who does what, when and how
2.4	know how to collaborate	good practice in communication, consideration for others and responsibility in meeting requirements
2.5	communicate well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond promptly • raise queries or problems as soon as they become obvious • take care to communicate politely in a sufficiently clear, detailed, comprehensive and timely way • avoid errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation



	Description	Examples
2.6	keep records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• matters agreed• documents handled• work done• decisions taken• queries• income• allowable expenses and tax liabilities• bank accounts• hardware and software details
2.7	can manage their time successfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand and respect schedules and budgets
2.8	understand the basics of file or document management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be aware of and apply good practice in naming and versions• deal appropriately with different file formats• use Track Changes in Word and appropriate markup tools on PDF
2.9	are able to protect their (and their clients') files against loss, corruption or confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• saving versions of files• backing up files, to the cloud or external hard drive as appropriate• running adequate anti-virus software and anti-malware
2.10	are aware of basic legal questions that are likely to arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• copyright• moral rights• plagiarism• libel• acknowledgements



	Description	Examples
2.11	understand and can apply markup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eg ISO 5776 or BS 5261• Track Changes in Word• PDF comments and tools• PDF tools
2.12	understand and can apply editorial standards in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eg ISO 5776 or BS 5261• Track Changes in Word• PDF comments and tools• PDF tools
2.13	understand the possible extent of a proofreader's and copyeditor's remit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• follow instructions• apply editorial standards and good practice, in context and using judgement• raise appropriate queries• deal with redundancy, omission, errors and inconsistencies• do all of this within the limits of schedule, budget, brief and legal requirements
2.14	can explain the nature, extent and limitations of proof-editing	
2.15	are aware of the typical contents of an editorial brief	what can be expected and what could be included, for proofreader or copyeditor
2.16	are aware of the typical elements of a house style and can extend or create a systematic style sheet for a specific job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what can be expected and what is usually essential• numbers

3 Editorial knowledge and judgement

Membership of the CIEP implies a claim to the basic knowledge needed in publishing and also implies good editorial judgement. This section of the syllabus addresses the editorial knowledge and judgement needed by all copyeditors and proofreaders.

Members of the CIEP need to have basic knowledge of the symbols, terminology and practice that they may meet, and awareness of variations, in:

	Description	Examples
3.1	types of published material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prelims • table of contents • headings • running/body text • lists • quoted matter • links • URLs • tables • flowcharts • artwork/images • captions • footnotes and endnotes • bibliographies and reference lists • appendices
3.2	types of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general non-fiction • fiction • guides • manuals • websites • reports • public information



	Description	Examples
3.3	house styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• typical styles/variations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">» numerals from 10, 11, 21, 100» elision in number spans/ranges» treatment of dates» measurements» units» single/double quotes» first-line indent or line space» -ise/-ize» , e.g.,/ e.g./eg» approach to hyphenation» how much punctuation• be able to follow a given style and brief, and to create a style sheet• recognise that different publishers have different house styles
3.4	quotations, citations and references	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be able to recognise author-date, numbered and short-title systems• be aware of typical styles/variations (data required, ordering/punctuation of data, elision, capitalisation)• know the difference between a reference (details of a source or authority) a citation (cross-reference to the source or authority) and a quotation (wording taken from a source or authority)• understand how to treat quotations



	Description	Examples
3.5	editorial terminology	know the meaning and significance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• callouts• extent, prelims, running head• note indicator/note cue/note marker• quotation marks/quotes/inverted commas• extract/displayed quotation• ellipsis• solidus/oblique/forward slash• font and typeface• minimum capitals• recto and verso• caret• rule• special sorts• stet• plain English• sentence case and title case
3.6	layout terminology	know the meaning and application of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• indent• hard/soft return• headword• run on• tab• em, pica and point (pt)• subscript/inferior and superscript/superior• justification, align/range• portrait, landscape• typesetting/layout/design/pagination



	Description	Examples
3.7	coding or styling of typescript layout, formatting and elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word styles• H1, H2• ... • LIST• <Fig. 1 here>, <Table 2 near here>
3.8	image terminology	know the meaning and significance of, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• figure• diagram• map/plan• caption• resolution• pixel• graph
3.9	IT terminology	be aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• operating systems (Windows PC/Mac)• software (Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat, anti-virus, browsers, email)• housekeeping (anti-virus, updates, backing up)• file formats• file size• cloud services• macros
3.10	typefaces	be aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reasons to use a specific style of typeface while editing• serif and sans serif• distinction between typeface and font



	Description	Examples
3.11	numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to check arithmetic totals • calculate average/area/percentage
3.12	abbreviations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of short forms being spelt out at first mention • be aware how to treat all-caps, acronyms, units, contractions • understand common abbreviations in publishing (rom., ital., t.o., t.b., n.p., MS, TS, u/c, l/c, p./pp., l./ll., et al., ibid., fig./figs, ch., URL)
3.13	symbols	understand, use and name symbols, including & © ° × ÷ + − * † ‡ # %
3.14	usual editorial practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum capitals or capitals on all significant words • numbers in words/at start of sentence • single/double quotes • serial comma • elision/reduction in number spans/ranges • hyphenation and adverbs • use of small capitals • limited use of upper case/italics/bold • use of hyphens, en/em rules and parenthetical dashes • orphans/widows • between ... and, from ... to (not from + en rule) • paragraphing (indent/line space) in print, smaller type for notes/extracts, simple tables
3.15	spacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and use spacing • leading • indentation • non-breaking space/hyphen



	Description	Examples
3.16	understand and use punctuation correctly	? ! " ' "" - . , ... : ; - - — () [] / apostrophes
3.17	languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know and order Roman alphabet, recognise other characters • handle diacritics/accents (acute, grave, circumflex, cedilla, tilde, stroke, umlaut) • be aware of alternative transcriptions (al-Qaida, Mao Tse-tung, Kirghiz, Mumbai) • know very common foreign-language terms/names (trompe l'oeil, Schadenfreude, piazza)
3.18	general knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise common units (A, Hz, kg, l, m, s, V, W, in., ft, lb, oz.) • recognise globally significant culture, terms and names (major celebrities, cities, rivers, businesses, institutions) • place and spell countries and other geographical locations, be aware of where to find answers on the latest or historical geographical names • be aware of controversy (creationism, homoeopathy, civil rights) • spot large errors of scale (a man weighs 7kg, a town 6 mm away)
3.19	well-known names	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • famous people with possible misspellings • leading companies with possible misspellings
3.20	reference sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use sources with discrimination • be aware of the content in hyphenation dictionaries, spelling dictionaries, corpora and style guides (eg New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors and The Chicago Manual of Style)



	Description	Examples
3.21	judging sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• does content appear correct?• is content appropriate for context?• if doubtful: flag, query or change?• is your change justified and appropriate?• correct any confusable vocabulary
3.22	judging voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respect author's voice, but is it suited to the content and the target/likely audience? Is it appropriate for context?• making changes in keeping with context, house style and author sensitivity
3.23	judging conciseness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eliminating redundancy/repetition• if space is limited or layout is fixed, can you fit any change into the available space without causing a new problem?
3.24	Judging client queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• when, what and how to query• how many queries are appropriate• judging how and when to use online resources and which are to be trusted• formulating clear, concise, useful questions

4 Sources

The CIEP editorial test is based on typical practice in English-language publishing such as the example sources below generally applicable to the UK, UK and Australia, along with this syllabus. To pass the basic test, it is not necessary to have studied all the sources listed nor any one of them in its entirety. You can certainly look things up in any of your resources during the test, but you should have a working knowledge of the contents beforehand.

These sources are addressed mainly to proofreaders and copyeditors, but the CIEP basic editorial test represents the knowledge and practice that all members of the CIEP should know or be aware of as a standard that can be applied to all editorial professionals.

	Description
4.1	The CIEP Membership Codes: https://www.ciep.uk/about-the-ciep/membership-codes.html
4.2	CIEP courses: Proofreading 1, 2 and 3; Copyediting 1, 2 and 3
4.3	Top tips for editorial professionals: https://www.ciep.uk/knowledge-hub/top-tips.html
UK	
4.4	National Occupational Standards SKS PUB19 (Edit Content) and SKS PUB20 (Proofread Content): https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/PublishedNos-old/SKSPUB19.pdf https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/PublishedNos-old/SKSPUB20.pdf National Occupational Standards relating to tasks members may be undertaking: https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/en/nos-finder?urn=&keywords=&suite=894
4.5	ISO 5776: Symbols for text proof correction (the international standard)
4.6	BS 5261: Copy preparation and proof correction – Specification for typographic requirements, marks for copy preparation and proof correction, proofing procedure (the British standard)



	Description
4.7	<i>New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors</i>
4.8	<i>New Hart's Rules: The Oxford Style Guide</i>
4.9	<i>Butcher's Copy-editing</i>
4.10	<i>Fowler's Modern English Usage</i>
USA	
4.11	<i>The Chicago Manual of Style</i>
4.12	<i>The Associated Press Stylebook</i>
4.13	<i>Garner's Modern English Usage</i>
Canada	
4.14	<i>The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing</i>
4.15	<i>The Copyeditor's Handbook</i>
4.16	<i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i>
4.17	<i>Guide to Canadian English Usage</i>
Australia	
4.18	<i>Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers</i>
4.19	<i>The Australian Editing Handbook</i>
4.20	<i>The Editor's Companion</i>
4.21	<i>The Cambridge Guide to Australian English Usage</i>