

## What to consider and to do as copyeditor

- **Copyediting is the step between acceptance and layout.** Reading a paper through the lens of a copyeditor is different from the way you read a paper as a scientist. The copyeditor must place the focus on correct and clear language, typos and other errors as well as formal/technical consistency. This requires very careful reading and a kind of obsessive attention to detail. Papers in poor English will not be accepted, which means that a big overhaul of the language used will not be necessary.
- However, copyediting is not limited to finding issues concerning language. In case of any questions that cannot be resolved without the author (unclear meaning, contradictions, missing reference etc.), **please add a comment/question**. When forwarding proofs we will inform the author that there are queries that need to be addressed. Usually this will be handled at the proof stage without further involvement of the copyeditor.
- **How does the process get started?** The editor will send an email with the text of the paper to the copyediting/layout board and ask who is able to perform copyediting within the next 72 hours. The board member who first responds/agrees (with cc to all) will serve as copyeditor of this paper. The text sent by email just serves to document the length of paper and quality of language. It does not necessarily constitute the complete paper, because separate figures, tables or supplementary materials are not included, so please do not start copyediting based on the file attached to the email. The editor will then assign the manuscript to the copyeditor via our online journal management system where all files can be downloaded. The copyeditor also needs to upload the final copyedited paper via the electronic system. Please refer to our guide **“Uploading a copyedited paper”** (which is attached to this document) for step-by-step instructions on how to use the system.
- **First of all, enable track changes in the Word file.** The file including changes will be forwarded to the author to document copyediting.
- One of the five dimensions of freedom of Free Neuropathology is Free Formatting. This means that the author enjoys the freedom of formatting the paper (style of references, subheadings, tables etc.) as he or she likes. However, formatting must be **consistent** throughout the paper. The copyeditor thus checks for consistent formatting and corrects occasional deviations from the author’s chosen format.
- Check spelling, grammar and punctuation (but do not be too dogmatic concerning punctuation, but unequivocally wrong punctuation should be corrected). Correct only in case of typos, poor English, apparently wrong

wording, or incorrect grammar. Wording can be changed if the text reads better or appears clearer while the meaning is preserved.

- Both British English and American English is fine, but use should be consistent throughout the text.
- Title: All words in lower case, except for first words of title and subtitle and words that are always capitalized (e.g. "Parkinson").
- Authors: Full first names. No titles (MD, Professor etc). Full postal address including email address.
- Make sure that all abbreviations have been defined.
- All references included in the list of references should be cited in the text. If references are cited in the text with names (such as Miller et al. 2019) verify that all are included in the list of references and the names in the text and in the list of references are identical. If references are cited with a year, check that the year is identical both in the text and the list of references. In case of discrepancies, PubMed should be consulted for correct citation.
- **The structure and styling of the references at the end of a paper should also be consistent. It's part of the copyeditor's task to ensure this consistency.** If it is not initially clear which citation style and styling principles were used, please make a decision as to which structural principle can be applied easiest. You're not expected to research every single entry, you should check if there is a discernible structure and how it can be harmonized with a little effort as possible. Occasionally, recent publications do not have page numbers and have not been updated. Please verify these references in PubMed and update, if possible.
- Right now we do not request doi's for references. It is fine if the authors provide doi's, but this must be consistent throughout the list, i.e. either all references should have doi's (if available) or none should.
- All figures should have a legend. Make sure that all labels (parts of figures, arrows, asterisks etc.) are explained in the legend.
- Formal appearance should be consistent throughout paper (punctuation, citing and format of references).
- If possible, please run an automatic spelling check using Word.

- Don't spend any time dealing with fonts and sizes – this will be harmonized during layout.
- Names of genes and italics/capitals/species etc. are a very complicated issue. It is theoretically possible, but practically almost impossible to do it perfectly. It is certainly good if human gene names are written in italics and capitals if the gene is meant. Again, consistency within the paper is most important.
- We aim to offer ultrashort turnaround times. Twenty-four hours are perfect for copyediting, while a turnaround time of 72 hours is ok.
- We consider acknowledging the copyeditor in the published paper. If you prefer not being acknowledged, please let us now.