copy editor  Seldom a formal title.  
Also: copy editing, copy edit.
WHY STUDY COPY EDITING?

Marketable skills

- attention to detail
- teamwork
- ability to meet deadlines
- time management
- problem solving
- cultural awareness
WHAT IT’S NOT

• a headline writing contest
• a current events contest
• a spelling contest
WHAT IT IS

a contest that focuses on editing, including
• knowledge of current events
• grammar, spelling, punctuation, style
• sentence structure, including passive voice and word choice
• media law and ethics
HIGH-LEVEL EDITING

- Are there any legal issues (libel)?
- Did the reporter interview the right people?
- Did the reporter interview enough people?
- Did the reporter ask the right questions?
- Does the story cover all sides?
- Is the story in context?
Expect temperatures to be at coldest on Friday morning, near freezing.

By Patrick Beach
pbeach@statesman.com

Yes, it’ll be at least 20 degrees cooler Tuesday than it was Monday, but it’s not slice-open-a-tauntaun-like-Luke-Skywalker-in-“The-Empire-Strikes-Back” cold.
On the other hand, you’ll

CORRECTION

A story about Austin’s cold weather on Tuesday’s Page B1 incorrectly identified the character who sliced open a tauntaun to stay warm in “The Empire Strikes Back.” It was Han Solo.
MID-LEVEL EDITING

- Does the story flow well? Has the reporter made good use of transitions?
- Are sentences structured correctly?
- Has writer made appropriate use of passive voice?
- Is vocabulary appropriate for the audience?
- Is math correct?
- Is geography correct?
CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

- Avoiding sexist writing
- Being insensitive
- Cultural awareness

Officials at Mesquite High School in Mesquite, Texas, have recalled their recently distributed school yearbooks after it was discovered the books described some students with special needs as "mentally retarded," KDFW-TV reports.

"Some of the disabilities the students in the Special Education Program have are being blind, deaf or non-verbal," school spokeswoman Laura Jobe told theion, describing the offending language.

According to KDFW, school officials confiscated the yearbooks after parents and students objected to the language and called it "appalling and disgraceful."

"There was an oversight in the editing approval process," Jobe told the Dallas Morning News. "Those who work inside the special education department know these requirements."
mentally disabled, intellectually disabled, developmentally disabled  The preferred terms, not mentally retarded.

disabled, handicapped  In general, do not describe an individual as disabled or handicapped unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If a description must be used, try to be specific.
**firefighter, fireman**  The preferred term to describe a person who fights fire is firefighter.

**mailman**  Mail or letter carrier is preferable.

**transsexual**  Use transgender to describe individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex or present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth.
LOW-LEVEL EDITING

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Style
STYLE
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LET’S LOOK AT A TEST
PART 1

COPY EDITING CONTEST
DISTRICT 2017

DIRECTIONS: This test is divided into three sections. Write all your responses as indicated. You have 15 minutes.

PART 1: Circle the correct response. (1 pt. each)

1. The editor said she would go interview the principle / principal about the policy.
2. Reporters often elude / allude to academic studies the public can’t comprehend.
3. We had less / fewer than $1,000 in the student travel account.
4. SpaceX will build a spaceship that can fly faster then / than the speed of light.
5. Before the movie, they played a sneak peek / peak of the next Star Wars film.
6. The am / a.m. band practice is mandatory.
7. The girl was only 16 / sixteen years old when she got admitted to college.
8. The meteorologist said its / it's going to rain today — with 50 percent certainty.
9. Queen Elizabeth began her reign / rein / rain in 1953.
10. The Great Gatsby was set in the 1920s / 1920's.
11. The actor and his director seldom agree with one another / each other.
12. Neither the choir members nor the director is / are going.
13. First place went to whoever / whomever got the highest score objectively.
15. The Brazos and Colorado Rivers / rivers never intersect in Texas.
PART 1

GRADING

There is some subjectivity involved in all editing. If you find an error in the answer key, report it to the UIL office.

PART 1: Circle the correct response. (1 pt. each)

1. The editor said she would go interview the principle/principal about the policy.
2. Reporters often elude/allude to academic studies the public can’t comprehend.
3. We had less/fewer than $1,000 in the student travel account.
4. SpaceX will build a spaceship that can fly faster then/than the speed of light.
5. Before the movie, they played a sneak peek/peak of the next Star Wars film.
6. The 8 am/a.m. band practice is mandatory.
7. The girl was only 16/sixteen years old when she got admitted to college.
8. The meteorologist said its/it’s going to rain today — with 50 percent certainty.
9. Queen Elizabeth began her reign/rein/rain in 1953.
10. The Great Gatsby was set in the 1920s/1920’s.
11. The actor and his director seldom agree with one another/each other.
12. Neither the choir members nor the director is/are going.
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Tips for judges

Part 1

There is some subjectivity involved in all editing. If you find an error in the answer key, report it to the UIL office.
UIL COPY EDITING DISTRICT 2017

Part 2: Edit the following sentences to eliminate FOUR errors in wordiness as well as any errors in AP style, grammar, spelling or punctuation in each of the five items. Use clearly understood editing symbols. (2 pts. each)

1. Having won a combined total of nineteen Olympic and World Championship metals, Simone Biles is the most decorated American gymnast.

2. The 3rd in line to the British throne, Prince George of Cambridge, now three years old, was born to Kate Middleton and Prince Harry in 2003.

3. The reporter asked “Where is Aleppo?” But libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson had some trouble recognizing the name of a major Syrian city.

4. Due to the fact that the 2 parties differed so greatly, they met on the island of Hawaii to develop a mutual agreement.

5. Caleb Martin, a sophomore, said “every kid’s dream was to catch Pokemon”.

There is some subjectivity in all editing. If a student finds another “error” or rewrites a sentence, the judges will have to consider how to award points.
ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Dak Prescott smiled widely and playfully shoved Tony Romo after the ten year starter the Dallas rookie replaced finished his only drove of the regular season with a touchdown pass.

The Cowboys (13-3) don’t anticipate using Romo in the play-offs. Prescott and fellow 1st-year sensation Ezekiel Elliott will be the focal point regardless of the opponent in the 1st divisional game at AT&T Stadium, which opened in 2009. The Dallas Cowboys last one their NFL championship in 1996.

Cowboys Owner Tom Landry has been bragging all season about the chemistry in a delicate situation between their quarterbacks - along with the closeness of the rest of the locker room - and is counting on those bonds when Dallas opens their play-off’s series at home January 15.

“Eyes are all one the play-off game” Prescott said, “we will wait to see who our opponent is. But in the mean time, we will get better this week, makes ourselves better in every way that we can. Then when we figure out who it is, continue to get better and ready for that opponent”

“its not really a time for reflection,” Garrett said. “This is a time to get are eyes forward and get back to work.”
PART 3

GRADING

The Dallas Cowboys is a team name. “Team names and musical group names that are plural take plural verbs. The Yankees are in first place. The Jonas Brothers are popular.”

Tom Landry is not the owner of the Dallas Cowboys. And owner isn’t capitalized. “Owner. Not a formal title. Always lowercase: Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones.”

Editing a direct quote requires discussion with the reporter. It’s better to change direct quotes with errors into indirect quotations. Always make it clear who is speaking.

Tips for judges

Part 3
This section is ONLY ranked to break a tie in the combined scores of parts 1 and 2. Assign no points.

Judges should compare the papers of students who tied, ranking them accordingly.

When grading part 3, holistically read the changes the student indicated starting with the highest level of editing. Remember, there are multiple levels of copy editing. The notes off to the side on the answer key indicate higher levels of editing errors. Those should be awarded more value if the student fixes the problem or indicates it should be fixed.

• Highest level: Are there any legal or ethical issues with the story?
• Middle level: Does the story use the right sources? Does it flow?
• Lowest level: Grammar, spelling, punctuation, style

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Modified from an Associated Press article distributed in January of 2017.
Their homes are in the northern port city of Haifa, one of the areas that was / were hit hardest.
The relative clause beginning with “that” describes the plural noun “areas,” so the relative pronoun “that” — the subject of the clause — is plural and needs a plural verb. To test the grammar, turn the syntax around: “Of the areas that were hardest hit, Haifa was one.”
CONTEST DATES 2017-2018

- Invitational A — Jan. 5 - Feb. 3
- Invitational B — Feb. 9 - March 10
- District — March 19-24
- Region — April 13-14
- State — May 3-5
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