Module 5(a): The BSI symbols

In this module you will switch from digital documents to 'hard copy', or paper, proofs. You will learn how to mark these using the publishing industry's long-established and concise method of correcting them: the British Standards Institution (BSI, BS) symbols for proof correction (BS 5261 Part 2 2005). They are independent of any language, and so are universally comprehensible.

Some countries – the USA and Germany, for example – have their own system. Nevertheless, we use the BSI system because it covers so much so well (and the International Standards Organization's symbols are very similar!).

Here we cover:

- what you will need for proofreading paper proofs against copy
- how to interpret what the copy-editor has marked
- good methods for marking up hard copy
- a list of the most common BSI symbols, with examples of how they are used
- the system of using different colours to mark amendments
- transferring information from the copy to the proof
- revised proofs – what happens to proofs after you've corrected them
- judging whether to allow changes asked for by someone else, such as the author.

We will practise working with the most commonly used symbols:

- insert or substitute
- stet (leave it as it is)
- delete
- one change made more than once in a line
- horizontal and vertical spaces
- transpose
- hyphens, em rules and en rules
- bold and italic
- capitals, small capitals and lower case
- moving left and right, centring
- moving material to another page
- punctuation
- turning an image
- justification
- marking a new line or a new paragraph, or running the text on without a break
- subscript, superscript and non-standard characters.

The symbols can be useful for proofreading in situations outside traditional publishing, too. Consider, for example, a commercial company that produces reports compiled by a committee, where every member of the committee will have input into marking the proof. When every person marks in his or her own way, it is often difficult and time consuming to interpret what each person means by their annotations! Having a list of symbols to use for the most common changes can be a great help in streamlining the proofreading process.

Most commonly the symbols are used when correcting paper proofs, but it is easy to use them digitally as well:

- you can draw the symbols on to a PDF using a graphics tablet and pen, or (if you have a steady hand!) simply using the drawing tools provided with the PDF viewer
- you can draw the symbols individually and save them as 'stamps' in the PDF viewer.

We use these digital methods in the model answers to the exercises in this module, so you can see how versatile this system can be. For an example of handwritten amendment, see the accompanying file 'The BSI symbols in use'.

At first it will feel strange using the symbols, because in effect you are learning a new language. However, with practice you will quickly become familiar with them and appreciate the amount of information they can convey quickly, clearly and unambiguously.

To see how well using the BSI symbols works, look at the file 'The BSI symbols in use' before you proceed any further. Having seen the examples of BSI mark-up, you will have a good idea how your work should look when you work on the exercises in this module.

'Reading against copy'

In this module you will be 'reading against copy' – that is, checking the typeset proof against the edited pages. The author has provided an electronic file (e-file) and a print-out of their text; the copy-editor marks changes directly on to the pages of the print-out, often using the BSI symbols for such items as confirming italic, bold and capitals, and showing precisely where new wording will be inserted; the typesetter then inputs on to the e-file the changes marked by the copy-editor as well as doing the layout and formatting. Because you will have the edited copy to check against, you will be able to determine whose fault each error is – the typesetter's (marked in red) or the copy-editor's (marked in blue). We explain about the colours below.

In a few instances we suggest that you can flag something – in the text or in the margin – by using highlighter. Note that you must not do this if you are going to scan or photocopy the proof to send on: the highlighter will obliterate what is underneath!

Marking by the copy-editor

In addition to marking corrections to spelling, grammar, facts, and so on, the copy-editor will mark the text with instructions to the typesetter – these will concern the layout and format of the various components of the text. Except when working on copy prepared on a publisher's template that has all the design elements set up, the copy-editor will have **coded** the component parts of the publication. This coding identifies the structural elements of the text, to provide information for the designer (who will create the design for each element) and the typesetter (who will then apply the designer's design). The most basic coding is for headings – chapter and section headings.

Coding headings

The copy-editor will code the headings, using some way to distinguish their hierarchy: either in the margin of hard copy or 'tagging' in the text of an e-file. A common system uses 'CH' (or 'ch hd' or 'chap head') to code the **chapter heading** – the chapter number, and the title if any. In multi-author books, in which each chapter is written by a different person (or persons), 'CH' can encompass the author's (or authors') name(s) as well, or these might have their own code.

In journals this equates to the article title and author(s), which would probably be coded 'AT' for article title (and authors). In a dictionary or encyclopaedia the word being defined or the entry's heading is often called a **headword** (abbreviated 'HW').

When chapters are divided into sections and subsections, those headings must be coded as well. A common system is to use capital letters:

- a main heading will be coded 'A'
- a subheading 'B'
- a sub-subheading 'C'

and so on with up to five or even six levels of heading.

An alternative system uses numbers, starting with 1 for the chapter heading and 2 for the main headings:

- h1
- h2
- h3

and so on, where the 'h' stands for 'heading'. Codes written in the margin of hard copy will be in a box or a circle; codes in an e-file will be within square or angle brackets ([and] or < and >).

Journals, too, have text broken up into sections and subsections. There are also often different types of articles, or papers: an editorial, research reports, correspondence, and so on. Their overall titles will be coded as the equivalent of 'CH' (chapter heading).

Extra marking by the copy-editor

Unless there is a fixed design style for all headings (e.g. a book in a series, or an article in a journal), the copy-editor will probably not know how much use of capitals the designer will choose for headings.

What the copy-editor must do is ensure that all spelling, numbers and punctuation are correct, and mark the 'essential capitals', such as proper names, in the headings. Then, even if the design specification instructs that headings must have capitals for just the first letter of the first word, the typesetter will nevertheless capitalise the letters marked by the copy-editor. For example, the name of an organisation – such as the Publishing Training Centre – should retain its capital letters.

Coding other text

Books and journals may contain different items within the text; for example:

- lists
- footnotes
- notes
- extracts from other publications (also called quotations)
- questions.

The copy-editor will mark or code these as well: 'L', 'fn', 'N', 'ext' (or 'quote') and 'Q' are common examples. Again, the copy-editor will advise the designer about these, and the design specification will give the typesetter full typographic instructions.

Note that when an extract or quotation is kept within the regular (running) text, it will have quotation marks. If, though, it is **displayed** (i.e. set apart from the running text), the quotation marks are unnecessary.

In science and maths books, formulae and equations are usually displayed.

Numbered headings

In books with many cross-references it would be costly to have to insert their page numbers at proof stage. (Unless the book is planned page by page, it is impossible to tell what text will appear on which pages until the page proofs are received.) A very practical solution to this problem is to number the first two or three levels of headings and to cross-refer to these numbers. For example:

- the first A heading in Chapter 4 would be numbered 4.1
- the first B heading in that section would be 4.1.1.

To number beyond this level could be confusing for the reader, so alternatives would be

- add a letter for the C heading: 4.1.1.a
- exclude the chapter number, starting with 1 for the first A heading of each chapter; the first B heading would be 1.1.

It is the copy-editor's responsibility to ensure that the numbering sequence is correct: that numbers are neither duplicated nor missed out, and that they follow on correctly. If you are proofreading text with numbered/lettered headings, it is worth doing a quick check routinely; mistakes in numbering are so easy to miss when editing or proofreading.

If you do check them, it's a good idea to do it *before* you begin reading the text itself. Then you can correct any mistakes in the cross-references as you proofread the text.

Lists

Quite a lot of non-fiction books contain lists. They help the reader to see easily aspects that would be clumsy in ordinary running text. Although the copy-editor must make sure that the spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct, it is often unnecessary to mark it for layout (indented lines, alignment, etc.). All the copy-editor has to do is to code the relevant text as 'list', and the typesetter will set it out as indicated in the design spec.

If any lists seem odd or inconsistent, ask your supervisor how far you should go in making adjustments.

Now we move on to marking proofs, reading against the copy-edited copy.

The colours

Red or blue ink

In traditional publishing, errors are corrected in different colours: typesetter errors are marked in red; non-typesetter errors are marked in blue. The marks in blue might be correcting errors (of omission or of commission) by the copy-editor or they could (later) be alterations made by the author at proof stage.

The reason for differentiating between the types of change is that typesetters do not charge for correcting their mistakes. They do not keep detailed accounts of each alteration but will charge on the basis of a fairly accurate estimate of the proportion of red and blue corrections. If, for example, it has taken a typesetter 15 hours to make the amendments, which were two-thirds red and one-third blue, the client will be charged for 5 hours' work; the typesetter will bear the cost of the remaining 10 hours. Another system that typesetters use is to apportion the cost of amendments according to the number of lines involved in each change.

On paper proofs, instructions to the typesetter (e.g. where to place a footnote or an illustration or table) should also be written in red ink so that the typesetter will clearly see that this is something for her or him to attend to. If you use pencil (see below), the instruction might be misinterpreted as a query to the proof collator (see below) or author, and overlooked.

Knowing how to colour-code the different sorts of amendments can be an important part of proofreading work outside traditional publishing. For example, you might find that you are asked to proofread a document on which a different colour is used for each revision (so that everybody knows that they are working on the same/correct version). You might also find that, if several people have editorial input to a document, such as a company report, a different colour is assigned to each person so that they can keep track of who has written what.

You might also be asked to provide a percentage breakdown of typesetting errors and editorial corrections and changes: this is helpful information that can show up a weak link in the chain. So the principle of colour-coding is an important one to be aware of, even if you might not always encounter the practice.

Pencil

There may be occasions when you are not sure whether to make a change. In such instances, don't waste time agonising about what to do; mark it in pencil and carry on proofreading. You may find, by the time you have read another few pages, that all is now clear. When, having completed your proofreading, you go back and check your pencil marks, you will usually know exactly what to do. If, however, you are still uncertain about something, you can raise the problem with your supervisor.

The other way to deal with something you don't know how to resolve is to leave it for the **proof collator** – the person who is responsible for combining all versions of the proof into a single version to be sent for amendment. This person might be a more experienced colleague or your supervisor.

If you leave a problem for the proof collator, it is often sensible to pencil in a suggested solution (encircled, with a question mark) than to try to write a note explaining what you think the problem is. But do be sure to make it clear what your query is. Just a pencil question mark in the margin is no help to the person who will have to make the decision. On rare occasions it might be necessary for the proof collator to check with the original author.

Always use pencil for anything that you are not sure about. Then, when the problem or query has been resolved, you can either write the alteration in in ink or rub out the pencil. Do your best to send corrected proofs back as neat and clean as possible. Quite apart from the psychological effect of being faced by a messy proof, it will take the typesetter longer to distinguish the alterations that are required from the items that have been crossed out. Even if your marks are to be transferred to a fresh set of proofs by the proof collator, you should still make sure that your set is neat and clear.

Green

Very rarely you may see a proof with notes in green. This is the colour traditionally used by the typesetter's reader (proofreader) either to raise his or her own queries or to draw attention to matters marked in the edited copy to be dealt with in proof (e.g. a page cross-reference: a page number has to be filled in). We discuss dealing with page cross-references later.

The main reason why you rarely see anything marked in green nowadays is that, in order to cut costs, typesetters don't often use a reader to check the proofs before they are sent to the client – the proofs are **unread**. Another possible reason is that the proofs sent to the publisher may be photocopies of a 'master' set, so everything comes out in black.

Black

Some publishers differentiate not only between typesetter (red) and editorial (blue) amendments but also between changes made by the author at proof stage and those correcting errors by the copy-editor. Because red (and green) is already assigned to the typesetter, black and blue are used for the copy-editor and author changes (in that order, or vice versa). However, unless you are told to use a separate colour for author changes, mark all non-typesetter amendments in blue.

Scanning

Some publishers transmit amended hard-copy proofs to overseas typesetters by scanning the pages and emailing/faxing them. If this is to happen with hard copy proofs you are working on:

- different colours might not transfer (they'll all be black)
- don't use highlighter, as this is likely to make the highlighted item unreadable.

What do I need?

For this module you will be working on hard copy, so please print out the exercise material: the pages of edited copy and the proof. You will also need:

- red and blue pens, plus green pen for annotating your work
- pencil and eraser
- correcting fluid (Tipp-Ex or similar) if you usually use it
- enough desk space for four piles of paper: two for the copy-edited pages beside the proof pages you are working on and two for the pages you have already dealt with.

It will also be useful to have a dictionary beside you, in case you need to verify an unfamiliar or unusual spelling.

We recommend that you use green pen to amend your worked exercises. If you missed something or marked something incorrectly, mark it in now in green. This will help you to see where your weaknesses lie as well as indicating aspects that you should brush up on before attempting the assignment.

Proofreading technique

It is sensible – and helpful to the typesetter – to use both margins to mark amendments: the left margin if the amendment is in the left side of the text; the right margin if the amendment is in the right. If the change is in the centre of the text, it doesn't matter which margin you use but be sure to position the changes in the order in which they appear in the text. The typesetter won't check the context, so won't know if the order in which you've made your marks is illogical, and the resulting mix-up will be your fault.

Learning the symbols

You will be introduced to the symbols a few at a time as you work through this module. These symbols (and earlier versions of them) have been in use for many years in the publishing industry, as they have a range of significant benefits when they are used correctly:

- they are quick to write
- they convey a great deal of information concisely and without ambiguity
- they are universally comprehensible, as they do not rely on language to give instructions.

The file 'The BSI symbols' lists the current (2005) symbols, grouped according to the types of changes required. Have a look at them now, to see how much they cover – there is almost always a symbol to indicate precisely what is needed. The accompanying file 'The BSI symbols in use' demonstrates how each of the BSI symbols is used – neatly and clearly.

Although they have been around for some time now, there is still some resistance to using the current BSI symbols. Not all designers/typesetters are up to date with the 2005 symbols, and some don't use them at all. If you suspect that this might be the case with a job, compile a list of the symbols you have used with a brief explanation of what each one means, and send it with the proofs when you return the work.

We recommend that you print out the list of 2005 symbols to keep by you so that you can refer to them easily. You will learn and remember some of them with no difficulty, because they are used a lot; others are needed only occasionally, so check the list rather than guess. An incorrect instruction could result in a costly mistake.

In this module we will concentrate on the most commonly used symbols.

Amending the proof

Positioning your marks in the text and the margins

In the text you mark *where* a change is to be made – an insertion or crossing out to delete or to substitute (replace). In the margin you mark *what* the change is. Don't be tempted to mark only in the text: the typesetter will look only in the margins for amendments; if nothing is marked in the margin, the typesetter will assume no change is needed. This enables them to work quickly, by visually scanning the margins of each page to see where their attention is required.

Make all your margin marks follow the same order as in the text, reading from left to right. The typesetter will match up each margin mark with its corresponding mark in the text. If you mix up the order, you can end up with some very interesting – and unintended – results!

Placing the symbol in the margin

Don't put your amendments too far from the text, making it hard to see which line they relate to. They shouldn't be too close, either, of course: when amending something at or near the beginning of a line, leave room in the left margin for another possible amendment nearby.

When you mark a change in the margin, the relevant symbol (the 'insert' symbol or a downstroke) should come at the end – signifying that this is the end of the alteration. It does not matter very much if you place the symbol before the instruction in the margin, provided you are *consistent*. The 'insert' or the 'substitute' symbol, for example, acts as a divider between instructions if there is more than one change to be made on a line. For this course, though, please follow the rule of placing the symbol at the end.

Opinion is divided as to whether you should mark a single 'end-of-amendment' downstroke (like the substitute symbol: see below) after each instruction in the margin. Technically, we should, so that is

what we want you to do in this course. (The exceptions to this rule are the 'insert' symbol, the 'delete' symbol and the 'substitute' downstroke: the 'downstroke' comprises part or all of those symbols.) However, the main thing in all proof correcting is to make sure that each instruction – including the symbol – is neat, clear and unambiguous.

Making your marks clear

Typesetters need to work quickly, so, if your handwriting is not clear, adopt a print-like style for amendments – but use capitals *only* if they are required.

For clarity, make the substitute and insert symbols slightly larger than the letters they follow; in particular, your insert symbol should not be confused with the letter 'h'. On the same principle, make your delete symbol match the size of the insert symbol. Be careful, too, that your space symbol doesn't look like a 'T' or a 'Y'. Sometimes you have to exaggerate things to distinguish between, say, a letter 's' and a numeral '5'.

Make sure that you distinguish between all easily confused **characters** (letters, numerals and punctuation), such as capital 'I', lower-case 'l' and numeral '1'; between lower-case 'i' and a semicolon; and check that your 'n' can't be mistaken for 'u' or an 'm' for a 'w', and vice versa.

Very occasionally you might find it necessary to write a brief note to the typesetter because there is no symbol that says precisely what you mean. Be sure that you encircle any such instruction; otherwise you might find your words incorporated in the next proof stage – or even in the final document! The encircling tells the typesetter that your instruction is not to be typeset, and it is the only way that a typesetter can tell the difference between wording that *is* to be typeset and explanations or instructions that must *not* be. (This is identical to the way in which we encouraged the use of <angle brackets> when working on digital material.)

Look carefully at what you have marked to make sure that it will be clear to the person reading it. Think of the typesetter as a computer that is going to do exactly what you wrote, not what you meant. Is what you have marked crystal clear to someone who doesn't know what you were thinking when you wrote it? Many typesetters are very experienced people who often perform miracles of interpretation. But they shouldn't have to – and the harder it is to interpret what you mean, the more mistakes they will make. Many typesetters are based overseas, and the keyboarder who is implementing your corrections might not have a good grasp of English; they might be correcting proofs from all over the world, marked in different languages, so they will rely on reading corrections letter by letter. If you develop good habits from the start, you will make their job easier and they will do a better job for you.

The BSI symbols that will be used in this module

Let us now start learning the proof-correcting symbols. We demonstrate their use in the accompanying essay, 'The BSI symbols in use'.

The table on the following page shows the symbols that will be covered in this module.

Symbol	Meaning
⅄ ◌	Insert, delete
/	Substitute/end of correction
✓	Stet
◇A	A large insertion/substitution
x2	One change made several times (use exact number)
◡/	Close up (horizontally)
⅄ Y/ T/	Add, substitute, reduce space (along the line)
Y/ ⅃/	Fixed space, thin space
⊔/ ⊐/	Transpose along the line, down the page
⊢⅄ ⊢/	Add or substitute hyphen
⊢Ⓝ⅄ ⊢Ⓜ/	Add or substitute en rule, em rule
⌐/ ⊣/	Change roman into italic, italic into roman
ᴧᴧᴧ/ ᴧᴧᴧ/	Change roman into bold, bold into roman
ᴧᴧᴧ/ ⊣ᴧᴧᴧ/	Change bold into italic, italic into bold
≡/ ≢/	Change lower case to capital, capital to lower case
=/ ≠/	Change lower case to small capital, small cap to l/case
———(	Increase space between lines (mark into margin)
———→	Decrease space between lines (mark into margin)
( )	Close up between lines (mark into margin)
⊏/ ⊐/ ⊏⊐/	Move right, move left, centre
∧ₐ ⁀ᵃ	Subscript, superscript
ᵛ ᵛ	Add or substitute quote marks
⊙ , ⊙ ; ⊙⊙⊙	Full point, comma, colon, semicolon, ellipsis
↻/ 90°	Turn image (show direction and give degree of turn)
⊐ ⊐	Justify, unjustify (bracket the text on the relevant side)
⊢→/	Full measure
⌐ ⊏	New paragraph, new line starting at the left margin
⌐⌐ ⊐	Run on
⊐	Take over (extend into margin)
⊐	Take back (extend into margin)
☐ Ⓝ	Em space, en space

Insert or substitute

The first two symbols to learn are:

⋏   insert: put in something new

and

╱   substitute: take something out and put something else in its place

You will use these much of the time.

Insert

Two examples of how to use the insert symbol are:

'thee' should be 'there': thee͏   r⋏

'show' should be 'shows': show   ⊃s⋏

When you insert a letter (or letters) into the middle of a word or between a word and punctuation, you need only write the insert mark (as shown above for 'there'). The effect of inserting *into* a word is to separate the letters either side to make room for the insert.

If, however, you are inserting a letter (or letters) at the beginning of a word *preceded by a space* or at the end of a word *followed by a space*, you should include with your instruction in the margin the 'close-up' mark ('no space', which looks like a pair of parentheses on their side; discussed later). This will make it clear to the typesetter whether the new letter(s) should be attached to the word on the left or on the right; for instance, in the second example above, the inserted 's' should be closed up to the word on the left (rather than to the next word on the right). It is a small point but is worth making a habit of for occasions when there could be some ambiguity.

Take, for example, inserting 'to' after 'in' – do you want a single word 'into' or two words 'in to'? Even if there is only a tiny possibility of ambiguity, it is far simpler to clarify it here than to have to correct an error in a later proof.

If the 'to' were to be a separate word and we wanted to avoid ambiguity, we would write – in pencil or *very* small – the space symbol (discussed later) on either side, to make this clear to the typesetter:

ʏ to ʏ ⋏

However, there is generally no need for the tiny space symbol either side of an inserted word other than to prevent ambiguity.

When you use the 'close-up' mark to add a letter at the beginning or the end of a word, make sure that you use it on the correct side; think of it as a 'clip' attaching the letter to the word. For example, we can attach 't' to 'hin' on either side, making different words:

t⌣/   /hin   thin (t⌣hin)

hin/   ⌣t/   hint (hin⌣t)

It isn't necessary to mark the close-up sign when inserting 'normal' punctuation; except for an **ellipsis** (three dots with a space either side), there is no instance in which there is a space before punctuation. Use the close-up sign for clarification in cases where the inserted character(s) might or might not be part of the word – as in the 'in to' example above; or when inserting an apostrophe at the *beginning* of a word – as when inserting an apostrophe before Tis to make 'Tis.

Substitute

Some examples of how to use the substitute symbol are:

'than' should be 'then': than   e/

'remmt' should be 'remnant': remmt   nan/

'streew' should be 'straw': streew   a/

From these examples you can see that you may substitute:

- one character for another
- two or more characters for one
- just one character for two or more

all with a single instruction.

When taking out a single character, make sure that the downstroke goes through the middle of it. Don't angle the mark too much, or it may look as though you want to take out the character(s) beside it as well.

If two or more characters are to come out, mark a horizontal line through all of them plus a vertical line at either end (a 'rugby post', as in the third example above). It will then be clear *immediately* to the typesetter exactly which characters are to be removed. Make the vertical lines long, extending into the white space above and below the letters, to make the extent easy for the typesetter to find.

If punctuation is involved, make sure that you mark clearly in the text that the punctuation is included in or excluded from your instruction. For example:

now, ~~however~~ we   though/
now, ~~however~~, we   though/

Occasionally you will encounter a letter that should have an accent with it: you are probably familiar with the grave (è), the acute (é), the cedilla (ç) and the circumflex (ê) in French, the umlaut in German (ä) and the tilde (ñ) in Spanish. If a letter appears without its accent, don't mark the accent to be inserted. The correction must be given as a substitution – take out the unaccented letter and replace it with the accented letter – because this is how the typesetter will make the correction:

cafe   é/

Be aware that some special characters look very similar to each other, and you must not confuse them. For example, a 'hook' or 'ogonek' in Polish (ę) looks very similar to a French cedilla (ç) but is not the same thing; similarly, a rounded 'breve' (ă) is not the same thing as a 'hacek', which is more pointed (ǎ). If in doubt, check.

A large amendment

You might find that you have to insert or replace a chunk of text, which won't fit easily (or at all) in the margin beside the relevant line. When this happens, mark the text in the usual way but write the new text in the margin at the top or bottom of the page. Flag this text by placing a capital A in a diamond beside the insert or substitute symbol in the margin. Repeat the A in a diamond at the beginning of the new text.

If there is another chunk of text to be added on the same page, follow the same procedure (perhaps in the margin at the bottom of the page this time) and using a capital B in the diamond. Use a different letter for each such addition on the same page.

If you have to add material on other pages, begin each page with the letter A in a diamond.

Making the wrong mark: stet

If you realise that you have crossed through the wrong character, don't worry. Just put the **stet** marks (short dashes) underneath what you mistakenly crossed out. That is often sufficient but, if the typesetter might be confused by what you have marked, write the stet symbol in the margin as well:

'Stet' is Latin for 'let it stand' – leave it as it is. We mark this in a different colour: in blue if we made the wrong mark in red, and vice versa. Here is an example of how a character can be crossed out and stetted, where the proofreader crossed out the wrong 'o' to replace it with 'e' and then realised their mistake:

If you write the wrong symbol in the margin, either cross it through neatly or – preferably, to keep the proof as clean as possible – white it out (with Tipp-Ex or similar). Don't forget to replace it with the correct mark, though! Write it in in pencil and come back to it if you don't want to wait for the correcting fluid to dry. However, it is better, if you can, to write the correct symbol on a clean part of the paper rather than over the correcting fluid, as it can flake off or the ink smear and your amendment is lost or smudged.

Delete

Another symbol that is used quite a lot is 'delete': take something out.

Some examples of how to use the delete symbol are:

'elbow' should be 'bow':   e|bow

'boote' should be 'boot':   boote

'abbroad' should be 'abroad':   abbroad

The 2005 BSI revision did away with 'delete and close up', which would have been marked when deleting one of the 'b's in 'abbroad' to make 'abroad':

This combined symbol was used whenever a character (or characters) was removed from the *middle* of a word or group of numbers or letters; it confirmed to the typesetter that there should be no space where the character(s) had been deleted. However, when a character is deleted from the middle of a word in a modern typesetting system, as on our computers, the characters on either side automatically close up, so it was felt that this symbol was unnecessary.

You don't have to worry about the 'delete and close up' when proofreading; it's mentioned here only because you might see it being marked by people who are not aware that it is no longer an official symbol.

If there's a possibility that, for example, the typesetter might mistakenly delete a character at the end of something crossed out, draw the 'stet' marks under it:

go now)

now, however;

An alternative is to cross through that character as well and include it in the correction as a substitution rather than a deletion:

go now   )/

now however   ;/

When you delete just one character, a single stroke through it is sufficient. Be careful, as with substitutions, to draw the stroke *only* through the character to be removed. If you angle the stroke too much, it may look as though you are crossing through two or even three characters.

When you delete two or more characters, be sure to make it clear precisely how much is to come out, as discussed earlier in connection with substitution. Draw a horizontal line through the characters to come out, and a vertical line at either end:

preventative

preventative

One change made several times

When the same change is needed more than once in a line, there is a quick and neat way to mark this:

- mark all places in the text – crossing out or inserting
- mark *once* in the margin the change to be made
- then put beside the instruction 'x 2' (or whatever number are required) in a circle.

(Remember *always* to encircle anything not to be typeset.)

The 'x 2' tells the typesetter to do that change twice. You can use the same principle whether you are substituting or inserting.

Heere are two deleetions

If, however, there is another alteration to be made between these two, mark them separately in the margin. Otherwise the typesetter could be confused.

Note that you should do this *only* when it applies to a single line. If you want to make the same amendment in subsequent lines, you must mark each line.

The space symbols

There are three basic symbols to do with space:

the symbol for a space

the symbol for less space (reduce the space but don't lose it altogether)

the symbol for no space (close up)

Be careful not to use 'less space' and 'close up' interchangeably: they have different meanings and different results, so be sure to understand the difference between them.

Example of their use are:

Come into see me

'into' should be two words, so insert a space

But no-one saw me

'no-one' should be two words, so replace the hyphen with a space

Finish. Begin

two spaces appear after the full point, so reduce the space

Put the flowers in to the vase

'in to' should be one word so close up (no space)

Another possibility with the 'abbroad' example given earlier (in connection with a deletion) is that you want to replace the first 'b' with a space, to make 'a broad':

abbroad

Em and en spaces

When you look at edited hard copy you may see that a square box has been drawn in, often at the beginning of a paragraph or after a number in a list.

This indicates a 1 **em space**, which is what most paragraph indents are. The box is based on the theory that a capital M (em) is a square character. (This principle applies with the em (M) rule that you learned about in Module 1.)

If a 2 em space were wanted, two square boxes would be drawn (joined together). Occasionally, though, there is barely room for one box; the copy-editor's solution in such a case would be to write '2' in the box, which is a conventional way to indicate a 2 em space. Not all typesetters know of this convention so the copy-editor might have written a note in the margin, explaining it to the typesetter. Ways that the copy-editor might mark a 2 em space are:

A run-on heading Text begins immediately after it

A run-on heading 2 Text begins immediately after it

A run-on heading Text begins immediately after it

You might also see, elsewhere, a box with 'N' written inside it: a 1 **en space**. It is quite common in a numbered (or bulleted) list; for example:

N

1│ The first step is . . .
2│ Then you . . .
3│ Now you . . .

A narrow box symbol for an en (N) space applies the theory that (as with the N rule) a capital N is half the width of a capital M. Because a box is taken to mean an em space, it is clearer for everyone if the capital N is written inside the box if only an en space is wanted. There will thus be no possible doubt. (The box in the example above wasn't narrow, and could have been mistaken for an em space without the 'N' written in it.)

Fixed and thin spaces

As well as the ordinary space between words, there are two special space symbols:

　Ⴤ　　for a fixed 'normal' space

　Ⴥ　　for a fixed thin (small) space

When technical or scientific information contains many measurements, companies may ask for a **fixed space** between the number and the unit. For example:

The glass must be at least 15 mm thick.

One reason for this is to prevent having a large gap that would otherwise occur between the number (15) and the unit (mm) in a line with wide spaces because of the **justification** (justification – both margins are even – is discussed in Module 2). The other main reason is to prevent a split over two lines, such as having '15' at the end of one line and 'mm' at the beginning of the next; this fixed space is also known as a **non-breaking space**. A fixed space will always be the same (usually the minimum word spacing allowed in justified text), even when the other spaces in each line vary in order to achieve a straight right-hand margin of justification.

A fixed **thin space** is used in many scientific documents instead of a comma in numbers of 10,000 and over. This is to prevent confusion in countries that use a comma where the UK and elsewhere use a decimal point. The decimal point has been agreed for international publications but a compromise substitutes the thin space for what would usually (to us) be a comma.

Fixed spaces may also be used with initials and surnames and in page cross-references. For example:

W. H. Smith　　p. 123

Here are examples of mark-up using the special space symbols:

12 000　　Ⴥⵋ

25 mm　　Ⴤⵋ

W B Yeats　　Ⴤⵋ

Hair (or letter) spacing

A typographic convention prefers to avoid more than two successive lines with **word breaks** (you learned about these in Module 3). If the page has two or three columns, this can create problems when the text includes long words. One way of preventing word breaks is to allow very narrow spaces between words – a **tight** line – or wide spaces between words – a **gappy** line.

When the spaces become unacceptably wide, the typesetting system will institute **hair spacing** (or **letter spacing**) – there will be hair-thin spaces between the letters of each word. We think that a tight line followed by a hair-spaced line looks dreadful (as you can see in the example below).

> The first line is very tight, looking squashed
> and the second line is much too gappy

However, constraints of time and cost might make it necessary to accept them in most instances. This combination is particularly likely to appear in magazines and journals, in which time is crucial even if money is available to pay for adjusting the lines.

An alternative is to accept word breaks in three or more successive lines. If you are proofreading text like this, it is worth asking whether it is acceptable. The decision will probably be based on how easy it is to adjust the text to prevent too many word breaks and what the alternative will look like.

Hair spacing is also used in words that are all in capitals, especially when they are in headings:

CAPITALS WITH NO HAIR SPACING
C A P I T A L S   W I T H   H A I R   S P A C I N G

Transpose

Transpose horizontally

It is very easy for our fingers to key characters out of order: for example, 'form' instead of 'from'. When this happens, you need only mark them to be **transposed** (swapped round). Be sure, though, that in the text you draw, *very neatly*, all three vertical lines of the symbol. This is necessary in order to show precisely which characters are to be moved. Often it is only two letters that have to be swapped round (as in 'teh' or 'whcih') but it might be a bit more complicated, such as 'being' that ought to be 'begin':

being

You don't have to draw the lines the same way down and up as here; just be sure that you have three vertical lines.

Even more complicated is the word that needs a double transposition, such as 'trapsnose' that should be 'transpose':

trapsnose

Or two transpositions close together:

patriarchal ⊔⊓/ (x2)

Notice how we can mark economically by using the margin symbol just once and then indicating how many times it is needed. Remember, though, that the changes must be repeated without the 'interruption' of any other amendment in that line.

Marking a double transposition is perfectly correct but often it is simpler and clearer to mark the amendment as a substitution: cross out the characters that are in the wrong order and write them in the correct order in the margin:

patriacrhal   triarc/

It is also better to mark such a change as a substitution if the transposition extends beyond one line – remember that we always aim to make our instructions clear instantly to the typesetter.
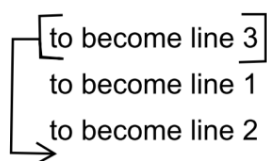
Sometimes whole words need to be transposed:

is it   ⊔⊓/

then and now   ⊔⊓/

If punctuation is involved, be careful to include or exclude it in your marking, according to the final sense.

Transpose vertically   ⊑/

There will be the odd occasion when you need to move something – be it a paragraph or a table or an illustration, say – to a different place on the page. Rather than use the 'transpose' symbol, which can look a bit messy, just bracket the item on both sides and then draw an arrow (in the left margin) to where it should be.

to become line 3
to become line 1
to become line 2

Economy of marking

There is often more than one possible way to indicate an amendment. It is good practice to choose the one that will be quickest, simplest and least confusing for the typesetter.

For example:

- To change 'there' to 'their' you mark a single correction changing the final 're' to 'ir' rather than inserting an 'i' and then deleting the final 'e' – although that isn't wrong.
- To change 'of' to 'off' it is simpler to insert the 'f' into the middle of the word rather than at the end – when you should use the 'close-up' symbol as well to show where the 'f' belongs.
- If several letters are scrambled, it is probably simpler to mark a single substitution (or even substitute the entire word) rather than attempt a complex set of transpositions (swapping letters round). However, if only a couple of letters in a word are wrong, there is no need to rewrite the whole word: change only what needs to be changed.

These are not right/wrong distinctions; just a matter of acquiring good habits.

Now download Exercise 5.1a, print it out and correct it using the BSI symbols to mark amendments. It is a proofread against edited copy, so use red and blue according to whose fault the error is. If there's something you're not sure how to deal with, mark it in pencil for the time being. Then, when you've finished the exercise, see if you can resolve any of the pencil marks and rub them out. If not, and it's something that will have to be dealt with by the proof collator, make sure that the query is clear but concise.

When you are happy with your work on the exercise, check it against the model answer to see how well you have done. If you missed anything or did something not quite right, annotate your copy in green. These annotations will help you see where your weaknesses lie.

Do be sure to annotate your work meticulously – seeing where you weren't quite right will help you to avoid repeating the mistakes!

When you submit your assignment at the end of this module, you will need to scan your worked exercises to PDF to send to PTC along with the assignment.