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**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH GRADUATES IN
COPY EDITING AND PROOF READING**

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Abstract:

The present scenario demands acquisition of vocational skills along with theoretical understanding of the subject. Traditional courses and average performance in certain subjects are insufficient in offering job opportunities to our graduates. Mediocrity in skill oriented education and inefficiency of implementing the knowledge received have shut the doors for job opportunities. This drawback could be overcome by relentless hard work directed towards achieving excellence. The present paper puts forth the career opportunities for graduates in English in the field of copy editing and proof reading and illustrates opportunities, challenges and scope for the job aspirants. It describes the reasons inhibiting the placements in general and tries to provide corrective measures. The present paper can be referred to as a piece of information on making career as a copy editor or proof reader. It illustrates the expectations of the employers and the requirements for the candidates in detail along with the inventory of sources providing job opportunities.

Key Words: *Copy editing, Proofreading, English Language, Technical Skills.*

At the outset, it is important to brood over the fact that what makes an Indian graduate student anxious of career opportunities. It takes one into the issues of quality of higher education, the scope for creativity in classroom, uniform curricula in our universities, lack of skill-oriented education and so on. The education in India seems to aim at increasing the numbers of literates so it focuses on more general and basic aspects of the education. It makes students jack of all trades, master of none which has curtailed career opportunities for them. This is perhaps the moot point that needs to be addressed urgently. It is sad that an English teacher cannot convince his student about opting for English graduate course. It is because the teachers and students are unaware about the opportunities of career in English.

It is therefore necessary to look for the possibilities of making career not with working knowledge but command of English. Career opportunities are abundant for those who have set goal having at least one prominent skill. English as a global language retains its vitality offering varied job opportunities. Publishing or proof reading is the area one can have better prospects of making career. It provides a challenging job, a decent work profile and handsome salary. Undoubtedly, excellence and skill is the prerequisite for the job. The aspiring candidate has to work on different aspects of the job profile. Perfection in English language is one of the key elements.

A copy editor or publisher has to ensure that the material is grammatically correct, consistent in style, and has appropriate content. He has to work with the book, journal or newspaper industry. Editing or proof reading can be done as in-house or freelance depending on the requirement of the author or publishing industry. It can be chosen as a second occupation too along with a full time job. A candidate having multi task managerial orientation has great opportunities in thriving publishing houses. The multitasking begins with fundamental skills, excellent knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, the

ability to identify errors of spelling, stylistic aspects of language, efficiency in the use of information and communication technology, publishing systems and databases etc. the basic skills need to be assisted by the ability of mediating between authors and publishers, ensuring that the author has provided all the required material, and following strictly the deadlines. It is also very important for the editor to communicate to the author the inconsistencies and errors in a manner that would not discourage him. The problem solving aptitude thus serves as a value addition to the career of editing and proof reading. He needs to check out the minute details such as consistency in hyphenation, capitalization, formatting of references and so on.

The career provides a great scope for creativity and innovation. The news paper a few days before used a blending 'Saifeena' referring to the illustrious couple Saif Ali Khan and Karina Kapoor. It is also flashed in newspapers as 'Virashka' when Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma, a glamorous couple got married. An editor has to be aware of such coinages and add it to his active vocabulary. The awareness of words and phrases borrowed in English language has to be maintained by the editor. He has to have the ability of arranging pages for the title, contents and preface of a publication. It is also expected from the editor that he manages marketing and business activities.

The career of editing and proofreading is open for all graduates. However, a degree in media studies or publishing studies increases the credibility of the candidate in the profession. The knowledge of English should be supplemented with the sound knowledge of technology. This is the profession one should join voluntarily as only then he can succeed. It is quite difficult in the present scenario to get a job just with a plain degree. The candidate must be prepared to work as an assistant editor and get an experience in proof reading and spend a lot of time in editing texts. One or two years' experience can give the candidate an edge over naïve professionals in the field. He should take small steps by approaching smaller publishers at the beginning and then moving to the renowned publishers.

The choice of working from home or as a freelancer is an advantage of the editing profession. It gives the employee flexibility in working time and control over working environment. It, however, needs an extra effort to get the job as a freelancer since one has to be best at communication skills, maintain contacts with publishing houses and enrich one's CV continually.

It is important to take a note of what is expected from a copy editor or proofreader. A sound knowledge of English is the most basic qualification. He has to show an evidence of working systematically. He needs to work sincerely paying attention to the minute details. Grammatical errors should not go unnoticed as it may become an unpardonable blunder in the profession. Therefore, concentration and accuracy are the key skills to be acquired by the English graduate. Acquisition of technical skills is a must in the field. An editor has to update his knowledge and technical skills as the technology keeps progressing.

The nature of the work indeed is challenging as it demands the person to work under limitations such as strict deadlines. An editor or proof reader does not have fixed schedule of working; in fact, it is a kind of contractual work which has to be completed as per the author's or publisher's timeline. There is a possibility that a tight deadline may dishearten the person but a person can cross such hurdles if he is self motivated. Another challenge in the field of editing is fierce competition. There is a limited number of employers and a huge number of aspiring candidates. One should not seek a permanent position in the profession. Being prepared for working on a freelance basis is quite beneficial. Technical publications, children's books, scientific publications may not be prestigious but can give a good start to the beginners. It should also be seen as an opportunity that the commercial organizations are thriving like anything publishing the publicity materials, newsletters etc. This is, of course, initial step. An experienced copy editor can obtain editing work in fiction and nonfiction also.

Salary for in-house and freelancers vary to a great degree. It also depends on the necessity of the authors and publishers. Experience influences the salary in the field of editing. It is also a norm to pay on the hourly basis or according to the quantity of the work. Thus, the income is purely an outcome of hard work, accuracy, concentration and language skills.

Following web links provide job opportunities in copy editing and proof reading:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/publishing-copy-editor-proofreader>

<https://www.naukri.com/freelance-copy-editor-jobs-in-india>

<https://in.linkedin.com/jobs/copy-editor-jobs>

worknhire.com › *Freelance Jobs* › *Writing, Content & Translation*

<https://www.glassdoor.co.in/india-freelance-copy-editor-jobs>

www.timesjobs.com › *Jobs by Skill* › *Copy Editor Jobs*

<https://www.britishcouncil.in/about/jobs/freelance-copy-editors-and-proof-readers>

<https://www.shine.com> › *Job Search* › *Freelance Jobs*

The employers clearly specify the role, eligibility criteria, qualifications, experience and pay scale. A systematic procedure for selection is followed by the employers. The applications are invited by the candidates along with CV. Applications are shortlisted on the basis of the qualifications, skills and experience. The shortlisted candidates are given a sample for editing which helps in evaluating the candidates practically. Selected candidates are asked about their salary expectations. Thus, the selection process gives more importance to practical knowledge than degree.

Thus, the profession of copy editing and proof reading opens a threshold of job opportunities; it just requires candidates to be well equipped with vocational skills and experiential knowledge.

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