

EFA Suggested Guidelines for Editorial Testing

Best practices for tests (also called "sample edits"):

- Tests may be paid or unpaid.
- They should be representative of the material you usually write.
- Tests should include instructions regarding the preferred style guide* and any relevant house style guidelines, if applicable.
- Instructions should address the preferred method for testing, such as onscreen, in Microsoft Word and using Track Changes; onscreen, marking up a PDF; or hard copy.
- Unpaid tests:
 - Should be no more than the equivalent of five standard (250-word, double-spaced) pages.
 - Should require about an hour of the candidate's time. A reasonable period should be allowed for turnaround.
 - Should be part of an unpublished work if it's **fiction or creative nonfiction** and the author intends to work directly with the editor; i.e., **if you're a fiction or memoir author, send an unedited excerpt or a full manuscript to the prospective editor**. If you're sending samples to multiple editors, **send each editor the same portion of the manuscript so you can directly compare the work**.
 - Should not be any part of an unpublished work if it's **shorter content**, such as blogs or articles; i.e., **do not send an unedited portion of the full manuscript to the prospective editor, unless you're paying for the test**. With shorter content, the best unpaid sample edits are derived from early drafts of published (prior to completed editing) or inactive work.
- Paid tests:
 - **May be from the full manuscript in question**. The client should inform the candidate when "live"† work is given as a test.

* A style guide is a comprehensive set of language guidelines. Having and using a style guide helps to ensure consistent choices across all content.

† "Live" work is that currently being edited.