

Final Edit

For our last assignment in W151A, you are going to put all of your skills to work. You must effectively edit professional writing, suggest revisions or ask questions through your author's notes, and ultimately advise a successful writer about whether to fully edit his blog entries before they are published as a book.

According to Benjamin Schwarz, Christian Lander's blog, "Stuff White People Like," offers "tightly focused, stylishly written, precisely observed entries [that] eschew the genre's characteristic *I* (though Lander in fact writes nearly all of them) and adopt a cool, never snarky though sometimes biting, pseudo-anthropological tone." His blog has received so much attention, critical and popular, that 150 of his blog entries are being published. Interestingly, he is being given the choice to edit them before publication or to leave them as is.

For this portion of the final exam, imagine that you have been consulted as an editor by Lander, who is considering whether the entries should be published in their current online form. Use two of his blog posts, "Public Radio" and "Grammar," to build your case. First, correct any errors and offer any author's notes you feel are appropriate to these two posts. Then, write Lander a letter in which you suggest keeping the entries as they are or editing them for style and errors. Consider issues such as genre, audience, purpose, and tone as you write your letter and notes, and use these two posts as evidence for your advice to him.

Public Radio

Summer: Who was that? It sounded like a girl.

Seth: Did it? Yeah. Well, sure. Because I'm listening to the radio. And This American Life is on. And so there's a girl talking.

Summer: Is that that show where those hipster know-it-alls talk about how fascinating ordinary people are? God.

Leave it to a show about stereotypical white people to actually explain how real white people act.

The quote above is from the television show The O.C. and the character of Summer is making reference to the Public Radio show This American Life. White people have an uncanny ability to make the ordinary exciting and there is no better forum than public radio to best showcase this.

White people love stations like NPR (which is equivalent to listening to cardboard), and they love shows like This American Life and Democracy Now. This confuses immigrants from the third world.

The ^y see the ~~need for~~ radio as a source for sports, top 40 ^{songs} ~~radio~~ and traffic reports, but they don't quite understand why people who can afford TVs and ^{who} have access to Youtube ^{#6} would spend hours listening to the opinions of overeducated ^y majors.

To explain this love for Public Radio, one only needs to summarize several previous posts on this website. Let's use my friend Craig as an example. Craig has a high ⁼ paying 9 to 5 ^{#7} so he feels guilty about all ^{of} the problems in the world. To make himself feel better, he likes being socially aware of things ^{#8} Post #18. However, he spends most of his time indulging in the arts and going out for dinner, so he has little time to devote to ^{#9} this. He found solace in The Daily Show ^{#8, 50} Post #35, however he decided that life would be better if he did not have a TV ^{#8, 50} post #28. Craig found an adequate replacement in Public Radio.

Craig loves Public Radio because it ^{gives} ~~gave~~ him an opportunity to download podcasts on his ipod Post ^{#8} #40. More ^{importantly} ~~important~~, ~~was the fact that~~ the download was free, because Public Radio is non profit ^{#8} Post #12. After Craig listens to people like Amy Goodman and David Sedaris ^{#8} Post #25, he feels like he is an expert ^{#8} Post #20 on the issues that they talk about like ^{how operates the} polygamy in third ⁼ world or how awesome it is to watch an old lady pick apples. He brings up these topics to his bosses when they are having dinner or playing golf and [#] next thing you know, he's landed that promotion. All ⁼ white people's opinions are developed from Public Radio. So if you want to sound smart in front of White [#] People, just bring up a topic that was discussed on Public Radio o.

"Grammar"

White people love rules. It explains why so they get upset when people cut in line, ~~for what~~ ^{why} they tip so religiously, and ^{why they tend} ~~their tendency~~ to become lawyers. But, without a doubt, the rule system that ⁼ white people love the most is grammar. It is not only in their blood to

use perfect grammar but also to spend significant portions of time pointing out the errors of others.

When asking people about their biggest annoyances in life, you might expect responses like #1 ~~“hunger,”~~ ^{going hungry} “being poor” or “getting shot.” If you ask a white person the most common response will likely be “people who use ‘their’ when they mean ‘there.’ Maybe comma splices I’m not sure, but it’s definitely one of the two.”

If you wish to gain the respect of a white person, it’s probably a good idea that you find obscure and debated grammar rules such as the Oxford Comma and take a firm stance on what you believe is correct. This is seen as more productive and forward thinking approach than simply stating your anger at the improper use of “it’s.”

Another important thing to know is that ^{while} ~~when~~ white people read magazines and books they are always looking for grammar and spelling mistakes. In fact, one of the greatest joys a white person can experience is to catch a grammar mistake in a major publication. Finding one allows a white person to believe that they are better ^{than} ~~then~~ the writer ^{#2} ~~and~~ the publication since they would have caught the mistake. The more respected the publication the greater the thrill. If a white person was to catch a mistake in *The New Yorker* it would be a sufficient reason for a ~~huge~~ large party.

Though they reserve the harshest judgment for professional ^s ~~do~~ not assume that white people will cast blind eyes to your grammar mistakes in email ^s ~~and~~ official documents. They will judge you and make a general assessment about your intelligence after the first

infraction. Fortunately, this situation can be improved if you ask a white person to proof^{#3}
read your work before you send it out. “Hey Jill, I’m sorry to do this, but I have a business
degree and I’m a terrible writer. Can you look this over for me?” This easy, off the shelf
solution will allow the white person to feel as though their liberal arts degree has a purpose
and allow you to do something more interesting.

Don’t worry, it is impossible for a white person to turn down the opportunity to proofread.

“Public Radio” Author’s Notes:

Author’s Note #1: In the excerpt taken from The O.C., there are certain words that do not match exactly with the scene that is being quoted. I recommend taking another look at the scene and fixing any transcription errors.

Author’s Note #2: Within the first paragraph, the term “Public Radio” is capitalized once and not capitalized the second time. If you are referring to the public radio network of the United States, it should be capitalized as National Public Radio (NPR). It is best to maintain consistency, so if you capitalize the term once, then you should capitalize it throughout the post.

Author’s Note #3: The embedded phrase “which is equivalent to listening to cardboard” could be emphasized with em dashes to provide comedic emphasis. Or, it can just be left with commas if the embedded phrase is supposed to be neutral.

Author’s Note #4: The term “like” could be changed to “such as” so that it sounds more professional; however, if the goal is to keep a lighthearted/casual tone, then you can leave “like” as is.

Author’s Note #5: The term “Third World” has conflicting evidence about whether it is a proper noun or not. I would err on the side of caution and recommend capitalizing the term since it is referring to specific countries.

Author’s Note #6: In the Oxford English Dictionary, the term “overeducated” is hyphenated like “over-educated”; however, other dictionaries have “overeducated” as one word, so that is up to your personal preference.

Author’s Note #7: Typically, numbers 1-10 should be spelled out; however, the term 9 to 5 is already a popular term, so for the purpose of readability it is up to you if you want to change it.

Author’s Note #8: The terms “Post #18”, “Post #35”, and “Post #28” appear in the third paragraph of this piece. The meaning of the terms is a bit ambiguous as a reader. If you are referring to topics that you discuss in other posts, I would recommend putting these phrases in parentheses like (Post #18), (Post #35), and (Post #28), so that it improves the clarity and readability. This also applies to the terms being used in the fourth paragraph. I also recommend that you put them at the end of the sentences, rather than in the middle to make it simpler to read.

Author’s Note #9: The phrase “this” is slightly ambiguous and the reader may not know what you are referring to. If “this” is referring to Craig being socially aware, then I recommend you phrase the sentence something like “However, he spends most of his time indulging in the arts and going out for dinner, so he has little time to devote to being socially aware.”

“Grammar” Author’s Notes:

Author’s Note #1: I would recommend changing “hunger” to an action so that it matches “being poor” and “getting shot.” I think “going hungry” would be the best verbage, but you could also say “being hungry.”

Author’s Note #2: The italicization of “*and*” is slightly ambiguous. If you italicized the “*and*” to add comedic effect, then you can leave it, but I don’t think it is completely necessary to understand the sentence.

Author’s Note #3: “Proofread” is typically one word.

From: Avery Stanley, [averystanley@ucsb.edu]

To: Christian Lander

Subject: *Stuff White People Like*; Editing Recommendation

Date: Monday, March 17, 2025

Dear Christian Lander,

Thank you again for the opportunity to read and edit your work. After editing your two blog posts, I would recommend implementing a light edit for the publication of your book. I will explain my recommendation based on the genre, style, audience, purpose, and tone of your blog posts, ensuring that you have a clear understanding of all of your options regarding the editing strategy of your book.

The first aspect of your blog posts that leads me to recommend a light edit is the genre, style, and intended audience of the posts. Blog posts as a specific format often take on a more casual, informal style that can aid in the genuinity and relatability of the posts. Since the genre of your blog posts regards personal opinions and comedy, I believe it is not necessary to change the overall style and essence of your posts. The relaxed language is clearly intentional, and editing your blog posts on the basis of style may take away from the authenticity of the original posts. Furthermore, since the intended audience of the posts are people looking for witty, biting comedy, the reader will be well aware that the use of casual language is appropriate in this format.

Similarly, the purpose and tone of your posts is to “poke fun” at certain groups of people and create humor through satire. The lighthearted and comedic tone of the blog posts would be diminished if too much extensive editing was done to make the posts sound more formal. The overall purpose of the posts, which is rooted in comedic effect, would not be aided by changing the style and tone. It is for these key reasons that I do not recommend doing a heavy edit of these posts. However, I do think that a light edit, majorly focused on certain grammatical errors, could be useful in the publication of your book.

After thoroughly editing the two blog posts, I took note of a few common grammatical errors that could be fixed to help improve the overall readability of the posts. I believe it is important to focus on the few errors that will help improve the comedic tone, rather than the errors that are small and essentially unnoticeable. Furthermore, since one of your blog posts is in

itself making jokes about how seriously White people take grammar, I do not think it is fitting for the post to be completely free of grammatical errors. There are certain errors that have no major effect on the post and could be ignored; whereas, there are other errors that could be fixed to help improve the readability and clarity of your comedic argument.

For example, a useful edit that could be implemented in the “Public Radio” blog post is in regard to the references to previous posts scattered throughout two paragraphs. I think it would be effective to separate these references with parentheses to improve the clarity of the sentences. This edit will help improve the readability of the writing without taking away from the style of the original post. Fixing small errors such as this will aid the comedic purpose of the book by making it easier to read, while not taking away from the humorous aspects.

Contrastingly, an example of an error that I would *not* fix is in the second to last paragraph in “Grammar.” In the quote of someone emailing a White person to proofread their work, there are grammatical errors, such as a run-on sentence. I would not fix this error because it is supporting the argument that they are a “terrible writer” and demonstrating why they need someone to look over their work for grammatical errors. This error adds to the comedic effect of the post, so it does not need to be edited. These two contrasting examples represent why a light edit would be most beneficial in the publication of your book. Overall, small errors that hinder the clarity and readability of the blog posts should be fixed, but other errors that are meaningful to the overall purpose of a blog post should be left.

A strategically light edit will improve the clarity of your book for readers, while still maintaining the genuinity and relatability of your original posts. If you have any questions regarding my recommendation or further editing advice, please feel free to contact me at the above email address. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and I wish you the best of luck with your future publishing endeavors.

Best Regards,
Avery Stanley