A RANKANDFILER'S GUIDE TO PROOFREADING AND FORMATTING

ERRORS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- Facts: Check'em! When proofreading your piece, carefully consider all the facts you present. For example, a sentence could read, "Jeb Bush was the governor of Arkansas." It's always worth double checking the details. Then you might catch that "Arkansas" should be changed to "Florida."
- Italicization: This is important. Names of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, movies, television series, and music albums—along with names of vehicles, in particular boats—should always be italicized, such as the *Ottawa Citizen*, *Rabble.ca* or Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, or the famed *Bluenose*. (For simplicity, the word "the" in the names of newspapers is always lowercase and takes no italics.) Titles of articles, songs, and television episodes should be in quotation marks, such as Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean."
- Spelling: Always confirm the exact names of people, job titles, and organizations. Consider
 capitalization and punctuation as well. For example, "UNIFOR" is incorrect. It should be "Unifor."
 Be attentive to apostrophes. "United Steelworkers' District 3" is incorrect. It should be, "United
 Steelworkers District 3."
- Abbreviation: In CP style, some months are abbreviated when followed by a date:

January (Jan.)
February (Feb.)
August (Aug.)
September (Sept.)
October (Oct.)
November (Nov.)
December (Dec.)

If there is no date following the month, write the full name of the month, and never include a "th" "st" or "nd" behind a date.

On Jan. 13, community members joined the workers in an occupation of their workplace. In February, the bosses returned to the bargaining table.

• Capitalization: Only proper nouns should be capitalized. For example, formal and official names should be capitalized, such as the "Worksafe BC," "President Jerry Dias" and the "Canadian Union of Public Employees." When referring to these more generally, capitals are not used: the union, the safety department, or the president.

You may need to check whether a word is a proper noun. In English, for example, the seasons are not capitalized (fall, autumn, winter, spring, summer), but the days are (Sunday, Monday, etc.)

Also note that *RankandFile.ca* does not capitalize each word in a subtitle or headlines. See the below example.

Failing to deliver on workers' rights

Canada Post, the Harper government and the assault on unions

Only "Canada Post" and "Harper" should be capitalized because they are proper nouns.

• **Punctuation:** Sometimes a word might have an incorrectly placed apostrophe (e.g., "four author's names" instead of "four authors' names"). Semi-colons are used to join two complete sentences and are used to separate items in a list when commas are present in an item on that list; a colon can only follow a full sentence.

Note that *RankandFile.ca* follows the style of placing ending punctuation inside of quotation marks (e.g., She said, "No one was there.").

Periods are generally not used with acronyms. For example, one would write, "US," not "U.S." An exception would be if the periods are deliberate in a proper name, such as, "U.S. Steel Canada."

- **Homonyms** (words that sound the same but are spelled differently: "Too" and "to" are often mixed up, as are "than" and "then," and "there," "their," and "they're." Check that the possessive "its" has no apostrophe; "it's" always means "it is."
- Other glaring errors: Has a sentence or word been typed twice? Is a word missing from a sentence?

OTHER USEFUL FORMATTING TIPS

- In news form, short paragraphs are the standard. Paragraphs are generally 1-3 sentences. Submit pieces that reflect this rule.
- Generally, when presenting quotes, avoid using ellipses points. Break up the quote into two quotes instead. Longer quotes should also be broken up.

Thank you for your role in producing fantastically stylish journalism!