

How To: Primary Edit Packets

■ What is it?

The “primary edit” stage is the point in the editing process where the article undergoes thorough line editing and vetting for substantive source support. A primary edit packet will generally consist of a certain number of pages for the packeteer to closely edit along these lines. The goals of the packeteer are three: (1) to correct all grammatical and typographical mistakes; (2) to identify substantive or logical problems with the argument; (3) to verify that sources support cited propositions and that all direct quotations are completely accurate.

■ The Process

The Supervising Editor will assign you to a primary edit packet, taking timing and article preferences into account to the greatest extent possible. [If you are not matched up with an article that you have a particular interest in, you may contact the Articles Editor for that piece and request to attend the optional substantive review session for that piece, but in any event you must complete the original packet assignment you receive.] The Articles Editor working on your piece will distribute the packet materials. **Please review the packet memo carefully as the Editor will use this memo to give special instructions and to identify particular areas of concern.** Review your assignment before you begin, and make sure you are editing the correction section of the paper as you will be provided with the entire article (not just the section you are editing). Verifying source support is of the utmost importance and can be time consuming – make sure you allow enough time for this task by starting early in the week! We will hold a training dinner on Wednesday during each week of primary editing – please attend this useful mandatory meeting during the week you are assigned a primary edit.

■ **What the Packeteer Needs:** The packet memo, an electronic copy of the article, and an electronic copy of the source list. Your edits must ultimately be done on a computer, but you are more than welcome to draft your comments on paper before transferring them to the Word document. You'll also need to refer to the Bluebook (18th Edition) and the Chicago Manual of Style (15th Edition) while editing. Copies are available in the library and in the BJIL office (for use in the BJIL office only).

■ **What the Packeteer Prepares:** A “redline” version of the article with your edits saved according to the following file format: [Author's Last Name].primary edit packet [Packet number in two digits, e.g. 01, 02, 10, 11].[packeteer's name].doc.

The Editing:

Turn on “track changes” in MS Word, and proceed with your edits. Make specific re-write suggestions in the text itself, in addition to providing explanations to your Articles Editor using the “comment” function or in your final memo to the Articles Editor.

▫ **Structure:** At this point in the process the article has already been subject to overall structural review and comment by the Articles Editor and the author has responded to these edits. The structure and flow of your particular section is something that you should pay close attention to. If you detect structural problems be sure to suggest specific solutions.

▪ **Paragraphs:** Do paragraphs transition well from one to another? Do the ideas in the body correspond to the topic & concluding sentences? Should a paragraph be split in two, or combined with another?

▪ **Headings:** Do the headings accurately describe the content? Should there be less? More? Suggest specific heading changes that correspond to your critique.

▫ **Line Edits:** Detailed and thorough line edits are a primary goal of this editing stage. Read your section carefully and correct any errors you find by rewriting the text (which should appear in track changes). If you think a sentence reads awkwardly, or discover other phrasing/word choice type problems, please type alternate wordings/phrasings. You should not make line edits without suggesting a specific change/re-write (i.e., do not simply note that a sentence is “awkward” or remark “word choice” without a proposed solution).

▫ **Grammar/Form:** Please follow the Chicago Manual of Style (15th Ed.) for grammatical edits. When you make a grammatical edit, please try to note the rule that justifies the edit. E.g., The Court emphasizes that “abstract injury is not enough— . . . the plaintiff must demonstrate a particularized concrete injury in order to have standing under Article III.” ([CMS 11.57](#))

- **Substantive Review:** Though your primary focus during this packet is the specific section you have been assigned, you're also encouraged to read the entire article and provide substantive feedback to the Editor, if time allows. Your Articles Editor will hold a meeting specifically for this purpose, which members generally find very valuable and interesting to participate in, though it is not required.

Checking Source Support:

Verifying the accuracy and pertinence of cited material is one of the main institutional functions of any academic journal, and ours is no exception. While we recognize that it is ultimately the author's responsibility to cite sources accurately, our own reputation as an academic institution is also at stake in the use of sources and direct quotations. Checking the sources is also probably the most time-consuming aspect of the primary edit packet, so be sure to plan ahead and start early.

- **Basic Process:** Every single citation in your packet needs to be checked in some fashion. First, lookup the cited source on the source list and determine if it is a type A or type B source.
 - **Type A Sources:** Everything about a type A source needs to be thoroughly checked. These are the sources the primary editor of the piece has identified as crucial to the author's argument, and therefore important to verify for accuracy. To check the source, first locate the source in the source box and make sure that the content of the citation is accurate. Are things spelled correctly? Is the pin-cite accurate? Next, read the relevant article text to discern what the article is using the source to say, prove, or identify, and then read as much as you need to of the source itself (start with the pincite) to verify that the source actually supports the cited proposition. If you cannot find "support" for the author's argument in the source, the source may be misused or the citation may have an incorrect pincite. Explain clearly what you found in your memo to the Editor. Finally, check all direct quotations in the text or footnotes for complete & precise accuracy. (Misquotations are surprisingly common, so read carefully!)
 - **Type B Sources:** Type B sources only need to be verified for the content of the citation itself and for any direct quotations. You should check that all information is spelled correctly, that the pincite is correct (e.g., that it actually falls within the page span of the book or article, so it doesn't refer the reader to page 301 of a 200 page book), and that any quoted material is accurately recited. You do not need to analyze the substantive content of the source.
 - **Bluebooking:** If you notice bluebooking errors please do correct them and note the bluebook rule you used. But, bluebooking is not the focus of this packet and you do not need to rigorously check the citation for bluebook form.
- **Recording Your Work:** Please prepare a document listing the footnote numbers that you checked. For each footnote, describe any substantive problems with as much detail as possible. If everything is okay, please note this briefly. Technical changes, such as fixing the spelling of an author's name or the page number in a pincite should be made directly on your redline of the article, but it doesn't hurt to call attention to such changes in your footnote list back to the Articles Editor so she is sure to incorporate all of your revisions.

Finishing Up:

When you have finished the packet, send three items to your Editor: (1) your redline document, (2) the packeteer memo describing your work, and (3) your footnote list (this should be inside your memo, but we note it separately to emphasize its importance). If there are any special concerns or problems that you notice, please bring these to the Articles Editor's attention. Thank you for your diligent and thoughtful work with the Primary Edit packet! It's the most work but also the most fun and stimulating of all the packets, so we hope you enjoyed it. Don't forget to try to attend the substantive meeting with your Articles Editor and fellow packeteers to recap the process and chat about the piece further.

- **Preparing the Packeteer Memorandum:** When you are finished with your edits please prepare a memorandum describing your work on the packet. A sample memorandum will be provided to you when your packet is distributed, and one is available on the website. Your memo should contain the following elements:
 - **A description of your micro edits:** in 1-3 sentences briefly describe what grammatical, structural and orthographical problems you noted in your section. You don't need to list out every edit, rather the goals are to provide the Editor with information that will help them spot problems elsewhere in the piece and with information on what work you performed.

• **A description of your macro edits:** If you attended the substantive review session, or otherwise read the entire article, please describe your overall thoughts on substance, structure, logical coherency and so forth. This portion of the packet is optional – you are free to write as little or as much as you want.

• **Footnote list:** Provide the Editor with a list of the footnotes you checked and explanations of your suggested edits. This will be discussed in more detail at the primary edit trainings, but as a general rule your footnote list will look as follows:

FN	EDIT
23	No edits.
24	Changed pin-cite to reflect accurate location of quoted material.
25	This source does not directly support the cited proposition, so I suggested using a “See” signal.
26	No edits.
27	I cannot find support for the cited proposition in this source.