

Some notes on the Zeteo editorial process

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1. *Zeteo* is for generalist intellectuals and for interdisciplinary work. We also seek to encourage writers to work in a holistic way—“combining the personal, the political and the intellectual,” as we say. See the [Zeteo Mission Statement](#).
2. The process is ever evolving, *with your help*. And we also seek to help you by responding quite quickly—within a few weeks maximum—to submissions and queries.
3. Except for texts from weekly contributors, *Zeteo* pieces are edited. Even when we quite like a submission, we will generally ask for revisions. These may involve pushing the thinking further, exploring the topic with additional reading, or suggestions regarding structure. There are no hard and fast deadlines, but three to four weeks is usually a good limit for the revision phase.
4. Before publication there is a straightforward round of copy edits. We send you proposed changes (in “track changes”) and queries in marginal comments. You respond. You have the final word on your text (some very minor, last-minute proofreading changes possibly excepted).
5. Some of our favorite pieces have developed slowly but surely, over time. We are also prepared to get pieces done, submission to publication, within just a week or two.

A little more on the sorts of editorial changes we request

6. We may have questions about your assertions, challenging some, asking you to clarify or expand on others, and *urging further exploration* and further reading. We believe that one of the best things an editor can do is to push a writer to take her or his ideas a few steps further, to look at his subject from differing perspectives. An editor can also see the overlooked and represent The Reader. If an editor is confused or unclear about what you are saying, so may be others.
7. We often ask that the structure of a piece be made more explicit through the use of subheads and topic and transitional sentences, and through the development of one or more “nut grafs” or “signposts,” as we have come to call such things. “Nut grafs” are a mechanism for longer pieces that we have adapted from journalism. In such grafs, which appear at or near the top of a piece, a writer temporarily pulls back from the movement of the piece to state clearly what the piece is about, why and how it may interest readers, and how it is going to be structured. “Signposts” tell a reader where she or he is in a piece. (“We

will get to Morandi right below, after these wise and beautiful words from Wilde.” “This piece has now done what it was going to do, which may be summarized as: . . . However, I would allow the present piece to close with some—if not cozy, still reasonably familiar and witty—half-truths.”)

8. Montaigne was ignorant of nut grafs and signposts, and we do not insist on them, and we are eager to see works that explore other structures, to include the structure that is structureless-ness. That said, our sense is that writing—and expressing thoughts and feelings—is not easy, and signposts, et al., can be a big help: to readers and writers.

9. *Zeteo* being a publication for generalists, we will ask writers to define technical terminology or to convert it into more generally recognizable words. We do not care for jargon and the various code words and expressions that signal that a writer belongs to one camp or another. *Zeteo* is for the “de-camped,” let’s say.

10. In the copy editing phase we often seek to: make awkward sentences clearer (and perhaps shorter) and to address standard writing problems involving diction, misplaced modifiers, and the like. (You may see the attached [Zeteo Style Guide](#), but prior to the copy-editing phase such input may be more tension-inducing than useful. Please do not worry about making mistakes. We make them, too, and will not hold them against you.) We have a growing sense that at least half of a copy editor's challenge these days involves getting clauses in the right order, so that the logic of sentences is as clear as possible and a reader may proceed confidently through the text.

11. If your piece uses footnotes, endnotes, or some kind of a bibliography, we will ask you to use the *Chicago Manual* approach to styling such references. The attached [Footnotes, Endnotes & Bibliographies](#), excerpted from the Style Guide, offers useful examples.

Restructuring and revising

12. Sometimes we request a little or more than a little restructuring; this again to make your piece more engaging, easier to follow, and more convincing.

13. In our experience writers have more difficulty rewriting than they do preparing an initial text. And we can think of many great writers who never learned how to rewrite, relying on their editors (e.g. Maxwell Perkins) to do for them any rewriting, pruning, and re-arranging. We are prepared to help in smaller or larger ways as may be necessary, but our preference is to help writers do the rewriting themselves. We continue to explore ways of providing such help.

A broader perspective on the Zeteo editorial process

14. We are drawn to pieces in which it is clear (explicitly or implicitly) that the writer is writing about a subject that she or he cares about deeply. This caring can make the text engaging, and engage us in the challenge of helping you unearth and communicate deeply rooted messages.

We thank you for your interest and participation in the Zeteo project.

With best wishes,

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