

One-Page Insights: The Editing Process

Whether you go the traditional publishing route or choose to self-publish, editing is a key part of the publishing journey, and cutting corners is unwise. Readers WILL notice errors, from the simple typo to the hole in your plot (and they WILL tell you about it), so you owe it to yourself and your readers to make your book the best it can be.

Remember

- Editing is not a one-and-done process; it involves different stages and, often, numerous rounds of editing. You might find it frustrating, but it will be worth the effort.
- An editor is not a dictator: you collaborate with editors to ensure your intent and voice are preserved and/or enhanced.
- Until the proof-reading stage, editors will almost exclusively use Microsoft Word. Therefore, you should be familiar with the MS Word application 'Track Changes' before starting the editing process.

The Professional Editing Pipeline (*terminology may differ, but the process will be the same*)

<p>Developmental Editing: The Overview</p> <p>Sometimes called an 'edit letter', this process involves an assessment of the entire manuscript from a big-picture perspective, i.e., plot, style, character, theme, and so on.</p> <p>This process often uncovers or deepens the 'inner story', i.e., the emotional or thematic core.</p> <p>The assessment will identify key weaknesses in the manuscript that the author should address.</p>	<p>»» Line Editing: The Close Up</p> <p>Once the big-picture issues have been satisfactorily addressed, it's time for a line-by-line edit (sometimes called a 'stylistic edit').</p> <p>This edit focuses on storytelling craft and writing style, i.e., how effective and clear the writing is. An editor will ask the author lots of questions at this stage.</p> <p>It is a more subjective process than copy editing, which is more technical.</p>	<p>»» Copy Editing: The Fine Tuning</p> <p>'Copy' is another word for text. At this stage, the focus is on technical and mechanical correctness, addressing errors in spelling, usage, punctuation, grammar/syntax, and consistency of style.</p> <p>A heavier copy edit will also eliminate repetition and redundancy, as well as suggest stronger word choices and sentence constructions.</p>	<p>»» Proof Reading: The Final Touch</p> <p>This final stage of editing can ONLY take place when the publication has been designed and laid out, usually in a Portable Document Format (PDF), called a 'galley proof'.</p> <p>A proof reader will pick up any stray errors in the text, as well as errors in the design/layout.</p> <p><i>(New authors commonly request 'proof reading' when they mean 'copy editing'.)</i></p>
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