

EDITING AND PRODUCTION



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WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EDITING?

THE DEVELOPMENTAL EDIT

Developmental edits focus on the big-picture, high-level view of your book. On this pass we want to make sure the structure and flow is right. For fiction, this includes story arc, character development, plot holes, and pacing. For nonfiction, this includes chapter order, continuity and flow, moving your readers from the introduction, along your line of reasoning—like stepping stones—to the conclusion, making sure your readers have all the information they need to experience the transformation you've promised.

This level of editing is generally where you're asked to make the most changes. Keep in mind, the editor is using all of her years of experience to help you create the best book possible. She is reading your book with fresh eyes and distance, much in the same way your readers will approach your book.

Because our brains work best when we concentrate on one or two things at a time, we won't be worrying too much about paragraph and sentence-level problems. There will likely still be typos and misspellings. But don't worry, we take care of those things in the next pass, the copyedit.

If you get an editorial letter from your editor, start there. This will give you the overview of the editor's thinking and overall findings. It's a high-level view with overall impressions, and it will give you a rundown of the strengths and weakness of the document, as well as some stylistic and housekeeping things for you to be aware of.

As you look through the edits, it may seem like there is a lot of red ink! This is very normal, even for multi-published authors! We are all working to make this the best possible book.

TO HAVE THE BEST SUCCESS AT THIS LEVEL

- Be open-minded and seriously consider the feedback you've been given.
- Be flexible with your vision of the book, and be willing to communicate clearly with your editor.
- Be focused on the big picture. Everyone is working toward the goal of a great book.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

Now it's your turn to go through the developmental edit. Make sure you have Tracked Changes

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on in Microsoft Word. Go to the Review menu>Tracking>Track Changes On. You'll want to accept the changes as you go through them. If there is something you disagree with or have a question about, you ask your editor or put a comment in the document using the New Comment feature. If you want to add anything or rewrite anything, now is the time to do it. But again, make sure Track Changes is on so your editor can see what has changed.

To stay on schedule, you'll need to return your pages on or before the milestone laid out in your Production Schedule (more on that later).

THE COPYEDIT

This is the step most people think of as editing. This is where the editor looks at the sentence and paragraph structure of the book, making it the most clear and readable. The editor checks for grammar, clarity, spelling, punctuation, references, and citations. This stage will focus on consistency in tone, style, and character throughout the book.

TO HAVE THE BEST SUCCESS AT THIS LEVEL

- Be willing to look past the red ink. It looks like a lot, but everyone's manuscript looks like that.
- Be sure to use Track Changes to approve the changes you agree with. If there's a change you have a question about, use Comments.
- Be encouraged! Your manuscript is getting better.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

Just like with the developmental edit, you'll get the pages back to go through the corrections. Make sure Track Changes is turned on, and let your editor know if you have any questions.

This stage is the last time to make any significant changes to the manuscript. There are still passes were we might catch typos or mistakes, but to stay on track, no significant changes can be made beyond this point.

If you are providing any art work, supplemental material, or need to get permission to use anything you're including, that all needs to be done by the end of this stage.

You'll also need to provide the front and back matter at this point. It can be in the same document or in a separate one.

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FRONT MATTER

This is everything that goes in the front of the book before the actual text of the book begins.

- Title page
- Copyright page, including ISBNs, permissions, publisher information and Library of Congress Control Number, and credits to editors, designers, agents.
- Dedication (optional)
- Epigraph—a verse or quote that summarizes the theme of the book (optional)

BACK MATTER

This is everything that goes in the back of the book after the main body of the book is complete.

- Afterword—additional information about the book, often including resources, or any closing thoughts that didn't fit in the conclusion (optional)
- Acknowledgments—people you want to thank for their help with the book
- Author's Note—information about the book, like what inspired it, how does it mesh with actual history, or any information that is helpful to the reader but doesn't fit into the book proper (optional)
- About the author—author photo and bio, including contact information and website

PROOFREADING

Because our brains really want to fill in the correct information, once someone has gone through a manuscript once or twice, they will miss mistakes. So a proofread is done by someone with fresh eyes, who hasn't seen the manuscript before. This allows for the most errors to be caught. This is the final polishing step that makes your manuscript the best it can be. It is the final step before the book goes to typesetting.

TO HAVE THE BEST SUCCESS AT THIS LEVEL

- Be trusting of your proofreader. Language changes, and what you learned in high school English may not be the standard any more. Ask if you have questions about a change.
- Be patient. This last process might seem like a tedious step, but many bad reviews mention typos and misspellings.

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FORMATTING

If possible, this is done after the proofreading. But due to time constraints, the book can be formatted while also at proofreading. This means the errors found in the proofreading stage will be entered into the already-formatted book. Because significant changes at this point can drastically alter the layout of the book and create a great deal of rework, we only correct mistakes at this point.

ARCS

By doing the proofreading and formatting at the same time, we can quickly format an Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) to get out to early readers who would like to review the book or endorse it as soon as the book comes out. They should be informed that it is an uncorrected proof and will likely have errors in it.

FINAL PROOFS

Depending on if time allows, you might want to order a hard copy proof to examine well before release date.

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE TIME LINE

You should create a customized timeline for your project with all the milestone dates indicated below in conjunction with your editors, formatters, proofreaders, and cover designers.

Manuscript turned in:

Developmental edit:

Developmental edits due back to editor:

Copy edit:

Copy edit due back to editor:

(All illustrations, images, permissions, front and back matter due at this time)

Proofreading:

Formatting, print and ebook:

Uploading to retailers sites:

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Release dates
Ebook:
Print:

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