

What to Expect When You Hire Me as an Editor

Never hired an editor before? You may not know where to start, or you may be wondering if you even need an editor.

Let's get one thing straight: Any formal written work that you wish to present in a logical, effective manner should be edited by a professional. This includes scholarly work, book manuscripts, and ads, blog posts, and other promotional materials for businesses. Professional writers—even other editors—need editors.

When we work together, the specific editorial process for your project will vary according to your needs, timeframe, and the overall complexity of your written content. However, you can generally expect the following process to take place:

1. Manuscript/Content Evaluation and Sample Edit

First things first. Before we decide to work together, you'll need to send me either your entire manuscript/piece of content or a small, representative section of it. This is when I'll give you my suggestions about what kind of editing your piece of writing needs, and you can tell me about any concerns, requests, or suggestions you may have.

This is also the point at which you can request a sample copyedit. I will take a few pages/sections of your written work and provide you with sample edits. This can help you decide if we're a match and if you find my work valuable. If so, we can move on to the next step.

2. Editing Agreement

It's critically important to ensure that the writer/publisher and editor are on the same page. During this part of the process, we will come to an agreement about what your project needs and how we will move forward.

3. Editor's First Pass

Most editors tend to go through manuscripts and other written content in two "passes." Different editors handle these passes in different ways. I tend to do a heavier edit on the first pass. At this point, I will make any necessary changes to grammar, punctuation, language, and anything else we've discussed during the editing agreement step.

I will also "query" the author and/or publisher, addressing a wide variety of concerns. These queries will need to be reviewed by either the writer or publisher in a timely manner so that we can move forward with the second pass as quickly as possible.

4. Editor's Second Pass

During the second pass, I will go back through the entire manuscript/document again to ensure that all queries have been addressed and that there are no additional errors to fix.

Note: Sometimes, the first and second pass are condensed, especially when it comes to shorter documents like ads and blog posts. In these cases, the author or publisher can review queries after the second pass.

5. Finishing Up

After the second pass, the editorial process is usually complete. Sometimes, writers (especially authors of manuscripts) may want to request an editorial letter and a style sheet. Not every client needs these tools, but they are essential for others. An editorial letter will outline the general issues and changes made to a manuscript as well as any large-scale questions or concerns that remain. A style sheet will document specific conventions that must be kept consistent throughout the manuscript. The specifics of these documents will vary widely according to writer's and publisher's needs as well as the type of manuscript or document we are working with.

That's not so scary, right? If you have any more questions about the editorial process or would like to chat about your specific project, please feel free to contact me.