

7 Reasons You Should Hire an Editor

A good editor is a writer's closest ally.

- 1 **Invest in your success.** An editor's only goal is to make your writing more compelling to more readers.
- 2 **Enhance your credibility.** A publication with errors and inconsistencies distracts readers and detracts from your credibility. A carefully edited publication gives readers confidence in you and your content.
- 3 **Benefit from fresh eyes.** You can spend weeks, months, or years writing your manuscript, and eventually your brain sees only what it expects to see on the page. An editor's fresh eyes often spot problems you may have overlooked.
- 4 **Get objective audience feedback.** As a writer, you may be too close to your work to be objective, and friends may soften their feedback to spare your feelings. An editor reads your manuscript carefully and provides detailed, supportive, and unbiased feedback to help you improve the final product. Editors serve as an objective test audience.
- 5 **Obtain technical expertise.** Editors are trained to spot problems like inconsistencies, leaps of logic, and factual errors. Copy editors have expertise in grammar, spelling, hyphenation, punctuation, and applying guidelines laid out in style manuals and style sheets.
- 6 **Improve your writing.** Editors illustrate refinements that you can use to make your prose more clear and effective.
- 7 **Save time.** Revising can become frustrating and exhausting. Editors' expertise saves you time by handling details that slow you down.

The Author-Editor Relationship



Authors and editors should clarify their working relationship before the project starts. Some authors prefer to work closely with an editor at every stage, communicating frequently and discussing revisions. Other authors prefer an editor to simply work on the project and return the finished product by a specified date. Or the interaction may fall somewhere in between. The most effective relationship is the one that you and your editor agree will work best for you as a team.

Most importantly, find an editor you feel comfortable working with—someone who understands you, your message, and your voice.

Looking for an editor?

Check out the San Diego Professional Editors Network by visiting

www.sdpn.com/find-an-editor

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Working With an Editor

An editor's job is to make your writing shine. Our goal is to help you produce the best possible text—one that communicates your message clearly in your voice. We take a reader's perspective and work with you to develop or refine your writing. Editors work on all types of content, including manuscripts, reports, presentations, speeches, brochures, proposals, ads, resumes, profiles, and many others. During one phase of your project, an editor may help with the overall structure and cohesiveness of your document and during another phase, work to improve consistency, clarity, and conciseness.

Read on for a list of reasons that your project needs an editor and to learn about different stages of editing.

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Stages of Editing

Definitions vary among organizations and individual editors, but there are a few agreed-upon stages of editing that a manuscript might move through: developmental editing, copyediting, and proofreading. Some editors specialize in editing at a particular stage or in specific genres or subjects, and others are generalists.

Before estimating a fee, editors need to see a sample of your work to gauge the scope of editing and the amount of time required. Editors may charge by the hour, the page (250 words per page is the industry standard), or the word, and some negotiate a flat fee for an entire project. Rates depend on the writing, length, complexity of the topic or project, deadlines, and an editor's level of experience.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDITORS help writers transform an initial concept or partial draft into a finished work. As the author writes or rewrites, the editor provides feedback, guidance, and encouragement. In a developmental editing partnership, the author focuses on the content and the editor on the form.

Sometimes developmental editors begin with a completed manuscript, assessing it for style, tone, logic, flow, structure, and accuracy. They edit out the manuscript's weaknesses and enhance its strengths and may suggest ways to better organize or revise content, smooth transitions, and address plot inconsistencies.

COPY EDITORS revise text word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. They correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, word choices, and sentence structure—all to make the written work more readable.

Copyediting can be light, medium, or heavy, but these definitions are general and can vary by editor and project. Be sure to confirm with your editor what will be included in your copyedit.

- **Light**—correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar; ensuring style consistency for numbers, capitalization, and abbreviations
- **Medium**—same as *light*, plus tightening wording; pointing out logic, argument, or plot flaws; correcting sentence structure to improve readability; ensuring consistency in character and setting; addressing noninclusive language; and cross-checking references and footnotes
- **Heavy**—same as *medium*, plus revising passages for clarity; eliminating jargon; and suggesting cuts, additions, and reorganization

PROOFREADERS check material at the final stage after it has been formatted for print or online publication, looking for typographical, formatting, and other errors that sneak past copy editor and author review. Some editors are excellent proofreaders, but many recommend a fresh pair of eyes because they become too familiar with material they've already edited.

Related Services



Some editors also offer writing, diversity editing, indexing, formatting, or design services, and others will refer you to more specialized professionals for those services.

GHOSTWRITERS write on behalf of an author who wants to publish but have a professional do most of the writing. Some editors consider ghostwriting an extension of their rewriting capabilities, but some ghostwriters specialize in writing and not editing.

SENSITIVITY READERS/DIVERSITY EDITORS review written work for inadvertently noninclusive or offensive language, stereotypes, and tropes.

INDEXERS begin their work in the final stages of the production process. A good index is far more than just an alphabetized list of contents; it provides readers quick access to the details of a lengthy book or report. Indexing is a specialized skill that some editors offer, but not all indexers are also editors.

DESIGNERS enhance the visual presentation of the text, selecting fonts, styling titles and headings, fixing spacing, adding ornaments, and more. They often work with **FORMATTERS**, who set the text into a publishable layout appropriate for a specific medium.

