



What to Expect from the Editorial Process

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from the Editorial Process



You've written your book (or your business documentation), done all your groundwork, sorted out your budget and found an editor you'd like to work with.

So what happens next? What can you expect from working with an editor?



Every editor is different. Just as there are different types of editing, there are different ways of approaching an edit, but generally the process will remain the same.

Let's break it down into stages ...

1. **You've approached your editor, [made sure your manuscript is ready](#)**, given them a sample of your work, a budget has been agreed and the type of editing has been agreed upon.
2. Next you will have to **book your work into their schedule**. Never expect that as soon as you are ready to go your editor will have space for you. Depending on the scope of the edit you may have to wait a while. Generally, editors like to know that they have work scheduled, so many will have booked work a few months in advance. Expect to wait a couple of weeks to a couple of months before they can start work on your manuscript. If they work in a highly specialised field you may have to wait longer. Don't see this as a bad thing – once you've found an editor who you feel you can work with, the wait will be worth it.



3. **Send all your relevant details**. This includes not only the manuscript that the editor will be working on, but your preferences for style. If you are writing for a company send the editor your company's style guide. If you are an author let the editor know if you have been using a style guide such as [New Hart's Rules](#) or the [Chicago Manual of Style](#), and which dictionary you prefer. If you have made your own style guide too, let your editor know. You'll be working together to make your writing the best it can be, collaboration is key – don't expect your editor to be a mind reader.

4. **Let the editor do their job.** Once your slot has come around you may be contacted by your editor who will let you know that work will be starting. Now is the time to sit back and let them get on with it. Do not hassle them with 'oh, by the way ...' or 'can you just ...' or 'when will you send ...' or 'have you finished yet'. Editing is both an art and a science. It takes time and concentration. If your editor has questions that are important to the flow of the job they will contact you. Just sit back and wait. Patience is a virtue.



5. **Review the document.** If you've spoken to your editor you should know how they work on your manuscript and how many passes or rounds of editing are involved. The terminology can be loose, but generally a pass means how many times your editor has gone through your manuscript, a round can mean how many times it goes between editor and author. For example, when I edit your work I will generally carry out two passes in one round of editing. In this example my first pass will be to look through your document for obvious layout errors, spelling mistakes, stylistic errors etc. (a fairly mechanical process). My second pass will be where the majority of work is carried out: the nitty gritty editorial process using Word's tracked changes. The document will then be returned to you for review and any queries and comments will be addressed. That round of editing is then complete. Any further rounds will require payment as a new edit.



When you get your document back for review take your time to read it through and address any comments from the editor. You may want to just go through it yourself, thank the editor for their time and move on, or you might want to ask the editor a few questions. This is the time to do it. You are perfectly within your rights to reject any changes that have been made, but you must take into account that rejecting one change may impact on the sentence and those around it. If you really don't like, or understand, the change this is your chance to talk it through. Remember that an editor is a trained professional, but this is your document and you must feel comfortable with the edit.



6. **Move onto the next stage of your publishing process.** Once you've reviewed the edit, and you're happy that the document is ready, it's now time to either move on or add another round of editing. Some people will go back and rewrite after an edit, focusing on the editors comments, while others will accept all the changes and feel that the job is done. It all depends on the type of edit carried out – a developmental edit is one at the beginning of the process, whereas after a copy-edit you should be ready for the final stages of publishing. When you're happy, it's time to get your manuscript ready for publication and hire a proofreader for that final look-over.

So, you see, the editorial process isn't at all mysterious. The main thing to remember is to talk with your editor, communicate well and don't take comments personally. It's very easy to get protective of your work, but trust your editor, they want what's best for you and your work.

If you would like to work with me, [contact me and we can talk through your project.](#)