



## Definitions of Editing Services

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### **Developmental Editing (aka Substantive Editing, Content Editing)**

A developmental edit is a “big picture” edit, and is generally the first round of editing performed on a manuscript. Some line edits or copyedits may be included on the manuscript to show how to revise effectively. A developmental editor

- identifies problems with overall clarity or accuracy;
- seeks to achieve clarity of subject, logic, and consistency by identifying cloudy explanations, vague assumptions, and faulty logic;
- evaluates the order of the text and recommends ways to reorganize;
- identifies gaps in content, structure, and style;
- analyzes sentences for structure, syntax, and rhythm;
- suggests clearer explanations, anecdotes, analogies, or illustrations;
- proposes additions or deletions of headings;
- identifies outdated content and factual errors; and
- points out content that doesn’t adhere to the theme, tone, or marketing focus of the manuscript.

For a fiction manuscript, a content edit also identifies problems in pacing, plot, dialogue, point of view (POV), character development, setting, lack of conflict/tension, too much (or too little) description, showing and telling.

Note: The terms *developmental editor*, *substantive editor*, and *content editor* overlap and may be used interchangeably. When seeking an editor, the best practice is to ascertain what each editor includes in this type of edit.

### **Line Editing**

Line editors work at the sentence or paragraph level of a manuscript, working on a line-by-line basis to check for clarity, flow, style, and tone. Basic line edits are often included in a developmental edit. Moderate and in-depth copyedits may also include a line edit.

\*If you would like to get a line edit for your manuscript through the Christian Editor Connection, request a copyedit and specify that you would like a heavy copyedit with line editing.

## Copyediting

Copyeditors correct spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. A copyedit can be light, moderate, or heavy depending on the manuscript's condition and the author's preference. A copyeditor may also

- ensure material is logical and understandable;
- correct continuity problems;
- ensure sources are properly cited for all statistics and quotations; and
- flag inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

In a moderate copyedit, the editor may also look for

- redundancies;
- sentence clarity;
- word choice; and
- maintenance of tone/voice.

A heavy copyedit could also include some line editing, such as

- a review for consistency of style and mood or presentation of content;
- analysis of the point of view (fiction);
- cross-checking references, figures, tables, equations, etc. (nonfiction); and
- pointing out items that may require permission from the copyright holder.

## Proofreading

This stage of editing generally follows developmental, line editing, and/or copyediting. Proofreaders review the text for

- typographical errors;
- misspelled/misused words;
- grammatical problems;
- punctuation mistakes (including abbreviations and capitalization);
- inconsistent format;
- spacing errors;
- specialized terms, character names (fiction), locations;
- numerical and alphabetical sequences;
- vertical and horizontal alignment of set-off text (including paragraph indents); and
- references to illustrations, tables, and figures within the text.

If a manuscript contains Scripture quotations, the proofreader may, upon request, verify that the quotations have been copied accurately and that the reference given is the correct one (including the Bible version being used).

# OTHER TYPES OF EDITING

## **Manuscript Critique**

A critique is an overall assessment of a manuscript, pinpointing its strengths and weaknesses. Specific problem areas are flagged and general suggestions for improvement are made. A professional opinion of the manuscript's potential for acceptance by an agent and/or royalty-paying publisher may be given if offered/requested.

## **Beta Reading**

Beta readers read a manuscript, often before the manuscript undergoes editing, and provide feedback to the author, usually at no cost. Some common issues addressed are plot holes, inconsistencies, and errors. While many beta readers are friends or acquaintances of the author, or avid readers who enjoy the author's genre, some editors offer beta reading as a paid service. Typically, feedback from a beta reader is less in-depth than a manuscript critique.

## **Sensitivity Reading**

Sensitivity readers review a manuscript with the goal of pointing out cultural inaccuracies, representation issues, bias, stereotypes, or problematic language. While many sensitivity readers are not editors, some editors offer sensitivity reading as an editing service.

## **Book Doctoring**

Book doctors are generally considered developmental editors. However, in addition to providing editorial feedback, they also make changes to the manuscript by rewriting and reorganizing passages. They often work with an author from the initial concept, outline, and/or draft.

## **Mentoring/Coaching/Consulting**

Mentors/coaches/consultants work with a client to develop, refine, and/or complete a manuscript. This can include everything from emotional support to practical advice. Coaching can begin at the start of the project to provide direction, or later if an author becomes "stuck" and needs assistance to complete the project. A consultant may also assist clients in navigating the steps involved in publishing their book.

## **Coauthoring/Collaborating**

A coauthor/collaborator works with the author to write the book together. The collaborator may be listed as a coauthor of the book.

## **Ghostwriting**

A ghostwriter uses text, notes, outlines, and/or transcriptions provided by the author to write the manuscript. New material is obtained from the author as needed. The author retains all rights and receives all royalties, and only the author is listed as author of the book.