

# MacDerby Farm Chapter - Editors Report - Developmental Editing - BubbleCow

Editor: Gary Smailes

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## Understanding Your Feedback

Before I launch into more detailed feedback, I thought I'd run through how the edit has been structured.

You will have downloaded two files:

1. The edited manuscript.
2. The editor's report.

The first is your original manuscript but now contains detailed editorial notes. The second is this file, which contains the thoughts of your editor.

These are Word documents and contain both comments and tracked changes. If you don't use Word, don't worry; most modern word processing packages have the ability to 'read' Word manuscripts.

If you are having problems opening your files, you can download this excellent word processing software for free - [LibreOffice](#).

Before you dive into the edit I think it will help if you understand the ethos behind BubbleCow's approach to providing feedback.

We see the role of the edited manuscript to be that it offers specific, actionable feedback on a sentence/paragraph level problems. You should be able to apply the suggestions made on a line-by-line basis, without any real wider knowledge.

The role of the editor's report is to provide a wider overview of the editing process. This means that if we have made changes to the manuscript that require a deeper rationale, these have been outlined and explained in the report.

One way to consider the two documents is to see the report as the wider instructions and the manuscript as the practical application. You should be able to start each editing session by reading the editor's report, before diving into the specific section of the manuscript.

# Using Tracked Changes

If you are comfortable with comments and tracked changes, then you can jump ahead to the next section ('Edited Manuscript').

Tracked changes are like magic. Once they are turned on, they record everything that happens to your manuscript. You then have the power to go in and accept or reject the changes as you see fit.

Comments are the little 'speech' bubbles that appear on the side of your manuscript. These allow your editor to add their thoughts and, in the process, allow you to 'see' the editing process.

The video below will give you a more in-depth view of tracked changes and comments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUf-lxzXyVk>

## Edited Manuscript

When you first open the edited manuscript, you may feel overwhelmed by the number of alterations. This is normal.

The manuscript contains both my tracked changes and comments explaining the rationale behind these changes. In some cases, I've re-written passages or removed whole sections, but where I've done so I've sought to explain my thinking using comments. Where possible, I have also highlighted sections I feel work well.

The real power of tracked changes is that if you disagree with the comment or change, you can just 'reject' what I've said and carry on.

Whenever I've identified a persistent problem, I've stopped explaining any future changes within the comments and have instead just made the change. Where this is the case, I have written out an explanation for my rationale behind the changes in the editor's report. You'll need to read the comments I've left and review the changes, accepting or rejecting them as you see fit.

## Editor's Report

The editor's report should be read first, and is designed to ease you into the editing process by providing an overview and explanation. The aim is for you to use the feedback in both the manuscript and in this report as a means of formulating a plan to elevate your manuscript to the next level.

I've split the report into several sections...

## Typographical and Stylistic Details

You'll find a summary of your book's typographical and stylistic details, which lists things such as what form of English your book is written in, how you're writing out times, whether you're using the Oxford comma or not, etc. This section is useful as it collates information and serves as a future reference. It will also help you enforce a level of consistency on your book.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

You'll also find pointers that will give you an overview of what I think are the manuscript's key strengths and weaknesses. If they're turning up here, they are some of the manuscript's biggest and most persistent problems, and will need addressing before any others. I'll explain what the problem is, how it is manifested in your book, and why it is a problem. I'll also suggest at least one possible solution.

Please note: I've approached your book from the point of view of a new reader. This means that I may make a comment early on but then later change my mind. This should give you a good indication of how a reader will be responding to the story and any confusions he/she may have. It should also help you to see my thinking process. Feedback has indicated that this can be very helpful for some writers.

Please remember that all the comments and changes come from a place of support, not criticism. I want to make the book the best it can be, as you do. I'm not here to cast judgement or project my own preferences. In fact, my role is to help nudge your writing style towards a place that will create the best possible reading experience.

Our goal is to produce better books and better writers.

Finally, once you delve into the feedback, I'd suggest you read the notes and then take a day or two to absorb what I've suggested. If you disagree with any changes, that's fine but please do take a little time to think them over before getting back to me. If after this cool-off period you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to email me at [gary@bubblecow.com](mailto:gary@bubblecow.com).

## Notes on the Edited Manuscript

Below is a list of general comments about your manuscript.

Please note, many of these changes have been made to help in the eBook conversion process. This process often involves the use of the original manuscript's formatting to help 'set' the formatting of the eBook. However, this can be problematic. I have, therefore, made some changes to help negate any potential future issues.

- I've run a basic spelling and grammar check. I've carefully made the alterations I felt were needed. This is not a proofread, but will add some level of consistency to your book.
- I have replaced double spaces with single spaces. This was to eliminate any unwanted 'white space', which is often removed during the eBook conversion process.
- I've set the line spacing to 1.5 lines. This helps with readability.
- I've added page breaks at the end of chapters. This will help with digital conversion.
- Ellipses have been formatted as ... (dot dot dot), not . . . (dot space dot space dot space).

## **Stylistic and Typographical Summary**

Below is a list of changes that have been made to help with readability and add consistency.

### **Language**

American English

### **Numeric Notation**

Spell out whole numbers up to (and including) one hundred (e.g., zero, one, ten, ninety-six, 104). Spell out numbers that begin a sentence unless it begins with a year (e.g., "Twelve drummers," "The ten lords a-leaping," "2011's quota for off-season holiday references has been filled.").

Spell out ordinal numbers up to (and including) "hundredth" (e.g., second, sixty-first, 333rd, 1,024th).

If you're juggling a bunch of numbers within the same paragraph or series of paragraphs, be flexible with the number style if doing so will improve clarity and comprehension. For example, use one number style for items in one category and another style for another category: "I read four books with more than 400 pages, sixty books with more than 100 pages, and a hundred articles with less than 4 pages."

### **Speech Marks**

Single for direct, double for reported

### **Oxford Comma**

No.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

It's evident from your writing that your knowledge of the lake's locale is not only extensive but also presented in a manner that captivates and engages the reader. This depth of understanding adds a rich layer to your narrative, making the lake and its surroundings come alive in the reader's imagination.

Additionally, your writing style is particularly commendable. The voice you've crafted is both engaging and easy to comprehend, which is crucial in non-fiction writing. It ensures that your readers are not just informed but are also entertained, thereby increasing the likelihood of them remaining engaged throughout the chapter.

Furthermore, the way you've intertwined the story with informative content about the lake and its buildings is skilfully done. This approach serves a dual purpose - it keeps the narrative interesting while also educating the reader about the subject matter. It's a fine balance to maintain, and you've done it well.

However, there are a few areas that could benefit from further refinement:

While your storytelling is strong, some sentences within the chapter could be improved for better clarity and impact. This includes addressing grammatical errors, refining complex or cumbersome sentence structures, and ensuring consistency in tense and perspective. It's these small details that can greatly enhance the overall readability and professionalism of your work.

In several instances, the narrative tends to 'tell' rather than 'show'. This is a common challenge in writing, where the tendency to explicitly state facts or feelings can undermine the reader's engagement and imagination. A more effective approach is to 'show' through descriptive language, action, dialogue, and sensory details. For example, instead of stating "The lake was serene and beautiful," you might describe the scene in a way that allows the reader to experience that serenity and beauty for themselves.

By addressing these areas, you can elevate the quality of your chapter significantly. Remember, the goal is to not just convey information, but to do so in a way that is as compelling and immersive as possible. Keep up the good work, and with a bit of fine-tuning, your chapter has the potential to be an even more powerful piece of writing.

## **Sentence Level Issues**

In addressing the sentence-level issues within your chapter, the primary focus was to enhance readability and facilitate a deeper engagement for the reader with your story. These adjustments, though mostly minor, play a significant role in streamlining the narrative and ensuring a smooth reading experience.

It is essential to clarify that these changes were made with the utmost care to preserve and enhance your unique 'voice'. The intent was not to significantly alter the way you express your

ideas but to refine them for clarity and impact. For example, where sentences were overly complex or convoluted, they have been simplified for better comprehension without sacrificing the depth or intent of your original writing.

One notable aspect of formatting that has been standardized is the paragraph indentation. In your manuscript, the first paragraph of each chapter was indented, which is contrary to the conventional format in most published works. Typically, the first paragraph of a new chapter or section is left flush (unindented) with the left margin, with all subsequent paragraphs indented. This formatting style not only adheres to industry standards but also provides a visually clean and professional appearance to the text. It also aids in clearly demarking the beginning of new chapters, thereby enhancing the overall readability.

## **Show, Don't Tell**

In the realm of narrative non-fiction, "show, don't tell" is a fundamental principle that can significantly enhance the reader's connection to the book and its topics. This technique involves conveying information through vivid descriptions, actions, dialogues, and sensory details, rather than merely stating facts or summarizing events. By 'showing', you invite readers to experience the story, rather than just reading about it.

"Show, don't tell" is crucial in narrative non-fiction because it transforms the text from a mere conveyance of information into a more immersive, engaging experience. It allows readers to visualize scenes, empathize with characters (whether they are real people or representations), and engage with the subject matter on a deeper, more emotional level. This technique is especially important in narrative non-fiction because, although the genre deals with real events and factual information, it benefits greatly from the storytelling methods typically associated with fiction.

For example, consider a passage about a serene lake. Instead of simply stating, "The lake was calm and beautiful," you might 'show' this scene with more vivid detail:

"The early morning mist hovered over the lake's glassy surface, pierced only by the occasional ripple from a jumping fish. The rising sun cast a golden glow across the water, reflecting off the smooth pebbles lining the shore. A gentle breeze carried the scent of pine and fresh water, adding to the lake's tranquil allure."

In this 'showing' example, the reader can almost see, smell, and feel the tranquility of the lake. It's no longer just an abstract concept of beauty and calmness; it's a vivid scene that the reader can mentally inhabit. This engagement is what makes narrative non-fiction compelling and memorable.

Incorporating "show, don't tell" in your writing enriches your narrative, providing a more textured and nuanced exploration of your topics. It's not just about presenting facts; it's about bringing

those facts to life in a way that resonates with your readers, enabling them to fully immerse themselves in the world you are describing.

## **Chapter Feedback**

This section contains specific feedback about your chapters. This feedback is in addition to the Specific Feedback.

### **Chapter 1**

IN THE FULL EDIT WE WOULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CHAPTER INFORMATION