For a new author it is probably safe to assume that most aren’t going to know that there are different editing levels and that there are a lot of terms that go to the same editing level. With each heading I included the synonyms of the same edit to solve the mystery of what someone might be talking about when they mention [insert name here] edit. Last week I talked about why new indie authors need editing. Now I can help you understand the kinds of editing you may need or be recommended by an editor or publisher. Also included are basic per word figures in what is acceptable  among editors and self publishing so that you will determine if you are getting a fair price and not being overcharged for your edits. Some self publishers (non-reputable) will overcharge for editing and some individuals will too.

Developmental Editing

Developmental editors help you develop your project from an initial concept or draft, and can consult with you before the writing even begins. Developmental editors can help plan the organization and features of your project. They may make suggestions about content and presentation, write or rewrite text, do research, and suggest additional topics for you to consider

**Developmental / Project Editing**

Co-ordinating and editing a project from proposal or rough manuscript to final manuscript, incorporating input from authors, consultants and reviewers. May include budgeting, hiring, design supervision and project co-ordination.

**Developmental/project editing**  
Do you have an idea for a book but don’t know how to begin? Or perhaps your company is working with outdated, unfocused marketing materials and needs an image update. Developmental editing includes co-ordinating and supervising your entire project from rough concept to market-ready product, incorporating input from consultants, designers, and marketing experts to reviewers and other writers, where necessary. I’ll prepare a schedule and cost estimate according to your specific deadlines and budget.

**Developmental (also called substantive) editing is about the big picture.** This is where you’ll want to start if you’re new to editing or in the early stages of cleaning up your finished novel; that way you won’t waste time fine-tuning sections that may not make it into the final draft. Developmental editing can help you fix things like these:

* holes in your plot
* story threads that dead-end
* main characters that fail to captivate
* secondary characters that should be scrapped or given a larger role
* decisions about voice (first-person vs. third, close vs. omniscient, etc.)
* order of the scenes
* flow of action and pacing
* and many others

Developmental Editing/Book Doctoring

Some people lump the term developmental editing in with the term substantive editing (*see next section*); however, others use the term as a distinctly separate type of work. I agree with the latter camp, and that's the explanation I'm going to give here.  
  
**What does developmental editing/book doctoring address in fiction editing?**

* Developmental editing/etc., focuses on story concept and overall execution, whether the intent of the story is clear and satisfying for the reader and intended market, and addressing the professional quality of the writing itself.
* Developmental editing is done when a manuscript is either a work in progress (WIP), an early draft that an author feels uncertain about, or when an author's final draft is not well-received by first readers (aka beta readers, critique partners, friends, and family), agents, or publishers.
* A developmental edit may result in the author reworking a plot thread or character in its entirety, rewriting or reordering large portions of the manuscript, or possibly writing an entire new draft after further developing a particular writing skill.
* A developmental editor will brainstorm and contribute plot, scene, and character ideas. They will sometimes do light rewrites of brief sections, but they do not heavily rewrite to the point of becoming a ghost-writer. They may also do market and genre research and guide you in all aspects of project development. A developmental editor is a mentor who teaches and helps you build core storytelling skills.

Although I occasionally do developmental editing, it's not a service I routinely offer. If you really want to work with me, though, you're always welcome to ask if I'd be interested in your project.

Substantive/Structural/Publish-Ready/Developmental Editing

This is the heaviest (and most costly) form of editing. It is basically your line/content edit on steroids. The editor will do content and copyedits (sometimes) and actually move, delete, add, or rewrite entire paragraphs, chapters, and sections of the manuscript. It is almost a hybrid of ghostwriting (where someone else write your manuscript for you) and editing. The range for this type of editing is very broad. It can overlap a little with the line edit area to the very expensive. All of this depends on the editor’s price range. But whatever the case is, it is the most expensive choice of the editor’s services. Knowing the figures will help you shop around for a good editor for a good deal if you need this level.

**Range: .02 up to .075**

\*\*\*This can go as high as .75 per word. Again, paying this much money is unnecessary. Reminder: The higher the price tag is not equal to a much better edit. The editor’s skill and credibility is more important than the price tag.

**Substantive (developmental) editing**

The most intensive form of editing is substantive editing. The document is evaluated as a whole and problems of structure, organization, coherence, and logical consistency are corrected. Sentences may be removed or added. Paragraphs may be rewritten, condensed, or expanded. Blocks of text may be moved from one section to another. Substantive editing includes one revision at no additional charge. Turnaround time must be negotiated.

**Substantive or Structural Editing**

Clarifying and/or reorganizing a manuscript for content and structure. Changes may be suggested to or drafted for the author. May include negotiating changes with author

* **Substantive and structural editing**  
  Ideally, your written work should captivate your reader’s imagination and engage his or her mind fully, without causing frustration or undue backtracking for clarification. Substantive editing means heavy editing, whether structural, stylistic, or copy editing, and is typically a combination of the three. Structural editing focuses on logical organization and flow of content to render your document clear, concise, and easy to read at the sentence, paragraph, and chapter levels. A structural edit will ensure your arguments make sense, your plot develops in a compelling fashion, and your information is conveyed accurately and logically.

Substantive Editing/Content Editing/Structural Editing

This is the type of editing that most commonly goes by different names. As mentioned in the previous section, some people also use developmental editing as a synonym for this level of editing; I do not.  
  
Substantive editing is for a manuscript that has *some*scene, plot, or character issues but is in great shape as a whole, with quality writing and storytelling execution. If a multitude of the issueslisted in this sectionare present in the majority of a manuscript to where massive rewrites are needed throughout, you need a developmental edit. See section above.  
  
**What does substantive editing/content editing/structural editing address in fiction manuscripts?**

* Substantive editing/etc. focuses on *fine-tuning* big-picture elements like three-dimensional characterization at all times, hero and heroine likability, character arcs (do they grow?), [GMC](http://www.publishingcrawl.com/2012/07/31/emergency-post-goal-motivation-and-conflict/) (Goal, Motivation, Conflict), using secondary characters to best advantage, plot holes, unresolved threads, pacing, tension, climaxes, following the principals of the Three-Act Structure (when applicable), content relevancy and necessity, plausibility vs. suspension of disbelief (logic is an issue I go after intensively; it's the number one issue in most manuscripts), head-hopping, world-building, fact-checking elements that underpin overall plot or character concepts, romance satisfaction (if applicable), red herrings and mystery satisfaction (if applicable), and more.
* Substantive editing starts once an author feels they've written their final draft. They think it's perfect, and probably their mom does too; first readers like it overall but may have a few critiques; agents or publishers may express a degree of interest but don't feel it's quite "there".
* **Substantive editing is targeted at tweaking, rewriting, cutting, or reordering paragraphs, pages, and scenes**, and very occasionally whole chapters (though issues that large usually fall under developmental editing).
* The editor points out the issues and suggests solutions, but the writer is the one who does the majority of rewrites to solve the problems according to their vision for the story.
* At this stage, the editor is the reader's advocate. The editor's role is to help the writer see issues from the reader's perspective.

**Most manuscripts need to start with a substantive edit.** Nearly all manuscripts have aspects that are out of sync or could use some improvement.   
  
When a manuscript is contracted with a traditional publisher, the acquiring editor works with the author on substantive elements before passing the manuscript to the copy editor. **Self-publishing authors should take the same professional approach by starting at the beginning of the editorial process.** Give your book every opportunity to succeed!  
  
If you plan to submit your manuscript to an agent or publishing house, bear in mind that some will only consider a manuscript once, and if they think *too much* substantive editing will be needed on their end, they'll most likely reject the manuscript instead of offering a contract. And unless they personally invite you to resubmit after you make changes on your own, you'll likely have lost your chance with them. So, before you submit to and get rejected by the agent or publisher of your dreams, you may want to hire a freelance editor to help you substantive edit your manuscript first. If you've already been rejected by your top pick agents or publishers, it's a good idea to hire a freelance editor before submitting elsewhere.  
  
Usually a substantive edit is done on two fronts. It will include an editorial letter, also called an editorial report, typically 10-25 pages in length, giving detailed feedback on big-picture content issues. Within the manuscript itself, there will be comments and light edits to highlight examples of issues addressed in the editorial letter, as well as relatively minor or page-specific content issues that may not have been included in the editorial letter.  
  
When an author gets a substantive edit back from an editor and sees that there *is*still hard work to be done, there's often a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates needed. Or both. But don't fret! Your editor is your partner, not your enemy, and you'll do a happy dance once you see how your next draft is even more amazing than your last.  
  
Want to hire me for substantive editing? Please see my [editing rates](http://www.romancerefined.com/my-editing-services-and-rates.html) page for information on how a tailor this service. This type of editing is my favorite kind of work!

**Level 3 – Substantive editing (also known as Line editing)**

Editors will rewrite major portions of your document if this type of copy editing is requested. Most people who need this service need help *writing* the paper, not just *editing*. Level 3 is essentially developmental editing in that the editor rewrites your document with the *intent* of educating you on how to better write. Expect your work to change substantively. New content will be added if the editor feels arguments made in the body of the paper lack substance or need support. New references, citations, and research may also be added.

Substantive editing is time-consuming and expensive. It also demands extra time from the original author to ensure the editor’s changes hasn’t altered the intent or tone of the paper. Rewrites are often prone to the loss of the author’s original voice. It often takes multiple revisions to get everything right.

Substantive Editing

Substantive editors work with you once you have a full text. They will help you get it into its final form, which may involve reordering or rewriting segments of it to improve readability, clarity, or accuracy. If you're a fiction writer, a substantive editor can alert you to inconsistent character behavior or speech, help you adjust your language to your desired audience, and make sure your story has believable dialogue and a plausible plotline

Copyediting

Copyeditors work with your text when it is in final or nearly final form. They read each sentence carefully, seeking to fix all errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and word usage while preserving your meaning and voice. With your permission, they may rewrite tangled sentences or suggest alternative wordings. They can ensure that your text conforms to a certain [style](http://www.edsguild.org/style-manuals); if your project includes elements such as captions, tables, or footnotes, they can check those against the text.

**Copy Editing**

Editing for grammar, spelling, punctuation and other mechanics of style; checking for consistency of mechanics and internal consistency of facts; marking head levels and approximate placement of art; notifying designer of any unusual production requirements. May include Canadianizing; metrication; providing or changing system of citations; writing or editing captions and/or credit lines; writing running heads; listing permissions needed and/or obtaining them; providing or editing prelims, back matter, cover copy and/or CIP data. May also include negotiating changes with author.

N.B. "Copy editing" is often loosely used to include stylistic and even structural editing, fact checking and mark-up. It is not so used by the Editors’ Association of Canada.

**Copy editing is about grammar, punctuation, and proper word usage.** It’s the kind of editing you’d pull out your [Chicago Manual of Style](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html) to do. Here are the types of questions you might ask yourself when doing a copy edit:

* should I use “which” or “that”?
* did I use punctuation correctly in the dialogue?
* should that be a comma or a semicolon?
* and a zillion others

Note that in the publishing world, the terms line editing and copy editing are sometimes used interchangeably, as they are closely related and often done by the same person or as a single step in the editing process. Some line editing may also be done during a developmental edit. So if you hire an editor, be sure you’re clear on what services he or she is offering.

**Copy editing**  
Copy editing is the level of editing most commonly called for. I’ll check and standardize grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of style. Critical at this level is a thorough check for consistency of style choices, mechanics, and facts. It may include fact-checking, marking heading levels, approximating placement of art, and notifying the designer of any unusual production requirements. It also may include providing or editing cover copy and front and back matter, and spot-checking references. Big changes are not made during the copy editing stage. I’ll consult with you in every instance where I feel an important change is required.

Copyediting/Copy-Editing/Copy Editing

As if wading through editing lingo wasn't tough enough, editors can't even agree on a single spelling for what they do! Some might find it ironic, but really the spelling variation for the word copyediting is the perfect example to illustrate how useful an editor can be for an author. Spellings and style choices are often specific to regions, such as American vs. British English, while others are specific to which style format is being followed, such as American fiction publishers preferring Chicago style rather than AP style. An editor will ensure the best spelling options are used--and used *consistently*--throughout the entirety of a manuscript.  
  
**What does the copyediting stage address in fiction manuscripts?**

* Copyediting focuses on elements such as detail and description consistency (making sure the hero's eyes stay the same color throughout, a house doesn't grow an extra bedroom, if a character is standing on page 10 they aren't said to be rising from a chair on page 11, etc.), grammar, correct word usage (such as die vs. dye), punctuation, adherence to a style guide or a publisher's house style, fact-checking minor details such as business names and historic dates, formatting elements like text messages and letters, flagging potential copyright and legal issues, and more.
* **Copyediting is targeted at rewriting parts of sentences and some complete sentences but usually not whole paragraphs.**
* The editor will make nearly all of the changes, not the writer.
* Copyediting addresses correctness rather than artfulness of expression.

This is the point at which an editor makes a style sheet for the sake of tracking consistency details. I make meticulous [style sheets](http://www.romancerefined.com/style-sheets.html) that include timelines, which I pass on to my authors.**The style sheet will be used to check consistency for any further edits that either you or I make during later revisions, but it's also an invaluable tool for future books in a series.**  
**Level 2 – Copy editing**

This is the most common interpretation of copy editing. In addition to the proofreading services in Level 1, copy editing focuses on the “five Cs” – writing that is clear, correct, concise, complete, and consistent. Editors will adjust sentence and paragraph structure, eliminate redundant words, replace repetitive words with synonyms, and substitute weak words, phrases, and sentences with powerful alternatives. Experienced editors will ensure your original tone remains intact. You can expect noticeable change to your original document and should be prepared to review the changes to ensure you are happy with them.

Professional editors will use a revision-tracking system, such as Microsoft Word’s *Track Changes* feature, so you can see changes and quickly accept or reject them with the click of a button.

**Copy editing**

The editor corrects problems of grammar, style, repetition, word usage, and jargon. Copy editing includes one revision at no additional charge. Turnaround time for copy editing typically is three business days.

**Copy editing is about grammar, punctuation, and proper word usage.** It’s the kind of editing you’d pull out your [Chicago Manual of Style](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html) to do. Here are the types of questions you might ask yourself when doing a copy edit:

* should I use “which” or “that”?
* did I use punctuation correctly in the dialogue?
* should that be a comma or a semicolon?
* and a zillion others

Note that in the publishing world, the terms line editing and copy editing are sometimes used interchangeably, as they are closely related and often done by the same person or as a single step in the editing process. Some line editing may also be done during a developmental edit. So if you hire an editor, be sure you’re clear on what services he or she is offering.

Proofreading

Proofreading is the final stage in the editorial process. Proofreaders usually see a project after design is complete and any photos or other visual elements have been added – a typeset book or brochure, a demonstration website. They correct errors overlooked during copyediting or introduced during the design process. If you wish, they can also cross-check the text to ensure that earlier changes were made correctly, and they can check design elements such as heading and typeface styles, page numbers, and the like.

<http://www.mseditoronline.com/types.html>

**Proofreading**

Proofreading is the lightest form of editing. Minor errors are corrected. Minor errors include:

* errors of grammar and style (e.g., verb tense, units such as ml, use of numerals and words such as “5” or “five”)
* errors of capitalization, punctuation (e.g., the use of commas, semicolons, colons, periods, dashes, apostrophes)
* errors of spelling and word usage (e.g., to/too, affect/effect)

Turnaround time for proofreading typically is two business days.

**Proofreading**

Reading proofs of edited manuscript. Galley proofing may include incorporating and/or exercising discretion on author's alterations; flagging locations of art and page references; verifying computer codes. Page proofing may include checking adherence to mock-up (rough paste-up), accuracy of running heads, folios and changes made to type in mock-up, checking page breaks and location of art, and inserting page numbers to table of contents and cross-references if necessary. May also include checking vandykes and colour mats (press proofs).

**Proofreading**  
Proofreading is sometimes mistaken for copy editing, but technically speaking, it’s a separate process. Proofing is done after editing and layout, after the page proofs have been prepared by the designer. While copy editing errors may still be found, a proofreader is concerned with other elements. I will check all design elements for accuracy and consistency including headers, level heads, page numbering, word breaks, end-of-line breaks, page breaks, cross references, and appropriate placement of tables and artwork. May include completion of table of contents and index and numbering of cross references. See my page [Editing versus proofreading](http://penultimateword.com/editing/editing-versus-proofreading/) for more about the differences.

**Proofreading is the final step in the editing process and results in the final don’t-touch-it-again draft.** This is where you catch spelling mistakes, typos, missing words, isolated punctuation errors, and the like. It’s the step that requires the most attention to detail, so if you’re doing it on your own work, it’s often essential to set the manuscript aside for a period of time so you can approach it with fresh eyes. Another helpful trick is to read your work aloud at a slow, measured pace.

Proofreading

Proofreading is yet another term that can mistakenly be lumped in with copyediting, especially in the new era of electronic documents. It is, however, a process of its own.   
  
Only publishers and self-publishing authors need to pay for proofreading. The types of errors that are addressed by proofreading are not the type of thing that would prevent an agent or publisher from acquiring your manuscript. If you know your manuscript is riddled with grammar and punctuation errors, you need copyediting before submitting to an agent of publisher.   
  
**What does proofreading address in fiction manuscripts?**

* The purpose of proofreading is for double-checking, *not* assessing or improving.
* A proofreader checks nearly all of the same things that a copy editor does, but the difference is that the proofreader is looking for the hard-and-fast mistakes that were missed during the copyedit—because all [copy editors *do*miss things](http://www.copyediting.com/error-rates-editing)—not seeking to improve the text.
* A proofreader checks to ensure that no formatting errors were introduced when the file was typeset or designed for publication, such as line breaks resulting in widows or orphans, a missing blank line to separate scenes, etc.
* A proofreader uses the copy editor's style sheet as a guide for correcting inconsistencies.
* Usually proofreading only results in changing isolated phrases, words, or punctuation, not entire sentences.
* **What to Look For**
* When you proofread, you’ll spend a lot of time checking the mechanics and less time with the fiction elements, though you should search for problems with both.
* You’ll want to be alert for—
* ~  missing words and repeated words
* ~  misspelled or misused words
* ~  missing or incorrect punctuation
* ~  double punctuation marks at the ends of sentences
* ~  missing closing quotation mark
* ~  missing periods before closing quotation marks
* ~  missing punctuation in dialogue
* ~  missing second dash or comma of a pair (check asides, digressions, and nonessential clauses)
* ~  inconsistencies in capitalization or hyphenation (your style sheet will come in handy for these kinds of issues)
* ~  overuse of dashes or ellipses
* ~  missing capital letter for the first word of a sentence
* ~  extra character spaces between words (this can be easily fixed by using search and replace)
* ~  sentences inadvertently cut off
* ~  word repetition in neighboring paragraphs
* ~  overuse of I or there was/were/is
* ~  overuse of words you didn’t realize you used again and again
* ~  missing or wrong chapter numbers
* ~  timeline errors
* ~  inconsistent formatting**\***
* ~  placeholders that were never changed or removed
* ~  notes to yourself within the text
* ~  bookmarks that can be removed
* ~  highlighting that no longer serves a purpose
* ~  duplicate scenes or paragraphs
* In addition to these items, you’ll want to be alert to inconsistencies between scenes. For example, you may find one character doing (or saying) something in one scene but find a reference to a different character performing that action in another scene. You may find a character in one scene when she couldn’t possibly have been there because she was off doing something else while the scene played out.
* When you proofread, you’ll want to do one more check of the spelling of character names, place names, and business names. This is even more critical if you changed names while you were writing the story.
* I assume that by this point in your process of story creation that you’ve verified facts, but if not, now is the time to verify. Check the dates of events and verify the parties involved. Check the spelling of the names of real groups, companies, and product brands.
* **\***You want formatting to be consistent when you submit to agents and editors as a signal of professionalism. When you’re self-publishing, a consistent format helps you (or the service you hire) maintain consistency with the published document. Items you’ll want to check include paragraph indents, line spacing, font type and font size, and margins.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Proofreading takes an eye for detail, but it doesn’t have to be an intolerable task. And it’s especially important that it’s done well if you intend to self-publish.
* Proofreading before you submit to agents and publishing houses and before you self-publish will save you embarrassment and help you put the cleanest product possible before your readers. Don’t skimp on this vital step of manuscript preparation.
* **Practical Steps**
* Take out your favorite fine-toothed comb and go through your manuscript line by line, word by word.
* Read with a ruler or use a piece of paper to cover the text so you can concentrate on a single line at a time.
* Try reading from the end of the story to the beginning (by sentences, not words) one sentence at a time. If that doesn’t work for you, at least try working through your proofing from the last chapter through the first rather than from the first through the last. Shake up your brain a bit by approaching the manuscript in a different way.
* And take your time. Don’t try to rush through 350 pages in an afternoon. A good proofreading requires time.
* And it deserves attention. Try turning off the TV and your music. Give your full attention to the task.
* Find those niggling little errors that are hiding in your stories. Find them and ruthlessly do away with them.
* **Level 1 – Proofreading**
* Editors will check grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, verb-tense consistency, pronouns, spacing, and formatting consistency. Don’t expect editors to make radical changes to your sentences or words because those services fall under the next level of copy editing. You can [read more about proofreading here](https://www.gramlee.com/proofreading-services/).
* **Formatting**
* The editor will amend document text to ensure that it complies with the required format, such as the format required by a specific journal. Turnaround time can be negotiated.
* **References/Literature Cited**
* Literature citations are checked to ensure that each citation that appears in the text is also included in the list of citations. Citations are also checked to ensure that each citation that appears in the list of citations also appears in the text. The format of the citations are corrected so that it conforms with requirements, such as the style preferred by a specific journal.
* **Other documents**
* Other documents also may be edited. For example, the editor may rework tables, figures, and figure legends to represent the data more clearly.
* **Review**
* The editor may provide a one to two page diagnosis of the manuscript that highlights the areas where changes might be most beneficial. Criticisms that are likely to arise during peer review, such as repetitive, ambiguous, or incomplete information, will be noted. A review includes proofreading at no charge. Turnaround time must be negotiated.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| * . * **Stylistic Editing** * Clarifying meaning, eliminating jargon, smoothing language and other non-mechanical line-by-line editing. May include checking or correcting reading level; creating or recasting tables and/or figures; negotiating changes with author. * **Rewriting** * Creating a new manuscript or parts of a manuscript on the basis of content and research supplied by an author. May include some research and writing of original material. * **Picture Research** * Locating suitable photos and/or artwork. May include obtaining camera-ready reproductions; preparing descriptions, working sketches and/or artist's references or co-ordinates for illustrations, maps and diagrams; supervising production of final artwork; obtaining releases from and/or conducting financial negotiations with picture sources and artists; preparing labels, captions and sources for typesetting. |  | **Fact Checking / Reference Checking**  Checking accuracy of facts and/or quotes by reference to original sources used by author and/or from other sources.  **Indexing**  Producing an alphabetical list of names and places and/or subjects and concepts, etc., that appear in a work.  **Mark-Up / Coding**  Adding designer-written specifications for typesetter or word processor.  **Mock-Up (Rough Paste-Up)**  Producing a mock-up from proofs and marking proofs for changes necessitated by mock-up. May include copyfitting and/or marking colour breaks.  **Production Editing**  Co-ordinating typesetting and design in the mock-up and assembly stages; includes ensuring integration of design and content. May include actual mark-up, proofing, mock-up, page proofing, indexing and/or checking vandykes and colour mats. May also include locating, negotiating with and supervising designer, artists, typesetter, and printer and creating production schedule. |

**Line editing focuses on the sentence or paragraph level, rather than the broad story-scope of your novel.** It’s about refining sentence structure and flow to make your writing both more readable and more pleasurable to read.  Line editing can fix wordiness, awkward sentence structures, and other issues that make your writing feel “unpolished.” Line editing is what helps you go from the first sentence to the second one below:

–Hands trembling, she stared at her sister’s number at the top of the call list on the screen, and after hesitating another moment, sent the call through.

–Hands trembling, she stared at her sister’s number for a moment, then sent the call through.

**Stylistic editing**  
Every writer has a unique voice and every book has an individual tone, and a good editor will respect and enhance that uniqueness. During stylistic editing, without flouting the conventions of English, I will assist you in clarifying meaning, eliminating jargon and clichés, smoothing language, and polishing your distinct style. I’ll work with you to analyze your target audience and make sure you’re delivering a suitable and impactful message. Stylistic editing may include checking or correcting reading level or, in the case of fiction, adjusting tone and formality of language, including dialogue. Often, stylistic editing occurs at the sentence level, adjusting syntax for better flow, smoothness, and how the sentence “sounds” in the reader’s mind. Stylistic editing is sometimes called **line editing**.

**Rewriting**  
Do you suspect your manuscript has significant problems with logic, clarity, or style? Do your characters’ conversations seem stilted and wooden, your descriptive passages dull and flat? Based on your research, outline, and/or the contents of your rough draft, I’ll revise and create a new manuscript for you. This may include some additional research and writing of original material.

**Indexing**A thoughtfully prepared index can improve sales of your book. Preparing a comprehensive, logical index is best done by an indexing specialist with indexing software, which I don’t have, so this is work I will outsource to a specialist whom you approve. Your indexer will create an alphabetical list of names, places, subjects, and concepts that appear in your work. Working in consultation with you and your designer, he or she will produce an index of appropriate content and length.

**Fact checking/reference checking**  
I’ll check the accuracy of facts and quotations by referencing your original sources and/or checking other sources, usually using the Internet. Fact-checking is an important editorial task in both nonfiction and fiction, requiring an editor who instinctively knows when facts may be amiss. Even though I may not know the facts themselves, many years of editing has taught me to know when and what to check, and how and where to look things up.

Line Editing/Stylistic Editing

Some people lump aspects of line editing in with what they call substantive editing, while others lump aspects of line editing in with what they call copyediting. Perhaps this is because a lot of editors do line editing simultaneous with copyediting, which is what I do. Regardless, line editing targets specific elements.  
  
**What does line editing/stylistic editing address in fiction manuscripts?**

* Line editing/etc. focuses on elements such as syntax, best word choices, awkward phrasing, word and phrase overuse, variation of sentence construction, resolving ambiguities, "showing" vs. "telling," [beats](http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-goal/improve-my-writing/amp-up-dialogue-with-emotional-beats)interspersed with dialogue, ensuring dialogue is age appropriate and culturally accurate (I specialize in Americanisms and Britishisms), amping up or toning down sex scenes, world-building, setting scenes using all five senses, eliminating clichés, fact-checking elements that affect other details in the story, pointing out anachronistic expressions or references used in historicals, ensuring chapters break in the right spot and end with a hook, timeline consistency\*, and more.
* **Line editing is targeted at reworking sentences and paragraphs rather than whole pages or scenes.**
* The editor does most of the hands-on changes and rewrites, but some things will be left for the author to sort out according to their vision for the story.
* From this stage onward, the editor becomes the writer's advocate, focusing on how to help the writer say it best and look their best as an artist.

\*I create detailed [timelines](http://www.romancerefined.com/style-sheets.html) to track all time- and date-related references. The timeline ensures references to past events and ages stay consistent, a character doesn't go to their office job 9 days in a row, a woman's missed period occurs when it should, there aren't two full moons in the same week, and if an event is said to be taking place 12 days down the road, it actually happens that day.

Copyediting/Proofreading/Basic Editing

This is the simplest form of editing that goes over the basic things of a manuscript: spelling, punctuation, basic syntax, and basic facts. Most of the time this is the final touch to a manuscript after more heavy edits. Some editors and self publishing companies will include this edit with a higher editing level. Sometimes it must be purchased separately. Always check out the editor’s/publisher’s website for details or ask. If your manuscript needs a stronger edit than this and if it is included when the other edit is done, then you will come out with a better deal on your editing services. You will also save some time. **Always, I repeat, always** do your own readthroughs to triple check to make sure that a glaring mistake doesn’t sneak through that the editor missed (i.e. a missing period). Remember that the ideal is to be error free. It only takes a second to add a period and that is one less mistake that gets through the gauntlet. Editors are human to and they can also make small mistakes, especially if they are doing your content edits and a few of the little things might slip through on the copyedit. It’s your job to catch them! Do everything you can to make it close to error free as possible. However, if you are doing your readthroughs and you are UNSURE if a comma goes there, leave it alone. Everyone knows about the itchy comma finger. Of course, if it is an obvious place for a comma and there isn’t one, do add it.

**Fair Price Range: .004 to .015 per word**

Line/Content/Stylistic/Heavy Editing

This is the most commonly used type of editing to help with story and sentence flow, plot holes, and more content related issues, and more involved facts. Since this is a heavier edit it does cost a little bit more than your regular, everyday copyedit.

**Fair price range: .015-.035 per word (sometimes a copyedit is also included)**

\*\*\*In some cases the range can go all the way up to .25 per word. There is no need to pay that much for good editing if you plan on self publishing! If you plan to publish traditionally, you can find freelance literary editors for a fraction of the price. These editors should have some experience working at a publishing house or for a literary agency. That is something to consider while shopping around.

It never hurts to hire a freelance literary editor while you self publish! We are just as concerned (or even more so!) about quality to compete with traditionally published works. The more of an edge you have, the better are your chances are of success (not a guarantee). Forking out a wad for the same edit doesn’t make it a better edit. For example, Some Author Solutions companies charge double the fair price range and do lousy editing compared to a freelance editor who does exceptional work for .015 per word for the same edit. **The determining factor here is the editor’s skills and credibility!**

In addition to the types of copy editing mentioned above, some editors may specialize in other areas of the editing or publishing process.

**Submission formatting.** Sometimes a document is required to adhere to specific style or formatting guidelines. For example, books, magazines, trade journals, Kindle eBooks, and [dissertations](https://www.gramlee.com/dissertation-editing-services/) each have different requirements. Editors who specialize in publishing can guarantee your document is formatted correctly for the specific venue to which you will deliver.

**Reference and citation formatting** services focus on checking documentation and source attribution for orphans and errors. Editors will scour your document for factual claims and make sure you have presented a source. This helps you avoid ownership or copyright infringement. Special focus is also given to ensure style consistency with formats like APA, MLA, or the many others in use.

**Glossary development** is the compilation of a glossary of terms that are core to the document. The glossary can also include terms that are specific to a region, culture, or language, or words people do not use in everyday diction.

**Table of contents and index development** can be important aspects of lengthy documents, manuscripts, and dissertations. This work usually falls into a copy editor’s lap because it can only be done after final revisions have been made and accepted by the author.

**Fact-checking** has become a requirement for major literary works in today’s digital age. Because of our unprecedented access to both reliable and unreliable information, editors are tasked with ensuring references are legitimate, current, and void of controversy. Depending on your audience, the integrity of your document could be compromised if facts or quotes are tangled in controversy, cultural sensitivities, or political, moral, or ethical partisanship.

Fact-checking is tedious work with very high liability. Consequently, this service is usually very expensive and typically not included in most copy editing projects.

**Manuscript evaluation**  
During an evaluation, I will read through and assess your manuscript with careful attention to detail, then provide a written critique. My evaluation will include attention to some or all of the following: punctuation, spelling, grammar, syntax, flow, style, and structure. In the case of fiction, I’ll review plot structure, dialogue, characterization, handling of POV, pacing, and many other elements of fiction. I value every writer’s creative process, so my critique will also include praise and encouragement.