



Ask an Editor

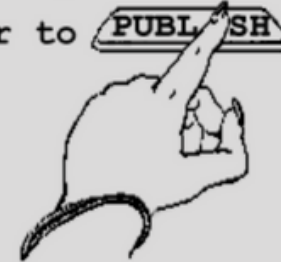
**Get Ready to Publish:
Selecting the Right Editor for
Your Writing Project**

with Eva Barrows & Lila LaBine

Eva Barrows Editing & Writing Services

- Developmental editing for fiction and non-fiction books
- Story writing coach
- Publication manager for newsletters, blogs, and magazines

Erasing Your
Fear to **PUBLISH**



LaBine Editorial

- **Copyediting for fiction**
- **Beta reading for specific fiction genres**
- **Screenplay proofreading**







In this session...

- The various kinds of editing
- Where to look for professional editors
- How to find the right editor for you & your project
- What to expect when working with an editor

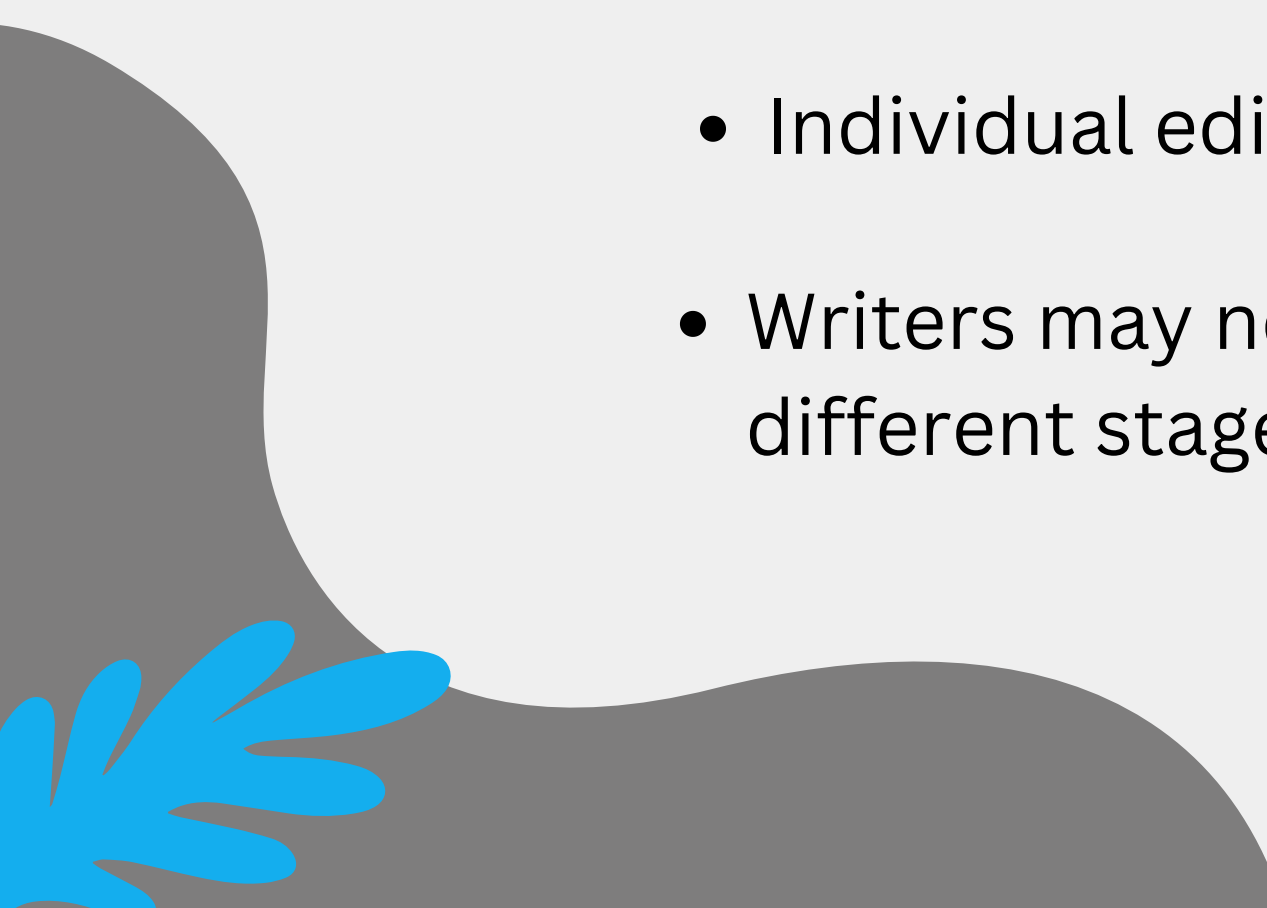



What does an editor do?

- The idea of an editor is someone who fixes sentence structure and grammar.
 - Yes, but there are so many more ways editors help and support writers to clarify their ideas in writing.
 - Editors are objective outsiders who help writers see what they are missing when deep into revision on their own.
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Editorial phases

- Editing is done in stages.
 - Authors go back through their drafts several times after receiving editorial feedback.
 - Individual editors specialize in one or two types of editing.
 - Writers may need to work with several editors who specialize in different stages of the editing process.
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Big-picture to detail-level



Book Coaching

Developmental Editing

Line Editing

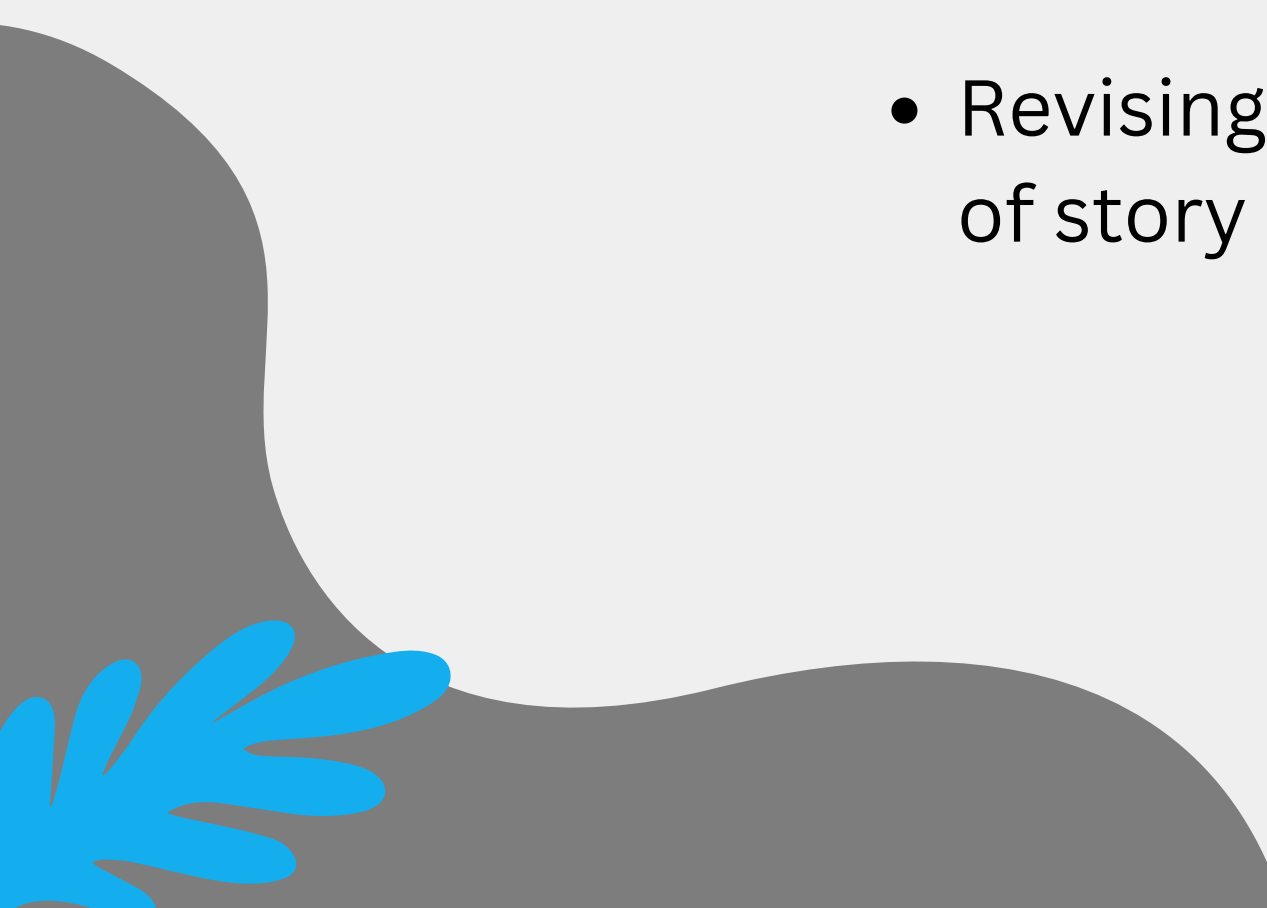

Copyediting

Proofreading





Big-picture editors help with

- Idea development
 - Brainstorming, organizing, outlining story or content
 - Revising a draft for clarity and effective development of story elements
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Detail-level editors help with

- Clear, consistent, concise, and correct paragraphs & sentences
- Engaging, graceful, and polished writing
- Writing that appeals to the author's targeted audience

(All while retaining the author's voice or style)



Why Do I Need to Hire an Editor?



Why would a self-publishing author work with editors?

- A self-publishing author is the production manager for their work. (The ultimate responsibility for producing a high-quality book is theirs.)
- A self-publishing author wants feedback from an objective person to ensure their book is easy and interesting to read. Writing that's unclear, stilted, or filled with typos and grammar errors is less likely to be read and shared with others.





Why would a traditionally publishing author work with editors?

- Traditional publishers provide a level of editing once they agree to publish your work.
- An acquiring editor may give feedback for a revision.
- A copyedit may be done before your manuscript is published.
- But to capture the interest of an agent or publisher in the first place, your manuscript must be in great shape.
- Hiring a freelance editor will help you level up your manuscript.



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The Various Kinds of Editing

Book or writing coaching

- An author might want to hire a coach if they are coming from a background outside of writing.
- A coach is like a private writing teacher who will find ways to help you improve your writing skills and meet your writing goals.
- An author and coach collaborate on working through ideas, outlining story or book content, and concentrating on book sections or chapters.
- Receive writing assignments and get feedback and accountability to meet deadlines.
- Receive inspiration, encouragement, writing advice, and support.



Ghostwriting

- You might want to hire a ghostwriter when you have an idea for a book but do not want to write the manuscript yourself.
- The ghostwriter's name does not appear on the book; yours does.
- A ghostwriter will write in collaboration with the author.
- The author can share the necessary information with the ghostwriter through interviews and prewritten text like blogs, articles or journal entries.



Manuscript evaluations

- A way to have your writing reviewed by a professional editor at a lower cost than a full developmental edit (more soon).
- Receive a high-level review of what works and what does not.
- Learn the editor's opinion and get advice on how to revise.
- You will be referred to outside resources that explain problem concepts in depth.
- The editor will point out consistent problems and grammar issues but not correct them all for you.



Developmental editing

- Receive holistic feedback on the entire book to guide rewriting.
- The editor will assess the genre, structure, characters, themes, point of view, and reader experience and expectations.
- The author will receive an editorial letter with recommendations. Sample revisions and comments within the manuscript and a spreadsheet tracking and analyzing the development of each scene.
- Full set of instructions walking the author through the next revision.
- Meet to discuss the findings via phone, Zoom, or in-person so the writer can fully understand their next steps.





Other names for developmental editing

- Substantive editing
- Structural editing
- Content editing
- These editing processes focus on large-scale strategies for improving a manuscript at the “big picture” level.



Book doctoring

- You might want to work with a book doctor if you are a subject matter expert struggling to write your draft.
- Receive expert guidance in examining your existing manuscript to make structural, organizational-level, and chapter-by-chapter revisions.
- A book doctor will do “hands-on” work on the author’s manuscript where other developmental editors point out where revisions should be made, a book doctor carries out the changes.
- Feedback will be given to the author at on going meetings throughout the project.



Line editing vs. copyediting

Larger focus on

- Length, rhythm & flow of sentences
- Necessity of sentences & paragraphs
- Order of sentences within paragraphs

Smaller focus on

- Grammar rules

For fiction

- Dialogue
- Action beats
- Point of view
- Telling vs. showing

- Clarity & concision
- Consistency
- Repetition & redundancy
- Verb tense
- Basic fact-checking
- Checking for potentially harmful language

Larger focus on

- Grammar rules
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Consistency in proper-noun spellings

Smaller focus on

- Making sure the sentences have a good rhythm & flow

For fiction

- Timeline inconsistencies
- Dialogue punctuation



Copyediting vs. proofreading

- Repetition
- Clarity & concision
- Timeline & other inconsistencies
- Basic fact-checking
- Checking for potentially harmful language

- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Redundancy
- Consistency in proper-noun spellings

- Done after editing & formatting
- Issues or errors brought in during formatting
- Hoping to make as few changes as possible
- Often includes a check of front & back matter



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Where Do I Look for an Editor?

The Editorial Freelancers Association

The EFA is an organization for editors and other freelancers in writing-related fields.

The Job List

the-efa.org/hiring/job-submission-form/

Fill out the (free) Job List submission form, and professional editors who believe they'd be a good fit for your project will contact you via email. You get to pick from there!

The Member Directory

the-efa.org/membership-directory/

Search for editors based on name, location, type of manuscript, genre/subject, and type of editing.



ACES: The Society for Editing

ACES is an organization for editing professionals, educators, and students.

The Job Board

aceseditors.org/resources/job-board

Fill out the “add a job post” form, and professional editors who believe they’d be a good fit for your project will contact you via email. You get to pick from there!

The Member Directory

aceseditors.org/resources/for-hire

Search for editors based on name, location, type of manuscript, genre/subject, and type of editing.



Northwest Editors Guild

The Northwest Editors Guild is an organization for professional editors.

The Job Board

edsguild.org/post-a-job

Fill out the form, and professional editors who believe they'd be a good fit for your project will contact you via email. You get to pick from there!

The Member Directory

edsguild.org/member-directory

Search for editors based on location, type of work, type of project, and subject/genre.



San Diego Professional Editors Network

SD/PEN is an organization for professionals in writing-related fields. Many of its members are freelance editors who work with clients nationwide.

Find an Editor

sdpen.com/find-an-editor/

Search for editors based on type of editing, subject/genre, and project type.



ALLi: The Alliance of Independent Authors

ALLi is a global organization for authors who self-publish. Editors can join as partner members.

Self-Publishing Services Directory allianceindependentauthors.org/services-directory/

Search for editors based on type of editing, subject/genre, and project type.



Reedsy.com

Reedsy is a marketplace that connects authors and publishing professionals, such as editors and formatters.

Looking for a professional book editor? reedsy.com/editing/book-editor

Once you create an account on the site, you can search for editors based on type of editing and genre/subject.





Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (CIEP) www.ciep.uk

Find an editor through the Directory of Editorial Services. Members have opportunities for professional development and networking.

Editors Canada www.editors.ca

Find an editor through the Online Directory of Editors or job board. Members have opportunities for professional development and networking.



Other places to look

Fiverr

Upwork

Facebook

Instagram

Goodreads

Reddit

- Be wary of very quick turnaround times and very low rates
 - Check the [EFA rates chart](#) for median rates for a specific level of editing
- Triple-check editors you find in these places who aren't also members of any of the previous associations
- Facebook -- "AABE - Help Wanted" group



Person to person

Word of mouth

Ask writer friends to refer you to their favorite editors to work with.

Join or visit writing groups

The California Writers Club (CWC)

calwriters.org

Local branches across the state support writers, and guess what? Editors attend, too!

Shut Up & Write

shutupwrite.com

Provides dedicated quiet time for authors to write and share about their projects.

Women's National Book Association (WNBA)

wnba-books.org

Networking, events, open discussions, and lots of writing, publishing, and editing resources.



Person to person

The benefits of finding an editor through a friend, trusted acquaintance, or better yet, meeting the editor face-to-face yourself are:

- Has a proven track record of doing good work for your friend
- Your friend received the help they needed and thinks the editor will do the same for your project
- You know or feel like you will get along with editor on a personal level
- Feel good about working with them and are ready to go!



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**How Do I Know They're
the One for Me?**



Check the editor's online presence

- Choose a short list of editors you want to find out more about
- Start your research online

Look up their websites, which should have information about:

- The services and types of editing they do
 - How the editors work with authors
 - **Portfolio of past projects:** Selection of published books they edited including details on what they did for each project.
 - **Client testimonials:** What are their clients saying about them?
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Research the editor online



LinkedIn research

- Go deeper and direct message an author the editor worked with on LinkedIn. Ask the author about their experience working with the editor.
- Look the editor up on LinkedIn and check out their resume for relevant past experience in publishing, writing, or editing.

Social media

- Review the editor's marketing on Facebook and Instagram.
 - Do you like what they have to say?
 - Do they appear knowledgeable?
 - Are they serious about helping authors and their work as an editor?
 - Do they offer workshops or videos to help you get to know them before approaching them about your project?
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Genre specialist or generalist?

In an editor's portfolio, check if they are a genre specialist or generalist

- If you are writing genre fiction like romance, sci-fi, or fantasy, working with an editor specializing in that type of fiction might make sense.
- They will know all the genre conventions your story needs to hit successfully.
- They will be familiar with the bestselling authors currently writing your genre.
- They can help your story stand out from the rest.
- **A generalist, someone who edits a variety of non-fiction topics and literary fiction,** knows how stories need to be structured to capture and keep the attention of a general audience. They can help you hook and captivate casual readers.

Meet potential editors

Try to meet potential editors in person

- Set up a coffee meeting if they are local
- Have a chat at the writers' meeting
- Get a sense if this is someone you are comfortable handing your “baby” over to.
- Are they someone you want to work with for the long term? Especially if you are writing a book series or plan on writing several books.

Simulate an in-person meeting by doing a **video call** with the potential editor.

Phone calls and email assessments are a last resort. It's more difficult to tell what the editor is like and if you will work well together.


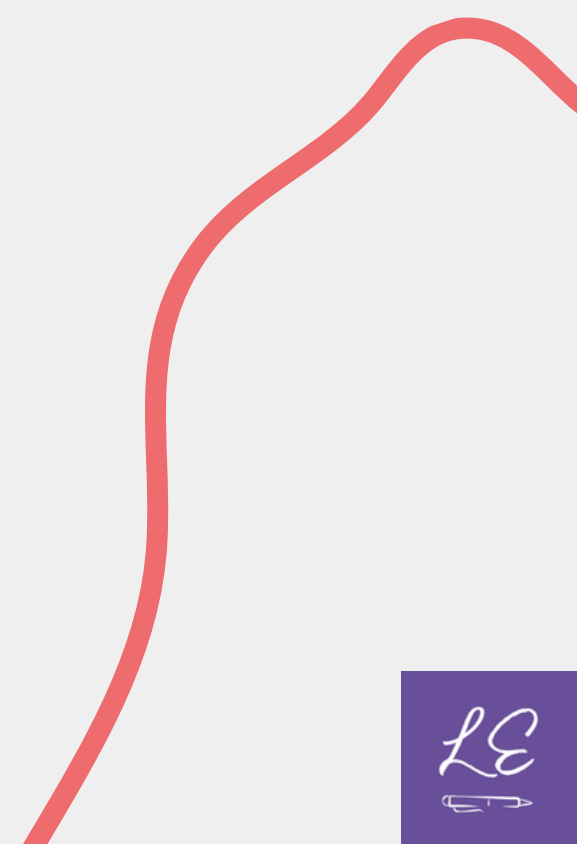
- If you decide to work with an editor on a platform like Fiverr, communication will be done via messaging through the platform. It's difficult to build a strong bond with your editor.

Questions to ask your potential editor

- Do you have a contract or agreement?
- Which services do you offer, and what are your rates? Do you specialize in any specific genres?
- Do you offer sample edits or Q&A calls?
- What professional editing experience do you have? What professional training do you have? Do you belong to any professional organizations?



Questions to ask your potential editor

- What is your typical turnaround time for a manuscript of this length?
 - When is your next opening?
 - How often do you update your clients during editing?
What is your preferred method of communication with your clients?
 - Do you have any testimonials you could share with me?
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Questions to ask yourself

- Do they get back to me when they say they will?
- Do I feel respected in our interactions?
- Did they give both positive and negative feedback in the sample edit?
- Do they seem to “get” my writing (or my project’s purpose)?
- Do I like them? What’s my gut feeling about them?




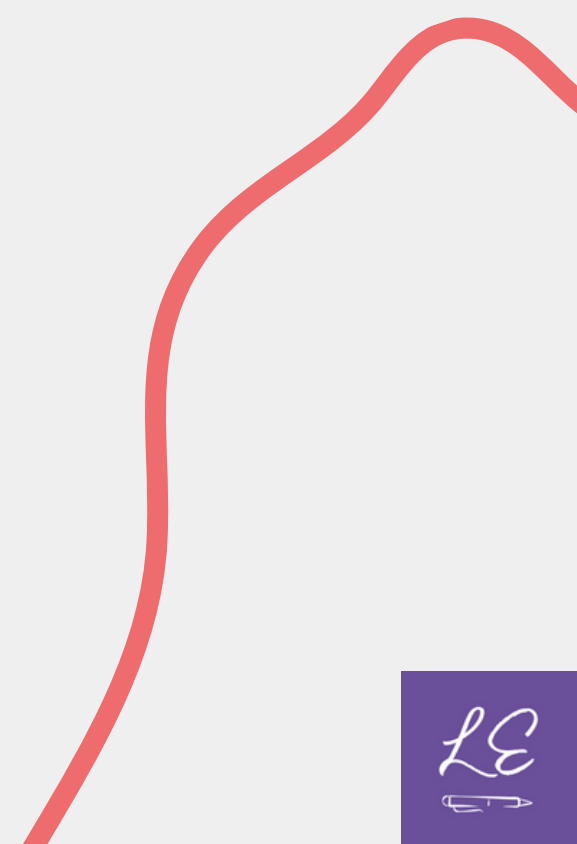
Assessing your potential copyeditor with a sample edit

- The best way to assess a potential editor for line editing, copyediting, or even proofreading is to get a sample edit.
- Many editors and proofreaders will do a sample edit for free. Most often, the sample will be 500–1,500 words from the middle (or less polished) portion of your manuscript.



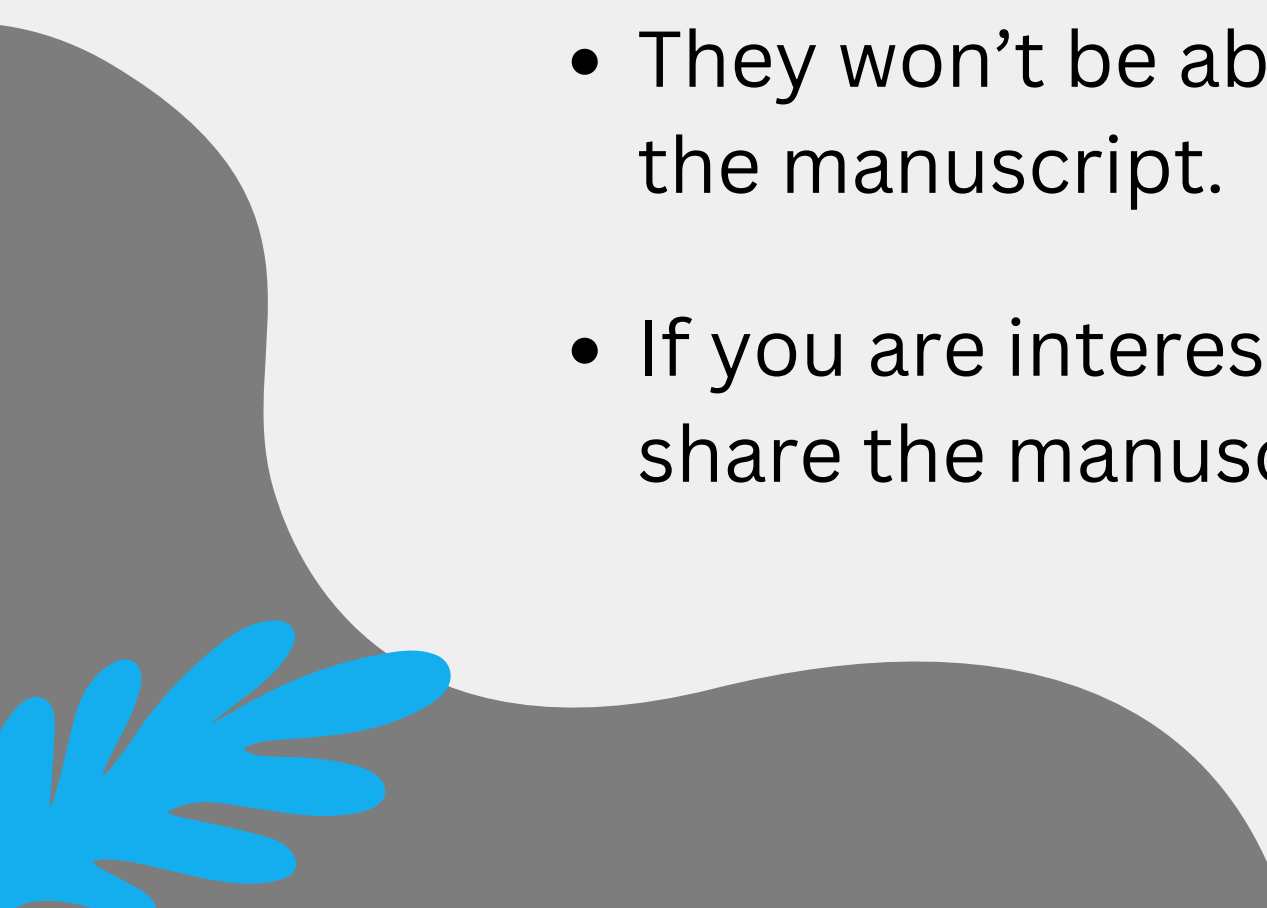



Assessing your potential copyeditor with a sample edit

- A sample edit allows you to see whether your writing style and the editor's editing style mesh well. You get to see how the editor communicates their feedback. And you get to see how much your manuscript might improve for the money you'd be spending.
 - It's reasonable to expect to wait 3–5 business days for your sample edit and quote/project proposal.
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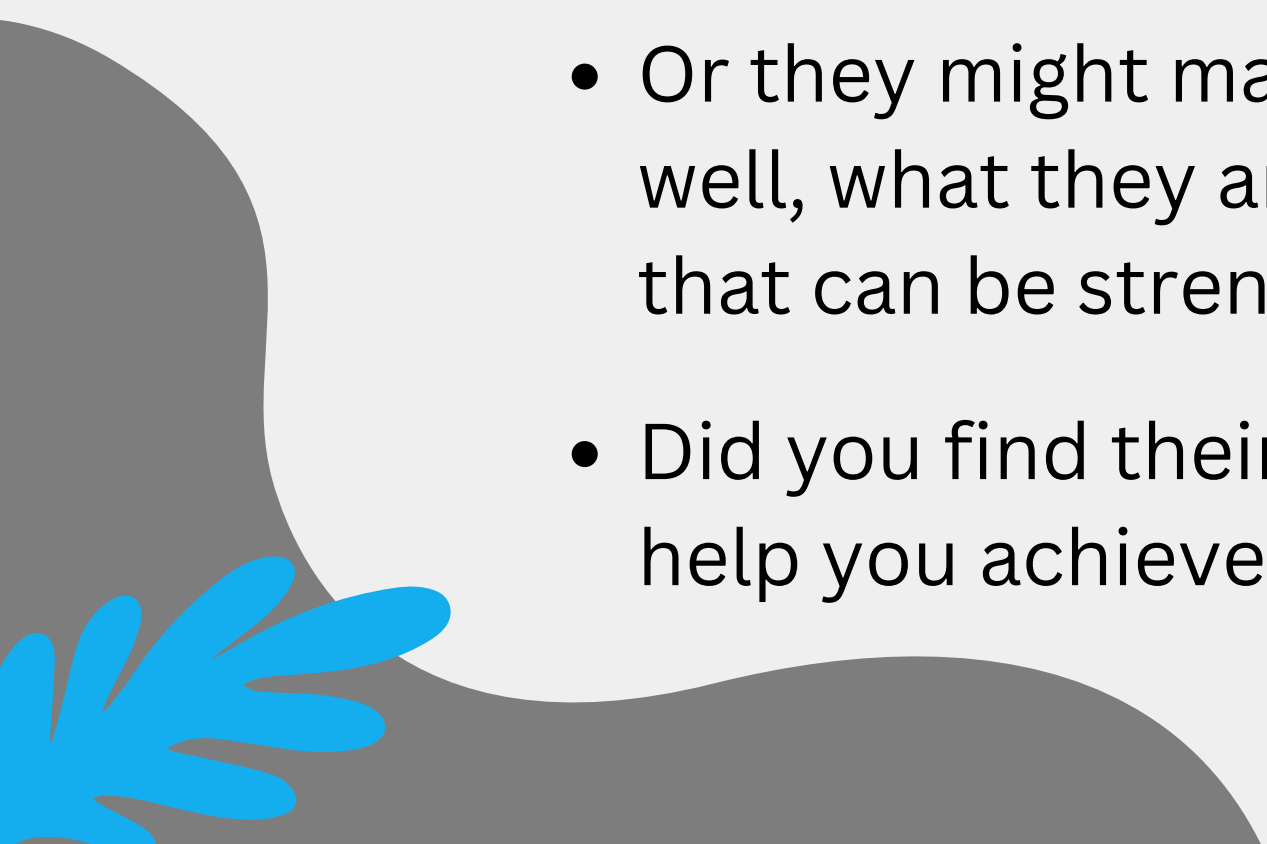





Assessing your potential developmental editor

- When you first talk with potential editors about your project, they will ask you questions to determine what the strengths and weaknesses of the book might be.
 - They won't be able to give you specific feedback before reviewing the manuscript.
 - If you are interested in working with the editor, they will ask you to share the manuscript with them or a large portion of it for review.
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Assessing your potential developmental editor



- The editor will review about ten pages from somewhere in the document, maybe not the beginning, because that tends to be the most polished!
 - Depending on what kind of editing help you are looking for, they may do sample line edits to show you how they can help shape the language.
 - Or they might make comments about what was unclear, what was done well, what they are curious about, and point out elements of storytelling that can be strengthened and some ideas on how to achieve it.
 - Did you find their feedback helpful? Will working with this editor help you achieve your goals?
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An editor assesses you and your project

- Is this project ready for the kind of editing I offer?
- Am I excited about this project? Is this a project I'm okay spending many hours on?
- Do I have the right skills to give this project what it needs?
- Do I feel respected in my communications with the client?





An editor assesses you and your project

- Does this potential client respond to my communication within a reasonable amount of time?
- How did this writer respond to my feedback on their sample edit?
- Do I have time to complete this editing project within the author's timeline?





What Can I Expect When Working with an Editor?

After the developmental edit

A lot of work for the author happens after the editor has reviewed the manuscript.

- Authors need to consider the editor's editorial letter feedback, margin comments, and in-text suggestions to guide the manuscript's rewrite—inching ever closer to publication, exciting!
- At the beginning of the process, when finalizing the contract with your editor, let them know how you would like to digest the feedback with them.



After the developmental edit

- Do you want to meet three times to discuss changes to the beginning, middle, and end?
- Will a one-hour meeting be enough for you to understand all the feedback and suggested changes?
- If you live locally, bring your laptops and meet at a coffee shop.
- Or do it all over Zoom, where you can share screens and dive into the edits.
- If you need more time with your editor than what was agreed to beforehand, they will offer you an hourly rate to continue the conversation until you are ready to forge ahead.



While your editor is working

- Please don't make additional changes to your project.
- Research cover designers, book formatters, or proofreaders if you don't already have them.
- Outline or draft one of those new ideas you had as you were self-editing your current project.
- Take a mini writing course or read a book to improve your craft.
- Take a writing break.
- Read something completely unrelated, just for fun.



After the copyedit



- Your editor may give you a “redlined copy” and a “clean copy.” They’ll probably give you a style sheet for your project.
- You’ll review their changes and suggestions. If your editor does two rounds of edits, you’ll answer their queries, ask for clarification for what you don’t understand, and let them know which edits you don’t want to keep. Once you’ve completed your author review, you’ll send the project back for its second round.
- If you have additional questions, check your editor’s contract for how they handle after-edit queries. Do they offer a post-edit Zoom call or a set time for email communication?







In the end, this is what's important

You are looking for

- Someone you want to work with.
 - Someone who is skilled and will help you get where you want to go.
 - And someone you value. You're ready to pay for their time and services.
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Free monthly Zoom sessions answering your most pressing questions about **working with editors**.

Join us for our “Ask an Editor” workshops!

Register at:

www.evabarrows.com/workshops

www.lilalabine.com/ask-an-editor





February Workshop Session

2/12/25 @ 11AM Pacific time on Zoom

How Can I Balance Showing & Telling in My Story?

Register at:

www.evabarrows.com/workshops

www.lilalabine.com/ask-an-editor

