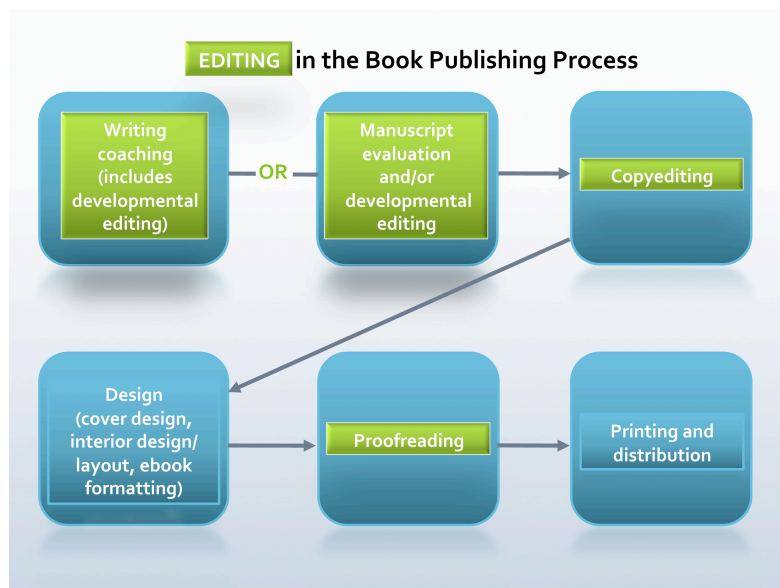


Three Levels of Editing Every Author Needs in 2023

Editing is an investment in quality that will set your book apart. Professional editors can help you create a compelling book that appeals to your target audience, and good editors are invisible in the end product. **The best thing you can do for your book is to hire professional editors to perform three levels of manuscript editing, in this order:**



1. Developmental Editing (also called content editing, structural editing, or substantive editing)

Consider hiring a writing coach to guide you through composing your manuscript. Otherwise, the first step in the editing process is working with a developmental editor to improve your book's content without compromising your voice or style. This work usually happens after you have completed a draft manuscript. For fiction manuscripts, developmental editing strengthens critical components like plot, story arc, pacing, character development, dialogue, and point of view. For nonfiction manuscripts, developmental editing focuses on thesis, exposition, content, organization, and tone. This step often starts with a manuscript evaluation, which gives a clear analysis of the book's quality as it's currently written and what can be done to improve it.

2. Copyediting

Step two is copyediting, which involves cleaning up the manuscript and preparing it to enter the book design process. This step is always done after the content is finalized. Copyeditors focus on grammar, spelling, punctuation, word usage, and flow. Copyediting also ensures style guide compliance and addresses formatting issues so that headers, subheads, etc., are consistent throughout the manuscript. A professional copyeditor is a vital part of the publishing process and helps your book compete with those from traditional publishers.

3. Proofreading

The last editing step is proofreading, which happens after the book has been designed; it is the last opportunity to identify and correct errors before the book is published. Proofreaders correct any stray typos and also address any design issues that might have cropped up during layout. Changes can be costly and time-consuming this late in the process, so if something isn't a true error, the proofreader will leave it as is. Unlike developmental editing and copyediting, in which the editors make changes directly in the MS Word manuscripts, proofreaders are not able to make corrections themselves; they work with PDFs and use PDF markup or typed out instructions to tell the designers what corrections to make.

Hiring professionals to perform these three levels of editing does not guarantee your book will be a bestseller, but it will help ensure your book has a fighting chance in a crowded marketplace.



Kim Bookless is an editor/proofreader/publishing consultant. She and her team create bring-to-market strategies for authors and expertly manage the publishing process from manuscript to finished book, including editing/proofreading, cover and interior design/layout, ebook conversion, printing, and distribution. Connect with her at kimbookless.com.