

Types of Editing Defined

By Gina Edwards, Retreat Leader, Editor, Certified Creativity Coach, and Founder of Around the Writer's Table

Did you know there's more than one type of editing? What they're called is ambiguous and even editors mix up the terms or use them interchangeably! That creates a lot of confusion for authors. Some editors offer several types of editing services while others specialize. So it's clearly in your best interest to fully understand the different types and at what stage of the process they're performed. That way, you can determine the editing service that best suits your needs.

Developmental Edit

- Early stages before draft is complete
- For nonfiction, the developmental editor also may serve as a project manager of sorts, guiding the author through the project from conception to publication.

Content Edit

- Completed draft
- Sometimes called structural or substantive edit

- ✓ Assessment of whether the manuscript is staying true to the author's original vision and intent
- ✓ High-level view, with focus on structure, organization, consistency, and clarity
- ✓ Overarching manuscript issues: point of view, character development and arc, plot development and arc, voice, tone, theme, conflict and tension, pacing, setting, and dialogue

Line Edit

- Paragraph- and line-level assessment
- Transitions between chapters and scenes
- Repetitive paragraph structure
- Tonal or point-of-view shifts
- A skilled line editor may also point out substantive issues (see above) and can flag things at the copy edit level, too (see below)

The terms "line editing" and "copy editing" don't mean the same thing. Some of the efforts for each are similar and overlapping (see box at left), but the primary focus is different.

*The **line edit** is a **paragraph-level** and **line-level** look while the **copy edit** is a **word-by-word** review. One editor may do both, but be clear about that before you hire them and find out how many passes they'll make through your manuscript.*

- ✓ Bland language
- ✓ Redundancies and digressions
- ✓ Passive voice
- ✓ Ambiguities
- ✓ Extraneous or overused words or phrases
- ✓ Run-on sentences or sentence fragments
- ✓ One or more passes through the manuscript

Copy Edit

- Word-by-word assessment
- Repetitive sentence structure
- Corrections of errors introduced in the revision stage after the line edit
- Continuity and consistency (spelling of unique character or place names, capitalization, hyphenation, numbers)
- Might include review of author bio, book cover, query letter or submission package to an agent or publisher
- A skilled copy editor may also point out line edit issues (see above) and can flag things at the proofreading level, too (see below)

Line and copy editors both may look for the things in the box above.

- ✓ Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and typos
- ✓ One or more passes through the manuscript

Some copy editors are also proofreaders. All this overlap adds to the confusion!

Proofread

- Not editing, but a final pre-press check
- Corrections of errors introduced in the revision stage after the copy edit
- Also may be a review of the pre-print proof (called an Advanced Reader's Copy or ARC) to catch any errors that may have been introduced in the formatting stage



www.AroundTheWritersTable.com

850-766-6029

Gina@AroundTheWritersTable.com