

# TIME FOR AN EDITOR

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## 7. Some Editing Reminders for Writers—so You Aren't Surprised!

### **Working with your editor:**

Once you, the writer, have self-edited as much as possible after the editor's suggestions from the sample edit, the editor might do a second sample edit to determine exactly what still needs to be worked on. This might even result in revising the time and cost levels downward if you have taken the editor's suggestions to heart and have applied them to the full manuscript. And then the actual edit will begin.

### **Multiple back-and-forth edits and self-edits:**

The editor will go through the full manuscript and do a full edit at the agreed-upon editing level(s), then return the manuscript to you for yet another self-edit draft—and probably more help from your critique team and/or more writing training and practice. Do not forget to save a copy of your editor's draft, and then each new self-edit draft of your own, so you can refer back if needed. Label each new draft appropriately and include the date. I also suggest you include the editor's initials on the filename of his or her edit drafts and your initials on your self-edit drafts, just to be clear on who did which draft.

### **Different possible approaches:**

Different editors have different approaches to editing, so your editor might work chapter by chapter or section by section with you rather than working right through. Or the editor might do one complete go-through on a particularly complex issue from a certain level, then another go-through on a different issue, or whatever method the editor feels will provide the best result for your manuscript. Editor and writer should discuss the method clearly before beginning the edit, so each one understands the process clearly and is comfortable with the process and their personal part in it.

**Schedules and deadlines:**

Whatever process the editor and writer choose, it is important to agree on a schedule and reasonable deadlines. If you, as the writer, fail to get your self-editing done and/or fail to return the manuscript to the editor in a timely manner for the next round of editing, it may be hard for the editor to remember what came before. This will make it difficult for the editor to continue to help you with over-arching issues like flow, character development, or plot holes.

Also, if you make fairly major changes, additions, or deletions to your manuscript on your own without discussing them with your editor, that person may need to spend extra time referring to a previous draft in order to be clear in understanding new self-editing changes you have made.

Finally, don't forget your editor has other clients and responsibilities, and it is only fair to stick to the time schedule agreed upon in the contract. If you don't submit for some time after you have promised to do so (whether the first draft or a self-edited new draft), the editor will have other jobs, and may not be able to get around to your late submission for quite some time, which could even further delay the process.

**Final read-through check:**

Once your editor has done a full-through edit, and you have done more self-editing based on the editor's recommendations, you really should submit this self-edit to the editor again for a read-through check on your work (which of course you will pay for—this should be discussed in your initial meeting together). You may also want to have a couple of beta readers check your manuscript over at this point, before having your editor check it. The editor will check to see if there is more that needs to be done, or if you may have inadvertently introduced additional issues during your self-edit. If the editor indicates multiple editing levels are needed, or if you have difficulty putting the editor's advice into action, this back-and-forth editing process may need to be repeated as many times as required.

When you are satisfied that the editing process is complete, and believe your manuscript is now ready for self-publishing or for submitting to agents and/or publishers, one final read-through by the editor, or by another editor or a skilled beta reader is important to catch any final errors introduced in the last self-edit draft. Having someone other than the editor do this read-through can provide "fresh eyes" and perspectives. On the other hand, your editor knows your work and can watch out for any ongoing issues. This final read is a type of proofread, though not exactly the same as the formal proofread immediately before the book is published.

**Taking an editor's advice—or not:**

Even famous, experienced, best-selling authors go through multiple drafts as they write, then self-edit with the help of their self-editing team, then go through the editing process with a freelance editor, and finally may have another round of editing with a traditional publisher's editor(s).

Writers who want to publish their books for the public to purchase and read, or who want to submit to agents and/or publishers, must make their manuscript shine. Therefore, you, as a wise writer, will take an editor's advice—and the advice from your critique team—seriously and strive to improve your writing with each draft. Of course, the manuscript belongs to you, the writer, and thus you have the right to either agree to or refuse your editor's and your self-editing team's suggestions. The only time this isn't true is if your manuscript is being worked on at a traditional publishing house and there are changes they insist on if they are to publish the book. If you, the author, refuse the changes, the publishing house may not publish after all.

**Don't forget** to place this exercise in your binder or Duotang.

And now go on to part 8 in this series: Specialty Editors and Other Publishing Professionals