

A Quick Reference to the Different Stages of Editing

by Andrew Doty



Editing can be a confusing need for many authors. If you've written a book and been told you need an editor, that only opens a door with a hundred more doors behind it. *What kind of editor? What kind of editing?*

If you're publishing a book, you can narrow those choices down to three doors, and you may want all three: a developmental editor, a copyeditor, and a proofreader. If you're seeking to submit your manuscript

to a publisher, you'll want to consider a developmental editor, and you may also want the help of a copyeditor. If you're self-publishing, you may want help from a developmental editor, and you'll definitely need a copyeditor and a proofreader.

No matter what you're doing, this is the order in which your book should be edited:

1. Developmental editing
2. Copyediting
3. Proofreading

Never do these out of order. Here's what those three things mean:

A **developmental editor** is concerned with the story of your manuscript, and whether it's well organized and presented in the best order, as well as helping you see what new material you should add, what material you should revise or improve, and what material

you should leave out of the book.

In **fiction**, this developmental editing can include whether you need to work on your plotlines, your characters, your world-building, or your themes and deeper meaning. In **nonfiction**, developmental editing can include whether you need to work on the order and structure of your materials, flesh out your descriptions to build a better narrative, cite more or fewer sources, add or remove additional reference materials, or adjust the scope of your focus to better convey your message.

In both fiction and nonfiction, a developmental editor reads your manuscript and gives you a top-level evaluation of it to point you in the right direction, and whether you prefer to take that advice and do it all yourself or work hand-in-hand with your

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PITCHAPALOOZA!

The One-Minute Book Marketing Challenge

with Bob Baker

At the St. Louis Publishers Association meeting on December 12, authors will have a unique opportunity to practice their book-pitching skills and get valuable feedback from professionals. Learn how to hone your "elevator speech" at this special SLPA book-marketing session, hosted by SLPA past president and book marketing master Bob Baker.

Make no mistake: Your ability to clearly communicate who you are and what your book is about will lead to more publicity, more readers, and more sales. As a self-promoting author, you need to learn this skill.

At the December meeting, one by one, authors will take the hot seat and have one minute to describe their book. A panel of experts will critique each pitch and make suggestions on how to make it more concise



and enticing. Audience members will also be encouraged to offer feedback, as time allows.

Current SLPA members will be given preference for the author hot seat spots, then we'll take volunteers from the audience in the remaining time. It's a great opportunity to polish your book pitch, whether you get direct feedback on your pitch or you simply observe the advice that other authors get. So bring your best pitch to the next meeting!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 14,* 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:
All About Editing

with Karen Tucker & Andrew Doty
*** ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING**
stlouispublishers.org/event-3062581

Dec 12, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:
Pitchapalooza: The One-Minute Book Marketing Challenge

with Bob Baker
stlouispublishers.org/event-3014215

Jan 9, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:
The Power of Press: Publicity for Authors
with Brooke Foster

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editor to make those changes is your call. Developmental editing can sometimes be a long process, moving a manuscript from a first draft to a second, from a second draft to a third, and so on, until both you and your editor can consider the manuscript “finished” and ready for copyediting.

A **copyeditor** is also interested in whether your story is as polished as it should be, but copyeditors focus more on the language of your manuscript. Copyeditors correct grammar and spelling mistakes as well as issues of formatting, tense, syntax, and punctuation. The job of a copyeditor centers around clarity and consistency: Does everything make plain sense to the reader, and are the writing and details consistent from page to page and chapter to chapter?

Copyeditors use a variety of style guides for reference. In **fiction**, you will most universally want to follow the Chicago Manual of Style. But in **nonfiction**, there are many, many style guides that may be right for your book, and

you should discuss the best choice with your copyeditor.

After a manuscript is copyedited, it will be ready for layout and design, which will transform your manuscript into a book by producing a “proof” copy (sometimes called a “galley” copy). This proof copy will look like it’s ready to send to the printer, but first, it needs to be proofread.

A **proofreader** will largely ignore high-level problems like whether your characters are believable or your message is convincing. Those things should have been changed during developmental editing, and if any significant issues slipped through the cracks, they should have been addressed by the copyeditor. To make large revisions now would undo the work of the copyeditor and the designer, which is why these steps of editing should always be performed in correct order. Rather, proofreaders continue to look for mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but they also have an additional

responsibility: to flag issues in the layout once the book has been designed.

Transferring a book from a word processor to design software and adding new formatting to each page can introduce quirky, unpredictable issues in spacing, line breaking, page breaking, and hyphenation, especially when images are involved. A proofreader checks the pagination and consistency of the header/footer content in addition to the rest of the page’s contents. A proofreader looks at each page not just as a block of text, but as a rectangular, ready-to-be-printed, aesthetic presentation. If there are any problems that will produce a less-than-ideal printed product, the proofreader is there to catch it and send it back to the designer for correction.

These things can all be time-consuming, sometimes tedious, and occasionally expensive, but they are fundamental to producing a professional product. To make a book you can sell with confidence, always have it well edited first.



Thanks to our author panelists for an informative and inspiring evening discussing “Successes and Failures” on Wednesday, October 10. Left to right: Jo Lena Johnson, Moderator, Publisher at Mission Possible Press; Todd Allen Smith, author of *Murder, Romance and Two Shootings*; Xu Fangfang, author of *Galloping Horses: Artist Xu Beihong and His Family in Mao’s China*; Gary Kodner, author of *St. Louis Cardinals Uniforms & Logos: An Illustrated History, 1882–2016*; Bobbi Linkemer, author of *Write Your Book Now!: A handbook for writers, authors, and self-publishers*; Rhoda Banks, author of *Moments: An Inspirational Devotional Journal: Stories and Words to Inspire, Confront, and Conquer Everyday Life Situations*.

Meetings on the Second Wednesday of the Month

Richmond Heights Community Center (THE HEIGHTS)
The Argus Room • 8001 Dale Ave.
Richmond Heights, MO, 63117
(Child care available at THE HEIGHTS)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm
Program begins at 7pm

The meeting concludes around 8:30pm
Networking until 9pm

Regular meetings are free to members
Membership \$60 per year
Guests: \$10 at the door



SLPA NEWS & VIEWS
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Official Notice: The Annual SLPA Member Meeting will be held on November 14, 2018. Members in good standing are encouraged to attend and vote to elect the 2019 board members. Karen Tucker and Andrew Doty will lead the evening’s presentation, and ballots will be collected at the end of the meeting. Board candidates will be announced soon via email. To submit a nomination, contact the SLPA President, Warren Martin, at president@stlouispublishers.org.