NOVUS PUBLISHERS

SERVICE BRIEF

The Right Edit, in the Right Order

Developmental editing, line editing, copyediting and proofreading, and how to tell which your book needs



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Why the Order Matters

“Editing” covers four different jobs. A developmental editor asks whether the book works. A line editor asks whether the sentences do. A copyeditor checks that everything is correct and consistent. A proofreader checks the pages readers will actually see.

The order matters because each stage builds on the one before it. A beautifully polished chapter can still be cut at the structural stage, and a late rewrite can bring new errors into pages that were already clean. Done out of order, the same work gets paid for twice.

The Four Edits at a Glance

Edit	Works on	Typical questions	When
Developmental	The whole book	Does the plot or argument hold together? Is this chapter needed?	After a complete draft you’ve revised yourself
Line edit	Sentences and paragraphs	Is this clear? Is the rhythm right? Is the voice consistent?	Once the structure is settled
Copyedit	Correctness and consistency	Spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage, the style sheet	When the text is close to final
Proofread	The final pages	Typos, layout errors, missed corrections	After typesetting, before release

What a Line Edit Looks Like

BEFORE

She made her way across the room and took a seat by the window.

AFTER

She crossed the room and sat by the window.

The action stays the same. The edit removes an indirect phrase. In another passage, a slower rhythm might be the right choice, which is why you see every change and decide on it yourself.

Illustrative example written for this document, not a client excerpt.

The Service

You can book one stage or several. Tell us where the draft stands and we'll tell you which stage we'd start with, and why.

1

Developmental editing

After the first complete draft

We read the whole draft and look at how the parts work together: what happens, in what order, what the reader understands and where their attention drops. You receive feedback and a plan for the next draft.

2

Line editing

After the structure is settled

We work closely on the wording: awkward sentences, repeated ideas, uneven tone and passages that take too long to reach their point. Changes are visible in your manuscript so you can review each decision.

3

Copyediting

Before book formatting

We check the text once the main revisions are finished. Alongside grammar and punctuation, we look for details that change accidentally: a character's name, a heading style, a date or a spelling choice.

4

Proofreading

After formatting, before release

Proofreading happens after editing and formatting. We review the pages readers will see, checking for missed errors and problems such as a wrong page number, a repeated word or an inconsistent heading.

Things Worth Knowing First

Your book stays your book

Edits arrive as tracked changes and comments. You accept, reject or question each one. A developmental edit gives you analysis and a plan; any rewriting is scoped separately.

Fact-checking is separate

A copyeditor may query a detail that looks wrong. A systematic check of sources and factual claims is its own service and needs to be commissioned.

Proofreading can't replace a copyedit

It's meant for final errors and page checks. A manuscript that needs extensive correction should go back a stage first.

An unfinished draft can still start

A complete draft lets an editor assess the whole book. If yours isn't finished, we'll discuss whether a partial assessment would help.

What's Included

Component	Details
DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING	
Editorial letter	A clear explanation of the main issues, with references to the manuscript.
Manuscript comments	Notes on chapters, scenes or sections that need attention.
Revision plan	An order for tackling the changes, starting with the biggest decisions.
LINE EDITING	
Tracked changes	See the suggested wording alongside your original text.
Editorial comments	Understand changes that affect emphasis, rhythm or meaning.
Questions for you	Resolve passages where the intended meaning is unclear.
COPYEDITING	
Edited manuscript	Corrections and suggestions shown with tracked changes.
Style sheet	A record of recurring spelling, capitalization and consistency decisions.
Author queries	A list of details that need clarification before the text is finalized.
PROOFREADING	
Marked corrections	Corrections in the file format agreed for your project.
Page-level queries	Notes on visible inconsistencies that need a decision.
Correction review	A further check of changed pages when included in the scope.

Start with a free sample edit

Send up to 1,000 words and we'll edit them for free, with tracked changes and a short note on the passage.

To get started, fill in the **Editorial Project Brief**. Your proposal sets out the stages, cost and schedule.

Send us the messy version.

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