

EDITING TERMINOLOGY

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There's always a bit of confusion when it comes to editing terms. For clarification, I define my services as follows:

- Analysis—MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION
- Compliancy—COPYEDITING
- Formatting—STYLE EDITING
- Functional—SUBSTANTIVE EDITING
- Typo Check—PROOFREADING

I do not do proofreading.

1. Analysis---MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION

Manuscript Evaluation is an extremely valuable *first* overview of any manuscript. The editor first

Manuscript Evaluation is an extremely valuable *first* overview of any manuscript. The editor first reads the material and then gives tough, constructive feedback by providing an in-depth *analysis* of what works in the narrative and what doesn't. Grammar and punctuation are *not* corrected during this process---though issues may be noted if errors are consistent. The focus, rather, is on structure, development, clarity, consistency, quality of evidence. In fiction, the focus is on plot, dialog, characterization, point of view, pacing, sentence variance.

Authors do not receive a corrected manuscript but instead a detailed written *analysis* of each chapter---and the book as a whole.

2. Compliancy---COPYEDITING

The copy editor makes a manuscript *compliant* with standard English grammar and punctuation and is the most common level of editing. Very little is a judgment call, but corrects

- misspelled words
- subject-verb inconsistencies
- wrong verb tenses
- misplaced commas
- missing commas
- em-dashes
- en-dashes
- dangling modifiers
- misplaced antecedents
- wrong words
- comma splices
- run-on sentences
- sentence fragments
- parallel ideas not using parallel construction
- wrong dates
- missing words
- repeated words
- etc.

Authors receive a pencil-edited *compliant* manuscript.

3. Formatting---STYLE EDITING

The Style Editor standardizes the *formatting* of text according to one of four manuals. There's no right or wrong way to head a chapter, for instance, but consistency is necessary. I use the Chicago Manual of Style.

- (a) The Chicago Manual of Style (commercial and academic texts)
- (b) the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (social sciences)
- (c) the Modern Language Association Style Manual (literary criticism)
- (d) the Associated Press Stylebook (newspapers)

Standardization might include matching

- bibliography titles and citations
- use of singular or double quote marks
- serial commas
- numbers
- acronyms
- compound words
- misuse of compound words
- extracts
- quotes
- italics
- numbers
- documentation style
- references style
- line spacing
- etc.

Author receives a pencil-edited *formatted* manuscript.

4. Functional---SUBSTANTIVE EDITING

The Substantive Editor (sometimes called developmental or content editor) addresses the *functional* issues, pointing out elements that interrupt, stagnate, confuse, or derail the narrative while simultaneously assessing logic, clarity, structure, and organization.

The minute a reader is distracted by flawed logic, or becomes frustrated by missing, redundant, wandering, superficial, irrelevant information, or any other element that yanks them out of the narrative world, he abandons the book. The Substantive Editor ensures this doesn't happen by rendering the narrative clear, concise, and easy to read at the sentence, paragraph, and chapter level. Ultimately, the Substantive Editor doesn't just make the manuscript correct and consistent, but also makes the manuscript *functional* for its readers. She does this by

- replacing passive voice with active voice
- varying unintentionally repeated verbs
- adding dashes or parentheses to clarify subordinate material
- reducing strings of adjectives or doublings
- replacing indefinite pronouns with clear noun subjects
- reducing the use of an author's pet word or phrase
- changing words with racist and sexist connotations
- defining special terms on first appearance
- cutting wordy sentences
- making parallel ideas appear in parallel forms
- straightening out logic and connections
- noting awkward phrasing that could be improved
- adding transitions to improve the flow of argument

- deleting irrelevant material or putting it in the footnotes
- moving incorrectly placed paragraphs
- deleting repeated paragraphs
- providing subheads
- cutting excessively long footnotes
- lengthening or shortening titles for clarity
- suggesting areas for additional citation or research
- suggesting additional illustrations
- noting the absence of a real introduction and/or conclusion
- fixing titles that don't match content
- pointing out where an argument is tangled or absent
- noting where the argument could be made stronger
- making note of citations without sources
- etc.

Authors receive a heavily pencil-marked *functional* manuscript, often accompanied by computer-generated "suggestions" for author reflection.

5. The Proofreading Editor looks for typos in ready-to-go manuscripts. I do not do this.

CONCLUSION: These terms often overlap and have fuzzy edges—and can be utilized all at the same time. Don't let this confuse you. They serve only to give us a common language for when you e-mail me. It's a place to start...