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EDITOR > “MY SERVICES”

1. MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION—Analysis

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. In nonfiction, the focus 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 receive a chapter-by-chapter written critique and an overall assessment.*

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

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 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

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 derail the narrative by assessing logic, clarity, structure, and organization. The Substantive Editor renders the narrative clear, concise, and easy to read at the sentence, paragraph, and chapter level. Ultimately, she makes the manuscript *functional* for readers.

Functional issues include:

- 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

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