



Let's Work Together

Tips to make our working relationship productive and smooth

Dear Author,

I am excited by the prospect of working with you, and honored that you are interested in my feedback and perspective. Before we begin, I want to be sure that the perspective I bring to your manuscript is in line with what you hope to learn and accomplish. Please consider as many of the following as are relevant to your work.

- If you had to describe your book in two sentences, what would you say?
- What are your goals for this book? Do you intend to self-publish this work, or will you be pursuing a traditional publisher through an agent?
- How are you feeling about the work as a whole? Has the writing process been going the way you hoped it would, or are some areas giving you trouble?
- What kind of feedback have you gotten from other readers of your book?
- Describe your ideal reader of the finished book. Who is your audience?
- Have you written in this genre or for this audience before?
- Do you have a deadline (self-imposed or otherwise) for completion of this work after you receive my edits? In other words, how much revision do you hope to do post-edit?
- What are your main concerns with the manuscript? This could be anything from a specific scene that isn't working as well as you'd like to difficulty with a character's role to striking the right tone overall.
- What would you like this phase of editing to accomplish?
- What is your budget for this phase of editing?

How does this all work?

Before we begin, we will discuss your book, your goals, and what I am able to do to help your book meet those goals. If you like, I am happy to do a 5,000 word sample edit for a nominal fee. In this edit, I demonstrate the breadth of my developmental editing services, and the fee will be applied to any future work. Based on the sample edit, we will decide together what kind of service will best meet the needs of your work and your budget. Once you decide on the services you want, I will draw up a contract for the work. Half of the fee will be due before work begins with the other half due after you receive my edits. You will send me your manuscript and I will do the edits agreed upon and send it back to you with my notes.

Do I have to send the whole thing?

Yes. I take your intellectual property very seriously. It's ok if you know your book is not 100% complete—maybe you intend to expand some scenes, maybe you don't know how it should end or how to progress a specific plot point. Let me know and I can address these issues in my edits, but I need to have the manuscript in as complete a form as possible for this to work.



What should I do while the book is being edited?

Go for nice walks, read, clean out your closet, outline a new book, plan a vacation... anything at all *except for working on this book!* If you are adding to or editing one version of your manuscript while I am editing another version, we are working at cross-purposes. Wait to send me your manuscript until it is at a point where you are content being hands-off for a period of time.

What happens after the edits?

After I complete the edits, you will usually receive two documents: the edited manuscript and the editorial letter, which contains the big-picture items that need to be addressed. The letter will be organized thematically: characters, plot, themes, pacing, structure, frame, etc.

I recommend taking your time with the editorial letter. It can be a lot of information to absorb! Make notes for yourself as you read the letter to remind yourself of questions you might have for me in our follow-up conversations. In your revision, it's important to address the big-picture items before the smaller issues. Sometimes you will find that the best way to resolve a bigger item will change the way you address a smaller issue.

Once you've considered the big-picture changes suggested in the editorial letter, move on to the manuscript itself. The manuscript will be marked up using the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word. If you are unfamiliar with the Track Changes feature, there are some good videos on YouTube, or check your local library to see if they have access to Lynda.com's tutorials. You will go through the manuscript to address all of the comments and approve or reject the insertions and deletions.

I am available to help answer questions, offer suggestions, and brainstorm with you during this revision process. If you have elected more than one round of editing, we'll keep in touch and set up a timetable for the next round to happen. If not, don't lose my number! At this point, I'll want to hear about your progress and experiences moving your book along the path to its goal.

So, then it's ready to publish? When does the agent step in?

The service I offer in developmental editing helps you get your book to a point where you could start seeking representation of an agent or move in another direction toward self-publishing. I am not an agent and I do not work for a publishing house. I am happy to help you craft a query letter and synopsis, or suggest connections to book designers, copyeditors, or proofreaders who are skilled at shepherding your book along the next steps of this path.

I have so many more questions!

Please contact me! Good communication and a solid, trusting relationship is key to making the editor/author team an effective one. There are no silly questions. Ask away!

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