

# My Job As A Copyeditor

It all started when a friend referred someone to me, thinking I was an editor because I have a BA in English and a Master's in education. Actually, I am a retired special education teacher experienced in working with struggling writers. So, I agreed to do the editing and gave the client a huge discount for my first editing job.

I edited my first e-book in 2013 and have enjoyed helping people publish their fiction and nonfiction manuscripts ever since. I use the Chicago Manual of Style along with other resources to verify my edits and comments while striving to maintain the unique voice of each author.

## **What Does a Copyeditor Do?**

Even expert writers need a second pair of eyes to do the editing. Authors often miss errors because they know what they intend to say, and their brains fill in the missing details. The writer's job is to get their thoughts and creative ideas written; my job as an editor is to fix writing errors and prepare the manuscript for publishing.

Unfortunately, books are being published today with missing words or repeated words in sentences and other annoying errors that interrupt the reader's focus and enjoyment of the text. These mistakes frequently happen during the first draft of a manuscript, but they should never show up in the published version.

## **How to Prepare for Copyediting**

I recommend writing and revising as much as possible before engaging a professional copyeditor. Write the first draft without editing or censoring the flow of ideas and then go back to fine-tune the pacing and text of the manuscript. Read it aloud or use a read-aloud program to discern potential flaws in the pacing, engagement level, repetitions, and omissions. By doing this prior to editing, the copyediting process goes faster and more smoothly.

Next, engage a few beta readers to offer feedback and revise again based on their observations of your work. Choose people who read the type of book you've written and provide them with a short set of open-ended questions to answer as they read. Keep an open mind when receiving constructive criticism and know you are making your book even better with appropriate revisions. With that said, use good judgment and only follow through on suggestions that enhance your work.

## **The Copyediting Process**

I like to think of the editing process as a partnership between the author and me. Communication is key. We begin by exchanging contact information and the best methods and times for reaching one another. The author describes the manuscript regarding genre, potential readers, word count,

and overall theme of the book. They send a portion or all of the manuscript to give me an idea of the scope and magnitude of the project. The manuscript must be in Microsoft Word, Times New Roman, and twelve-point font. We discuss payment terms and if both parties agree, I draw up a contract outlining the terms of our agreement.

The contract will list specific areas to be addressed such as punctuation errors, appropriate word choice, correct verb tense, omitted or repeated words, sentence structure, content clarity, consistency, and repetition. I use Track Changes, an editing format in Microsoft Word that allows editing markups within the manuscript and comments in the margin. In the contract, the author agrees to receive one edited document with Track Changes markups and comments in the first pass of edits, consisting of two read-throughs of the manuscript.

Upon receipt of the first pass, the author agrees to accept or reject each of the recommended changes. It is the author's responsibility to review all marked changes, comments, or questions and to revise the manuscript accordingly. The author also agrees to send revisions to me for a final check as the last step of the editing process.

Some editors do not do more than one pass, but I prefer to take the extra time and effort to do as thorough a job as possible. I take pride in being thorough and accurate in my work and in making myself available to address any questions or concerns communicated by the author to me.

Finally, the contract stipulates the fee based on the word count of the original manuscript. I charge by the word rather than an hourly rate. Payment plans are available, and the dates of payment are also stipulated in the contract so that everyone knows their responsibilities in advance.

### **Perks of Being a Copyeditor**

I enjoy my job as a freelance copyeditor for many reasons. First, I meet and work with interesting and talented creative writers. As a writer myself, I learn more about my craft by editing the works of others. Because I work from home, I can choose my work schedule and due dates. Most of my clients are repeat authors of books I've previously edited or referrals from those who know me or my work.

I can balance my time between editing and working on my creative writing projects. I provide a professionally polished manuscript an author is proud to publish, and I receive reasonable compensation to do so. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement that I love!

This entry was posted in Uncategorized on January 5, 2020.