



# What are the different types of editing?

A Daisy Editorial guide

*If you've written something to be published – for example a book or report, or pages for your website – the next step is editing. This guide explains what the different types of text editing are and will help you find the right editor to work on your text.*

## What type of editing does your text need?

First, how do you know what editorial service you need? Is it proofreading or copy-editing? Or maybe a critique or a developmental edit? 'Editing' covers a wide range of tasks that help get a text ready to publish. Identifying what your own text needs, and finding the right professional to help you, is therefore an important first step.

## The main types of text editing

Here's a quick summary of the different types of editing to help you work out what stage you're at and what type of editor to look for. A text usually goes through several rounds of editing before it's ready for publication, and you may benefit from using different editors at different stages of the publishing process.

You may not need professional help with all of these, or you may have to prioritise your spending because of budget or time constraints.

You may find different definitions of editing elsewhere. That doesn't matter so long as both you and the professionals you work with **agree on which tasks are included in the job and which aren't.**

### *Editing to help you write your content*

If you are the only person who has read your text, or you've only had feedback from friends or relatives, it's a good idea to get professional (or at least impartial) input on the 'big picture' first. It doesn't make financial sense to pay for detailed copy-editing if the basic content and structure of your text needs more work first.

Here are some types of editing to consider for the early stages.

- **Critique or appraisal:** A summary report on your draft or sample text to check that you're on course to meet your publishing aims, or to highlight the main points that you could do more work on.
- **Developmental or structural edit:** An in-depth report on your draft text or sample, or your content plan, to make sure you're including the right material and that the organisation and structure of your text are clear for readers.

- **Authenticity read:** A report with recommendations to make sure you're writing correctly (authentically) about people, characteristics, perspectives or events that are outside of your own experience and to alert you to anything that may have an adverse impact on your readers. Examples: reading for the female perspective if you're a male writer; reading by an expert in police procedure if you're writing about crime.
- **Line edit:** Revising the language to suit your intended audience and improving the flow of the text (but not yet doing a detailed edit of the whole text). Examples: rewriting business jargon into plain English; adjusting the language to suit teenage readers.

### *Detailed editing after you've finished writing*

Once you have done all you can in the writing stage (with or without professional help), it's time for the detailed edit of what you've written. By now you should have stopped adding new material and making substantial changes, otherwise the following edits may need to be done again (and so cost more).

- **Copy-edit:** A detailed edit of the whole text. This is the stage that corrects spelling, punctuation and grammar and ensures consistency and clarity. The copy-editor also prepares your text for layout by marking up the structural elements and cleaning up any formatting that may affect that process.
- **Proofread:** A final quality check *after* your edited text has been put into its final format by a designer or formatter (or you if you have the skills). The proofreader checks for anything missed during copy-editing, checks any content added since and also checks that the layout on the page is correct.

Both copy-editing and proofreading involve numerous consistency checks plus one or more complete readings of your text word by word and line by line. You'll therefore need to leave plenty of time for your editor to complete these tasks.

**Tip:** Getting your content into its final format (the **layout**) comes in between copy-editing and proofreading in the publishing process.

Creating a **design** for how your publication will look can start earlier, but the actual layout can't be done until copy-editing is finished.

## Do you need help with editing?

Daisy Editorial can help get your text ready to publish. Get in touch for a free no-obligation quote for copy-editing, proofreading, formatting and design and layout.

[margaret@daisyeditorial.co.uk](mailto:margaret@daisyeditorial.co.uk)

Don't worry if you're not sure what type of editing or publishing service you need. Send me a sample of your text and I'll let you know what I can do to help get your text ready to publish. If I'm not the right person to help you – or not yet – I'll tell you that and suggest what you can do next.

## How I can help you publish your text

For all **non-fiction content** such as print books and ebooks, printed and digital reports and documents, and text for online use in websites and blogs I provide:

- Line editing and rewriting for tone and flow
- Rewriting into plain English
- Copy-editing
- Proofreading
- Formatting Word documents, including styles and templates
- Book and document design (what the pages look like)
- Layout for final output (for example in InDesign, Word or PowerPoint).

*Services I don't provide include:*

- Critiques and appraisals
- Developmental or structural editing
- Marketing and distribution, publishing your book for you.

If you need a service that I don't offer, you can find a professional to help you in the [Directory](#) of the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading.

## Get more free advice

See the [Daisy Editorial website](#) for more guides, tips and advice.