

Choosing an Editor

How to find the right editor for you!

1. Many of the best editors are booked weeks or months in advance, so keep that in mind!
2. It's important to find an editor with experience in your genre and enthusiasm for your topic.
3. Get personal recommendations by asking fellow writers. If you know any published authors, contact them, and ask in writing groups on social media. It's sometimes safer to go with an editor whom someone you trust has already worked with successfully.
4. Another safeguard is to find out if the editors you're looking at have a professional presence—for example, a website, social media presence, and references. In other words, do they seem well-established? I know references can be misleading, but with a solid online presence, it's less likely.
5. Make sure they offer the kind of editing you believe you need. If you're not sure what that is, be upfront and discuss it with your candidates.
6. Get sample edits from several editors. Many do these for free, usually anything from 250 words to 1,000. Make sure that each editor works on the same passage or portion of that passage, so you can compare more easily. From the sample edit, you should get an idea of the following: Do they show an intelligent and informed interest in your topic, do they keep to agreed timeframes, do they respond quickly, and the big one, do you feel you could have a good working relationship with them?
7. Make sure your editor understands your deadlines and is comfortable with them. You don't want to have to delay publishing a book you've planned for a particular holiday, or that's on pre-order.

Pro Tip 1: Never, never put a book on pre-order without discussing it with your editor!!!

8. You need detailed timelines if you're paying by the hour. We charge by the word, so there's no possibility of confusion or shifted goalposts. It's usual to pay a deposit to book

your place in the queue, and some editors will require that 50% of the price be paid by halfway. Discuss your editor's requirements and get everything in writing.

9. Editing is not for the faint-hearted, so don't be offended by constructive criticism. It doesn't mean you should give up writing! If you're committing to the process, you can't afford to take professional input personally. It's always great to find an editor who's kind, but you also want an editor who's going to help your manuscript become a highly polished work of art, and that can be difficult for all of us at times.
10. It's painful to be told your carefully planned themes or plot are not so well-planned, or that your writing waffles too much. It's rough when someone tells you one of your characters lacks depth—or that some of them should be taken out altogether. It's hard to cut out sentences and paragraphs you spent days crafting, and it's tough to be told you should split your manuscript into two or three shorter books. And what about being presented with a manuscript that seems to have more corrections in it than words! Yes, find someone who can be gentle, but let them also be honest—even ruthless. If you're paying attention, it'll make you a better writer, which is a priceless bonus.

Pro Tip 2: Don't be afraid to ask why an editor has made a particular suggestion; it helps a lot if you feel you're making informed decisions.

11. Ultimately, editing is about making your book stand out, getting the 5-star reviews it deserves, and having your readers come back for more.

You need to find an editor you can trust to help you achieve that!