

# Hiring an editor for your book

A comprehensive guide to hiring an  
editor.

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AJ EDITORIAL SERVICES

Resource Centre



# Hello and Welcome!

This resource will walk you through everything you need to know before hiring an editor! By the end of this resource, the task won't feel so daunting. You'll be able to discern exactly who is the right editor to bring on to your team.

At the end of the guides, there are a few resources to support you with self-editing and discovering what it is you want from an editing service.

# KNOWING WHEN to hire an editor



We can get so wrapped up in our work looking for an abstract clue that says it's time that we end up in a perpetual loop of editing. Even bringing on a few Beta readers to mark the end of a round of revisions churns up pages of advice that lurch us back into our never-ending hunt for that when.

## The Deadline Method

In reality, most of us don't often get a manuscript to this magical point where it all clicks and it is ready to be put before an editor. Because when isn't concrete. Perfect (or near perfect) isn't attainable. Aiming for perfect only leads to criticism which leads to revisions and so on.

A quick fix to this is a deadline.

Book an editor for two or three months time, pour out some coffee, and get your manuscript as well edited as you physically can in that time.

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## The mindful self-editing method

Perhaps you don't perform so well under pressure. Our manuscript deepens and develops like a fine wine with careful edits and maybe even a spreadsheet or two.

For you, having a concrete stopping point indicated in your manuscript is essential for you to be able to step back. For you, understanding why you're hiring is the key to knowing when to.

When you are self editing, work with a checklist that you can write brief notes on. Know how your manuscript is performing in each of the elements of story writing.

When you reach a point in your self editing where you know that you're an overwriter or that your characters need development or that the plot is just missing something, but you can't work out how to fix it, that is when you are ready to bring someone on to your team.

## Quick tips for knowing when your work is ready

- ✓ You can pinpoint your manuscript's weaknesses and know what you'd like an editor to bring to the table.
  - ✓ You can tell your editor exactly what it is about your manuscript that you love and help them get excited for your writing.
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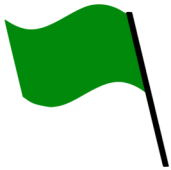


# LOOKING OUT FOR THE green flags

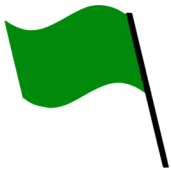
Even when you're going to all the right places to find your editor, it is still good to know the markers of a good editor that you should be looking out for.



An affiliation with a professional organisation shows that they are investing in their business.



Proof of training and experience, beyond an English literature degree, is an essential green flag to look out for. Training exists for all stages of editing.



An editor who wants to see your work before they quote is an editor that is taking the project seriously.



A proper professional contract that lays out the scope, terms and NDA clauses is essential for protecting both you and the editor.

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# LOOKING OUT FOR THE red flags

Likewise, you should know what should set off alarm bells in your mind when looking to hire an editor. Once you know what to look out for, it is easy to spot the bad eggs.

If their prices are low, they don't value their time and, likely, don't value your work. Freelance editing is expensive for some very good reasons.



Offering to complete a full novel edit in less than a week is concerning fast. You will end up with surface level comments and it is likely that your book has simply been run through a spell checking programme.



There are a few levels of editing that can't be done out of order. If someone is offering a service wherein they provide developmental feedback and also check the grammar and spelling at the same time, it is guaranteed that they don't know what they're doing.



# GETTING THE MOST FROM a sample edit

1. Use a sample edit to assess the editors abilities. Hopefully, all of the editors you approach will be highly trained and great at what they do. However, a sample edit is a great way to separate the wheat from the chaff.
2. Learn whether their approach to giving constructive criticism fits with how you best receive constructive criticism. Seeing how an editor structures their feedback is a good opportunity to test if you will be a good fit.
3. After writing all your articles and adding them to your layout, list down all the titles to set up your table of contents. You can add a brief description for each article or paste the feature titles on the page.



*It is important to like  
your editor, to be  
confident that they see  
their role as being the  
champion of your work.*



## Not all editors offer a sample edit, what else can you look for?

1. Check their portfolio to see what projects they have worked on previously. Are they working in your genre? Do they have any past projects that are similar to yours?
2. Testimonials are a great way to get a sense of the value that an editor has brought to the process for their previous clients. If testimonials strike a chord with you, then consider hiring the editor for your project.
3. Editors often have a whole wealth of resources available to authors that are not only useful, but show just how great they are at what they do. If you find yourself living in the blog posts of a particular editor, maybe it is time to get them on your team officially!



# IS IT IMPORTANT TO like your editor



## Developing professional respect

You don't have to be best friends with your editor. But liking them as a person is important.

You already have a deep relationship with your book. When you hire an editor, you're hiring someone to build a similar relationship with both your book and you. This is a professional relationship, but it's a relationship all the same.

When you hire an editor, you're asking a stranger to read something deeply personal to you and offer criticism and advice on every little detail. This is not a task that should be handed out lightly. Without that professional respect, their opinions have the potential to damage your confidence.

You need to trust that the person you are bring on to your team is championing your work and challenging your writing abilities.

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## EXERCISE #1

# Your Tools & Resources

Some further reading and a checklist to break the process for hiring an editor into manageable steps.

### FURTHER READING

- ☐ The CIEP suggested minimum rates
- ☐ EFA reported rates
- ☐ Alliance of Independent Authors
- ☐ Writers and Artist Blog Post
- ☐ Writer's Digest Blog



### HIRING PROCESS

- ☐ Create a shortlist
- ☐ Look at their website
- ☐ Check out their social media
- ☐ Request a sample edit
- ☐ Ask questions!



## EXERCISE #1

# Mindful Self-Editing

Work through this check list, marking out of five how confident you are in each story writing element and noting any strength and weaknesses in your mastery of them

### STORY ELEMENTS

Plot and pace



Characters



Authenticity issues



Tension



Narrative style



Genre



Dialogue



Setting



## EXERCISE #2

# What Do You Want?

When you approach an editor, it is helpful to have an idea in mind as to what role they are fulfilling in your manuscript.

1. What story writing component do you feel is your strongest?

2. What story writing component do you feel is your weakest?

3. What would you say is the core of your novel?

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# Thank you!

You can now approach editors with confidence! A deeper understanding of what your manuscript needs will lead to a more valuable experience with your editor. Find an editor that empowers your voice and challenges your writing.

Are you still in the writing an editing process? Don't get caught up on looking for an editor early in the process. Take a look at the Resource Bank for writing tips and tricks.



## Do You Need More Help?

### Get in touch

*I work with fantasy and science fiction authors to shape their stories and sentences. If you'd like to discuss the editorial services I offer, email today: [aimee@ajeditorialservices.com](mailto:aimee@ajeditorialservices.com)*





# Plain Text Links

[\*https://www.ciep.uk/resources/suggested-minimum-rates/\*](https://www.ciep.uk/resources/suggested-minimum-rates/)

[\*https://www.the-efa.org/rates/\*](https://www.the-efa.org/rates/)

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