

Different levels of editing

1. Manuscript evaluation.

This looks at the big-picture issues and reports on the strengths and weaknesses. So it will look at the following:

Plot. Does the structure work? Is it easy to follow?

Characterisation. How are the characters represented? Does their behaviour make sense – are they behaving according to their personality?

Pace. How is the story unfolding? Is it too fast? Does it drag (this quite often happens in the middle)?

Narrative style. Which point of view has the author used? Does it work with the type of story?

Tense. Is it written in past or present? Or a mixture of both? Does this work?

2. Line editing.

This is more of a stylistic edit, working at sentence level to address style, sense and flow, and concentrates on:

Characterisation. Is the phrasing and word choice appropriate for the character?

Narration. Is the narrative style consistent? Are the viewpoints clear?

Engagement. Are there awkward metaphors? Too many clichés?

Dialogue. Does it sound authentic? Is there too much or too little? Use of action beats.

Pace & flow. Is there too much repetition or overwriting which is slowing down the story? Is it too fast?

Tense. Is it effective and consistent?

Exposition. Told verses shown prose.

3. Copy editing.

This looks at the technical aspects.

Chapter sequencing.

Consistency of proper-noun spelling.

Dialogue tags and punctuation.

Logic of timeline.

Any plot holes that might have been missed.

Spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, hyphenation.

4. Proofreading.

This is the final check. Like a literary quality control to make sure that no errors have been introduced during previous rounds.

In an ideal world, a manuscript would go through all of this before publication.

Obviously in the real world, self-publishing authors don't have a limitless budget so it's probably more practical to think about your own strengths and weaknesses to decide which level of editing would be more useful.

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... EDITING ...

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