



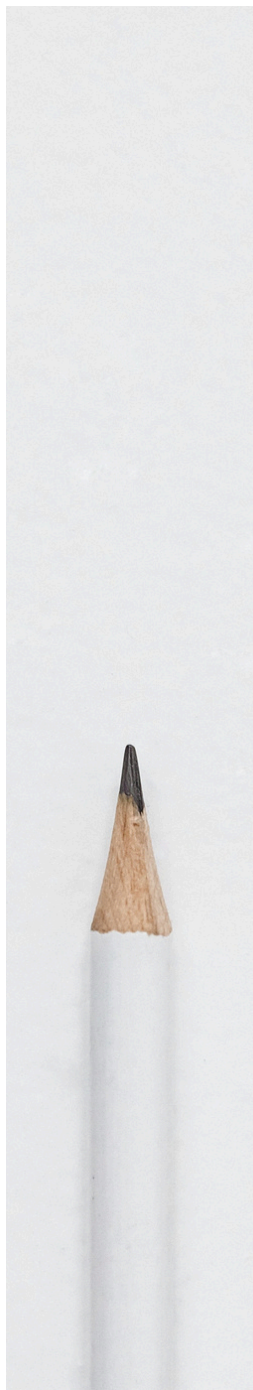
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# 10 Questions To Ask Before Hiring A Professional Editor



To help you hire the right person for the job and refine your manuscript into a book worthy of publishing, I have designed the following questions so that you can make the best decision for your finances, time and effort.

# Before Engaging a Professional Editor, Know the Answers to These Vital Questions



## What are you writing?

No matter what genre or type of book you are writing, it's important to be fully aware of industry requirements and have a good understanding of the conventions of the genre you are writing in. Having such knowledge will help you to find an appropriate editor who understands your target audience.

## What stage is your writing at?

Before enlisting the services of a professional editor, it is beneficial to take your manuscript through a few editing rounds to help you make the best use of the editor's time and your money.

If you are looking to traditionally publish, working with a professional editor will help get your work up to a publishable standard. A great first impression with a publisher shows them you take your craft seriously.

Going down the self-publishing route means you can develop a fruitful partnership with your editor who can help you with structural editing and advise you on the bigger picture issues.

## Do you know what free tools you can utilise?

Employing an editor means the money comes out of your pocket. But you can help ensure you utilise your finances wisely by avoiding hiring an editor prematurely. Correcting your work and crafting the best draft possible will pay dividends.

Understand what makes writing great by reading widely in your genre and outside of it. Take note of what engages and bores you. Study successful writers who have paved the way before you, and take note of contemporary writers excelling in fiction and nonfiction. What is it that makes them successful?

Writers' groups can be a wonderful resource where like-minded people share their writing and receive important critical feedback in a respectful environment.

Beta readers are a tool that can help you to understand how receptive your ideal audience will be to your work. A beta reader, however, does not eliminate the need for a professional edit.

## What are your writing needs?

Determine your current writing needs. Being aware of what your story requires will help direct your efforts to find an editor who will help bring out the best in your work.

Each editor will specialise in a set genre or group of genres and will also have their own set of skills they bring to the table. Find out what the editor's area of focus is and make sure they can help you with your unique needs.

## What is your goal?

Publishing is a rapidly changing industry, and consumers have more choices than ever before. Do you long to self-publish? For many writers, this is now a recognisable and lucrative goal. Do you want to create an audiobook, podcast, audio serial or something else? You need to, firstly, understand who your audience is, as there is no point catering to the wrong audience, particularly if you want to be successful.

Craft a plan to succeed. Do your homework and clearly outline what your goal is for your book.

## What is your budget?

It is helpful to determine whether you wish to traditionally publish or self-publish. While a traditional publisher will absorb editing costs, getting to this stage may require a professional edit at your own expense first.

What is your budget for editing? Choosing the cheapest editor may not be the wisest course of action. Aim for industry standards and quality. Do your due diligence beforehand. Be aware of the skills you are employing and the result you desire.

Editing prices vary considerably based on the editor's experience. In Australia, expect to pay anywhere from \$60-\$80/h for an editor with less than 2 years' editing experience or \$80-\$120/h for an established editor.

If you are seeking an editor with extensive or specialised experience, then expect to pay anywhere from \$120/h upwards.

The above prices are an indication only, as an editor may choose to charge higher or lower hourly rates. These rates are influenced by the scope of work required, the time frame, the subject, the format and the experience the editor possesses.

Make sure to clarify how the editor charges for their work so you don't get any unpleasant surprises when you receive your final invoice. If you need your work as of yesterday, then expect to pay a premium rush fee.

## What editing do you require?

If you are new to the editing process, try and do some research so you are familiar with editing terms as well as the different stages a document goes through when being edited. Each stage takes varying times to complete, and editors will charge accordingly. Some may charge by the hour, the word, or by the project.

Always ask what each edit entails so you are both on the same page. If you are unsure, get the editor to explain clearly what they will realistically achieve with each stage of the edit.

## What experience does the editor possess?

Experience is crucial. Carefully checking an editor's website and asking specific questions will help you determine whether the editor is the right one for you.

It is important to look at any formal training the editor may have. Are they associated with professional writing or editing industries? What clients have they worked with in the past? Do they have testimonials on their website of happy clients? Does the editor respond to you promptly and helpfully? What are their specialities?

Some very competent editors have never received formal training. So don't shy away from an editor just because they don't have a specific editing qualification. Perhaps they have a professional or personal background that lends itself to the testimony of edit you require.

## How can they complement your editing style?

It's extremely important to find out whether the edit fits in with your vision and style of editing. If you're happy to have someone come in and cut and rearrange, then by all means go for that. But if you find the thought of that horrifying, then make sure your editor's style matches the goal for you and your manuscript.

You should also consider the temperament of your editor. Do you want an

encouraging editor? Do you freak out at the thought of a blunt editor who doesn't mince words? What's the best approach for you? Find an editor who can accommodate your working style.

Having the final say over your work is important. Does your editor use Track Changes so you can see every editorial decision within the Word document? An editor's job is to make suggestions you can ultimately accept or reject. Finding an editor whose process puts the author first and foremost in mind will make your editing journey more enjoyable.

## What are your time constraints?

You might get lucky and find an editor who has a break in their schedule, but for the most part, editors are usually booked out in advance or have a waiting list of several weeks or months. If your manuscript requires a quick turnaround, as previously mentioned, you may need to pay a rush job fee to have it completed in a shorter time frame.

Let the editor know of any requirements that are time sensitive so they can help you achieve your goal. Telling them that you need your manuscript earlier when they are in the middle of it won't make you any friends; editors often map out the editing job and have several projects or commitments on the go. If an editor has expressly cleared their schedule for you, be respectful of this. Editing is a mentally draining job, and there is only so many hours in the day an editor will work on your project.

Delivery dates should be worked out beforehand so both you and the editor are on the same page. There is nothing worse than thinking you will get your manuscript back on one date when the editor believes they have another week or two to complete the job.

Yes, an editor can be one of your greatest assets, so plan to succeed by finding the right editor for you and your needs.

Answering the above questions before you hire an editor will help you get the most from your editing experience and help you enjoy the journey along the way.



# Checklist

Here is a checklist to help you plan for a successful editing journey.

- ☐ Do I understand the conventions of the genre I am writing in?
- ☐ What publishing industry requirements apply to my genre?
- ☐ Have I edited previous drafts before looking for an editor?
- ☐ Do I know how to correctly lay out my manuscript?
- ☐ Do I read widely in and outside my genre?
- ☐ What great writers are there that I could study their work to find out what makes them successful?
- ☐ Are there any local or online writers' groups I could join?
- ☐ Could I utilise beta readers for feedback on my manuscript?
- ☐ What does my writing need in terms of editing help?
- ☐ What is my publishing goal?
- ☐ What is my budget?
- ☐ What type of editing do I need? Do I need a structural edit, copyediting, proofreading, or a combination of these?
- ☐ What experience does the editor possess?
- ☐ Does the editor match my editing style, or do I feel stressed at their lack of encouragement and bluntness? Do I need an encouraging editor?
- ☐ What is the timeline for needing my work edited?



# Need Professional Help?

I offer a range of services for writers and businesses to help you achieve your goals.

## Editing

- Structural
- Copyediting
- Proofreading

## Copywriting

- I work with you to help solve your business writing needs.

## Literary Agency

- Looking to get published? I provide full agency services for aspiring and published authors.

## Notes: