

What Editors Do

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Writers and publishers who want to achieve their goals need to be specific when seeking editing services. Look at the chart below, and decide which editing tasks you want your editor to perform. Then see which types of editors to contact for these tasks, and remember to communicate your editing needs clearly.

Key: Y = Yes, definitely provides the service M = May provide the service

Editing Tasks	Development Editor	Concept or Publications Editor	Substantive Editor	Content or Technical Editor	Copy Editor	Production Editor	Proofreader	Indexer	Web Editor
Collaborates with author to shape rough draft, outline, or sketchy notes into manuscript form	Y	Y							
Selects and orders pieces for each issue of a periodical		Y							
Assesses entire manuscript for style, tone, structure, logic, and accuracy; makes appropriate corrections			Y	Y					
Reorganizes manuscript, makes minor rewrites, writes transitions and summaries, eliminates wordiness, and works with author to resolve inconsistencies and clarify confusing passages			Y	Y					
Collaborates with website owner to shape rough draft, outline, or sketchy notes into appropriate Web content	M	Y		Y					Y
Applies technical knowledge of website design to create and edit Web pages directly	M	M	M	M		M			Y
Makes light edits to manuscript, line by line: Corrects errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage; assures consistency in capitalization, numbers, and abbreviations			M	M	Y				
Makes medium edits to manuscript, line by line: Conducts all light-edit activities; tightens wording, eliminates sexism, checks for flawed logic, cross-checks in-text citations and footnotes against references, checks permissions if needed, edits artwork, and marks design elements/styles for typesetting			M	M	Y				
Makes heavy edits to manuscript, line by line: Conducts all light- and medium-edit activities; revises murky passages; changes passive to active voice; eliminates jargon; suggests cuts, additions, and rearrangements			M	M	Y				
Has specialized knowledge or expertise in the subject matter being edited			M	Y					
Manages the stages of a manuscript: Coordinates services of copyeditor, designer, artist, and proofreader to maintain production deadline and budget	M	Y	M	M	M	Y			
Writes a manuscript to be published under another person's name	M		M	M	M				
Checks typeset material; flags typographical errors, poor type quality, and deviations from typesetting conventions		M	M*	M	M*		Y		
Creates and alphabetizes index as a condensed overview of the book	M		M	M	M		M	Y	
Critiques Web pages or websites verbally or in writing, without making direct edits to the site.	M	M	Y	Y	M				M
Revises or corrects website text; writes captions									Y
Adds, deletes, and rearranges graphics; creates Web page layouts; adds and deletes Web pages as needed; creates or updates hypertext links from menus and other pages within the website									M

*Few editors can accurately proofread a manuscript they have edited themselves.

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