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Line-by-Line Editing Services

The complexity of the creative process makes it challenging to develop a consistent style throughout a manuscript and to avoid producing mistakes in spelling, word choices and more. These are often called “mechanical errors,” but they impact everything from the mood set by a piece, to reader’s understand of and trust in the truth of what’s being shared. Studies suggest that readers have a harder time retaining information and believing a source is credible if something like a newspaper article contains grammatical errors.[[1]](#endnote-1) In addition, online readers have noted being willing to pay more for edited content, believing it to be more professional and more likely to be well organized.[[2]](#endnote-2)

**Copyediting options**

As a certified editor, I offer three levels of copyediting (light, medium, heavy) for you to consider that take into account your content status, finances, and deadline (if any).

For all levels, I correct indisputable errors in grammar, syntax (the ordering of words), and word usage. The main elements added with a medium or heavy copyedit are addressing major organizational challenges and factors that can influence reader understanding, such as awkwardly phrased passages or unclear word choices.

* Fee ranges from 2.5 cents per word to 5 cents per word

At 4 c/word or higher, you will receive a style guide for your book that documents style and formatting decisions made as I worked through the manuscript. The guide covers commonly seen items that aren’t addressed by the Chicago Manual or other traditional style guides used as a starting point to creating consistency in how things like hyphens are treated throughout a work. Having a list of these extra editing decisions can reduce the time required if you seek professional proofreading as a next step. It also helps with consistency in the way you refer to book content in blog posts, query letters and other future works, such as a book sequel.

**Line editing**

Fiction and creative nonfiction authors sometimes have a book edited from a craft perspective after it has been developmentally edited, and before it is copyedited. Line editing overlaps with developmental editing in considering big picture elements that impact voice such as point of view, but the content is reviewed sentence by sentence. My overall focus is on voice and style, including how quotes are handled. Among the factors considered are approaches that sap energy, such as overuse of adverbs, and wordiness or repetition. For example, overly complex sentence structures can prevent readers from engaging, taking away from the mood of a piece and hiding the author’s voice. In addition, the flow of sentences is evaluated, including whether they effectively convey a sense of urgency or another mood.

* Fee ranges from 3 to 5 cents per word

**Proofreading**

Proofing is a final, catch-all step after copyediting to check for glaring errors, such as double periods at the end of a sentence, misspelled words, a misnumbered page or a headline that’s in a different style than all other headlines.

As an indie author, it could be tempting to skip the proofreading step. But it’s very common for a few grammar glitches and more to be caught during proofing, which is why traditional publishing houses often have two separate proofreaders look at the final text, image captions and all. I have even provided a third proofread ("cold read") for a memoir from Counterpoint Press.

Passing on having a fresh set of human eyes proof your finalized work is risky; editing software won’t pick up certain errors, such as the fact that you had mistakenly used the word “feat” and meant to write “feet.”

* Fee ranges from 2 cents per word to 4 cents per word

My Process

I evaluate manuscripts individually to give you a fixed bid in advance based on your word count, stated needs, and how much editing work I will do. For copyediting, I will often suggest two levels of copyedit that you can choose between, sharing the specific details of what I will do in each case. I provide one round of copyedits or line edits, and a reduced rate if you want a second round after you have updated the manuscript with suggested edits. Proofreading involves one round of review for glaring errors.

With each type of sentence-level edit, the best estimate is possible from reviewing your entire manuscript. But if preferred, I can develop a bid after reviewing at least six chapters (two from the beginning, two from the middle and two from the book’s end). \ I am happy to share language in writing in advance about not showing your content to anyone in any form without your prior written permission.

My Experience

An award-winning writer, I began my career interning at newspapers, and continue to freelance at times about conservation and other topics. I have edited professionally for nonprofit clients and others for two decades. [Since 2016](https://www.vitalwordplay.com/editing-info?pgid=kqziq67f-e169fbf9-1a34-4156-b118-3d4df87cc443), I have focused on working with self-published authors and with W. W. Norton, MIT Press and three other publishing houses. I ran a creative nonfiction writing group for several years, and have judged three state or national book competitions. I continue to take classes on storytelling, structure, the publishing process, using the language of diversity, and more. Formally, I have completed the Poynter Institute/ACEScertificate in editing, and UC, San Diego’s copyediting certificate program, and I have trained as a fiction book coach through Author Accelerator.

I use an organized, thorough approach to print and digital content. Beyond book projects, copyediting and proofreading clients have included magazines for a geological sciences college and an engineering construction institute, a spirituality blogger, conservation non-profits, and the Health and Human Services division of Texas (editing physician education modules). I previously spent a decade plus developing magazine issues, web features and other content for universities, while assisting faculty with communicating their work at a top-ranking medical school and an R1 research university.

Next Steps

Please reach out on the [Contact](https://www.vitalwordplay.com/contact) form with basic project details, after which I will send a few questions tailored to your specific situation. After receiving those responses, we can discuss sharing of your manuscript in Microsoft Word. I would get an estimate back to you within 5 working days.

Thank you for your interest in Vital Wordplay Services!

Barbra A. Rodriguez

1. Appelman (Northern Kentucky University) & Boll, 2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Dr. Fred Vultee, Wayne State Univ., 2015 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)