

I help you make your narrative focused and exciting so you'll emblaze your readers' hearts and be remembered.



Your Best Story's Worry-Free Editing Plan



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We care about your book

Publishing is scary. Sometimes, missing our goal of engaging readers seems easier than achieving it. And many drafts end up hidden in drawers, safely tucked away from the public—waiting to be completed when, one day, the time is right. These narratives might remain there till the second coming.

We have reason to despair: many factors harm our credibility and influence. Our drafts suffer ailments ranging from poor organization to blabber. From clutter to undeveloped ideas. And what about style mismatch? Inconsistency? Grammar issues?

Whatever the cause, the solution is the same. Ask a storytelling expert to analyze your manuscript and tell you how to fix it. You'll give your story—and yourself—a chance to shine.

As a professional editor, I have spent uncountable hours honing the craft of storytelling. I graduated in writing and editing at the University of Washington and the Institute for Writers, and helped hundreds of writers connect with their audiences.

This *Worry-Free Editing Plan* shows how I can help you write with impact and change the world.



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Two Kinds of Editing

Your Best Story offers two kinds of editing: developmental editing and copyediting. These cover most issues a document can have. We can help you develop your story from scratch or fix content you've already written.

Copyediting and Line Editing

Copyeditors make sure your manuscript is consistent in spelling, grammar, and usage, and that internal references, tables of content, captions, images, and tables are correct.

Copyediting comes in different levels, depending on how heavy an editorial hand your prose needs.

Developmental Editing

Developmental editors catch and fix problems on a grand scale—flaws that concern the entire narrative—and help you finish your story.

Developmental editors ensure your story will be a great read before a copyeditor zooms in on details like grammar and punctuation. Often, they'll recommend revising vast parts of your book, but you can be sure the result is rewarding. In the end, your book will be solid, well motivated, and well structured.



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A few testimonials

Niels is a real professional. His editing work is excellent, and he communicates clearly. One of the things I appreciate is that he knows his abilities but also what's not his expertise. When Niels says he can, you can rely on his work, and that's very pleasant to work with. He gave me some good advice and did a lot more than just editing. I'll definitely work with Niels again when I need an editor.



Basjan Rietveld

Speaker and entrepreneur

Niels is the best editor I've had in eight years of writing. His patient and constructive feedback has made me a more careful and attentive writer. He's also an absolute pleasure to work with.

Adam De Gree

Writer and history teacher



Niels is very generous with his time to help coach us writers. As a relative newcomer to the writing industry, I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the pleasure of working with Niels. He is the consummate professional.



Tim Cheng

Technical writer



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Copyediting

As a professional copyeditor, I have seen many good writers. But I've never seen a book ready for publication without some editing. Most final drafts reek of run-on sentences, dangling modifiers, spelling errors, you name it.

Your main focus while writing is your message. By the time you get to the self-editing stage—to improve your language, flow, and diction—you've seen your writing so often that it's hard to assess quality. Did you use abbreviations consistently? Did you make the same style choices throughout your document? Did you catch all dangling modifiers?

I can offer you a sharp eye and make sure your manuscript is consistent in style, word choice, and spelling. I can help you catch typos, ambiguous sentences, and errors in logic and reasoning. With my help, your document will be ready for typesetting.

What is a copyeditor?

copy·ed·i·tor or copy _ ed·i·tor

noun

Someone who knows their stuff and removes flaws and inconsistencies from your almost-finished manuscript.



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Copyediting isn't proofreading

Copyediting is often confused with proofreading, but there are significant differences.

Copyeditors work on your manuscript before typesetting (i.e., formatting it into a print-ready PDF) and can still make major changes. Copyeditors make sure your manuscript is consistent in spelling, grammar, and usage, and that internal references, tables of content, captions, images, and tables are correct.

Proofreaders, on the other hand, scrutinize the typeset proof and are limited in the changes they can make. Proofreaders perform quality control on typesetting and check for spelling errors and typos, but they will never go into complex grammar issues—by then, that ship has sailed.

Writers often hire proofreaders and expect them to do a copyeditor's job. To ensure that won't happen to you, read the description of the copyeditor's tasks below.



Levels of copyediting

One copyediting job is not another. Some manuscripts need only polishing, while others need line editing—a thorough sentence-level rewrite of your prose.

The three levels below represent a continuum and are not set in stone. Before starting any job, I will compose an agreement about what I will and will not do.

The light copyedit — Mechanical editing and spelling

The first level of editing is mostly mechanical. This comprises correction of spelling, basic grammar, and inconsistencies in—for example—hyphenation, compounding, and comma usage. In a light copyedit, the copyeditor ignores (or at best queries) complex grammatical issues, word choice, and style. However awkward your sentence may be, the only criterium here is that your text is understandable and correct.

The copyeditor will flag factual inconsistencies and incorrect statements when these are obvious but will not focus on them.

Most writers assume their manuscript needs only a light copyedit. But be sure to have a professional editor—not your spouse, mother, or neighbor—assess the editorial needs of your document. Always assume your manuscript needs more than you anticipate.

Typically, a light copyedit is about 1500–2000 words per hour.



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The medium copyedit — Getting the grammar right

In this level of copyediting, the editor has more license to improve the sentence flow—though still minimally. The copyeditor will not remove unnecessary adjectives and adverbs, and will not be bothered much with word usage and wordiness. The stress is on grammatical correctness, and in this level of editing, the copyeditor will correct more complex grammatical issues.

The copyeditor will query seemingly incorrect statements and apparent flaws in logic, and verify facts that ring untrue.

Typically, a medium copyedit is about 1000 words per hour.

The heavy copyedit — Making beautiful sentences

Here, we throw line editing into the mix—turning sentences into magic. In a heavy copyedit, also called a line edit, the text is scrutinized not only for errors but also for inconsistencies in the author's voice, style, and syntax.

The copyeditor judges every sentence to determine if it can be improved by removing words, moving clauses and phrases, introducing parallelism, or implementing other stylistic conventions. In short, the line editor is involved with beautifying the language and deciding if the words the author chose are fit for the job.

The heavy copyeditor verifies statements and revises incorrect facts, and queries or edits issues in organization and logic. Of course, the writer can always choose to reject these changes.

Typically, a heavy copyedit or line edit is about 300–800 words per hour.



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When copyediting isn't enough — Rewriting or developmental editing

Sometimes, issues aren't at the sentence level, but at the conceptual level. Or the author's voice is so verbose, messy, or un-understandable that every sentence needs a total makeover. We have exited the realm of the copyeditor and entered the domain of the developmental editor.



“My book needs rewriting?”

Don't worry. Most books need more than only copyediting. In the next chapter, you'll find out how that works.



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Developmental Editing

Imagine. You finally place that elusive last period. You cross your arms and sit back, looking dreamily at the kicker you wrote. Now, you hire a proofreader, and you're set for success.

Not so fast.

Publishers receive cartloads of book submissions each week, and they turn down most of them. In their hunt for the next bestseller, acquisitions editors consider only the manuscripts with life-changing potential. And to have such clout, the book must stand like a fortress above the water.

As a writer, you're so close to your story that you overlook holes and inconsistencies that might confuse or annoy your reader.

Maybe the structure of your nonfiction book is illogical, making the whole thing confusing or amateurish. Or perhaps your novel's protagonist lacks motivation, and your plot is simply pulling her through your storyline.

Agents and publishers notice these things within minutes. By hiring a developmental editor, you can save yourself the embarrassment.



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What is a developmental editor?

de·vel·op·men·tal _ ed·i·tor

noun

Someone who knows their stuff and helps you turn your manuscript into something extraordinary by ensuring a logical structure, a tone that matches your audience, and a clear thesis.

Developmental editor or rewriting service?

Developmental editors catch and fix problems on a grand scale—flaws that concern the entire story—and help you rewrite your book.

Developmental editors ensure your story will be a great read before a copyeditor zooms in on details like grammar and punctuation. Often, they'll recommend revising vast parts of your book, but you can be sure the result is rewarding. Ultimately, your book will be solid, well motivated, and well structured.

As a developmental editor, I wouldn't make all the revisions for you but guide you in your rewriting. I would, however, perform some structural edits throughout your manuscript to help you get started.

If you need me to rewrite your book for you, let's talk.

If your story is excellent, but there are issues at the sentence level—for example, your formality register doesn't match your target audience, or your sentences are passive and cluttered—you can hire me for a heavy copyedit.



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One package — Developmental editing, line editing, and copyediting

If you need copyediting or line editing, as well as developmental editing, I can offer you a package deal. Book a free discovery call to have a chat about it.

I do, however, recommend hiring a separate proofreader to check your PDF after typesetting. One editor seldom accomplishes a completely error-free product, and a fresh set of eagle eyes can help catch the last issues.



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A few more testimonials

Working with Niels is a pleasure. He is a professional involved in the process and your product. He can help you feel carefree and on track. Niels is the editor of my book, *Grow and Heal: Becoming Like Jesus in a Broken World* (title translated from Dutch). It will be published in 2024.



Marjolijn Rietveld
Counselor, speaker, and educator

I’ve worked with 10+ book editors, and Niels has been the best . . . by far. He took my book and made it great. He challenged me where I needed to be challenged and improved my writing while maintaining my tone. If you need a book edited, Niels is the way to go.

Chris Stanley
*Author, founder of Stanley
Crew Publishing and IA Path*



Niels is a talented editor who knows how to think along with the customer. He has edited some of my academic writings and I can highly recommend him to anyone wanting to see the quality of their texts rise and shine.



Tobias Strijker
Agronomist R&D



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The steps to success

If you book a discovery call today, we'll have a look at your manuscript together. Once you request an offer, I'll do a swift structural analysis of the manuscript and two half-hour editing samples to gauge the workload. You'll receive a quotation specifying what the document needs and how much time and money it will cost.

How sad it would be if your stories remained unnoticed. Every person has a story worth telling, and nothing should be in the way of telling yours. After all your work, you deserve more book sales, followers, and chances to be heard and remembered.

Start by ensuring the highest level of writing—with clarity and transparency. True influence comes from sharing your experiences and being understood. And this influence will permeate other segments of your life. As an author, you might be featured in podcasts, documentaries, and articles—expanding the reach of your story and ideas, and feeding your confidence to take on new challenges.

It all starts with a well-written story.

And that's the expertise I'm offering you.

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Niels Kwakernaak

Editor and writing coach

Books ✨ Articles ✨ Editing ✨ Coaching