

## WHAT DOES A COPY EDITOR DO?

We are often asked the question ‘what does a copy editor actually do?’ The general answer has to be multi-faceted. As every writer will have their own unique copy-editing requirements so the answer is not that straightforward.

To those not in the know – editing, proofreading and all the other names for work that involves improving, honing, and changing the written word all seem to involve doing the same thing. That is, ‘crossing out bits of what the author has written, then replacing them with some other bits the editor believes makes more sense, or is more beneficial to the story.’

There are many different kinds of editor: from copy editors, commissioning editors, editors in chief, freelance editors, to desk editors, project editors, managing editors, editorial managers, with the list going on and on.

Let’s look at the definition of a copy editors’ role:

‘They make changes to the authors writing in order for it to read more smoothly, and flow more logically. They make sure the work has no spelling errors, or other glitches in it, which will distract the reader. And they get the nitty gritty of the writing correct, while ensuring the author’s message will still be understood.’

How many changes a good copy editor will make to an author’s work will depend on (a) the underlying quality of the material, (b) how much time the writer has spent honing their work already and (c) how complicated or lengthy the piece of writing is.

In short, a good copy editor is someone who edits an author’s copy or writing, and is one who should be able to smooth off the rough edges, thus making the author’s work read clearly so the finished piece is the best it can possibly be.

Finally, it must be remembered that a writer should use a copy editor who is impartial, independent and professional if they want the best result.

*Mentoring Writers have been reviewing and editing manuscripts for published authors from many countries for a number of years. We also mentor new and developing writers of all ages, worldwide and have a wide and varied experience in the craft of writing. If you need help with your writing then check out our website or email us at [contact@mentoringwriters.co.uk](mailto:contact@mentoringwriters.co.uk)*

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