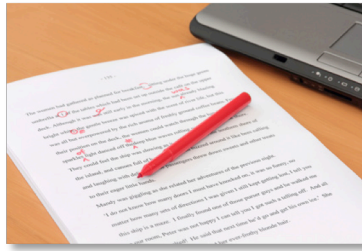




Emma Walton Hamilton's
Guide to Finding, Hiring &
Working with
Freelance Editors



Finding, Hiring & Working with Freelance Editors

Once you have done everything you can to get your manuscript into the best possible shape, I highly recommend you **consider hiring a freelance editor for an evaluation and/or line edit.**

3 reasons to hire a freelance editor *before* you submit to an agent or publisher:

1. Today's editors are looking for polished, publication-ready manuscripts.
2. Once a manuscript has been rejected, that same publisher will seldom reconsider it... even if you rewrite it.
3. It's impossible to edit yourself with any real perspective.

Q. What kinds of services do freelance editors offer?

A. There are many different types of services that editors may offer, and their definitions of terms may vary or overlap, but below is a list of the most common:

- **Manuscript evaluation** – Comprehensive assessment of manuscripts strengths and weaknesses, with recommendations for areas of improvement where needed. May be in written form or provided as a consult, usually over the phone or via Skype.
- **Developmental / content editing** – Evaluation/critique of a manuscript plus specific recommendations for additions, deletions, and revisions. The focus is on making sure the manuscript is well organized, the story structure is solid and the storytelling is consistent in tone, style, and format.
- **Line editing** - Line-by-line recommendations to improve sentence structure, grammar and narrative flow. May also address verse issues like meter and rhyme.
- **Book doctoring** – May encompass developmental or line editing, or even ghostwriting.
- **Copyediting / proofreading** – Highlighting and correcting mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as inconsistencies in the narrative. May include fact checking.

Q. How do I know which editing service to choose?

A. A good editor will ask to review sample pages and/or a synopsis and will be able to advise whether you are best served by starting with an evaluation or whether your manuscript is ready for a line edit. When in doubt, start with an evaluation – most editors offer discounts on follow-up services.

Q. How much does a freelance editor charge?

A. It varies, depending upon the nature of the project, the service required and the editor's level of experience. An editor may charge per word, per page or per hour. Some offer a flat fee for certain projects. Many editors post their rates on their websites – by way of comparison, you can view my rates here:

<http://emmawaltonhamilton.com/services/childrens-book-editing/>

You can also view some standard rate ranges at Editorial Freelancers Association, here: <http://www.the-efa.org/res/rates.php>

Q. Where and how can I find a good freelance editor?

A. There are several ways to find good freelance editors:

- ★ **The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators** (<http://www.scbwi.org>) - provides a list of approved professional editors that they recommend. This is probably your best bet for guarantee of quality.
- ★ **The Editorial Freelancers Association** (http://www.The_EFA.org) - most freelance editors belong to this association, and the website provides guidelines, pricing structures, etc.
- ★ **Referrals** from trusted friends and writing colleagues

Q. What should I look for or ask when making an inquiry?

A. In addition to querying rates and availability, you should review a prospective editor's background and level of experience. Look for someone who has specific experience in the children's publishing world, either as an editor or an author – ideally both. Make sure they have endorsements or references you can read, and will provide you with a signed contractual agreement for their services. Ask what the turn-around time is for the service you require, and whether any follow up questions are included in the price.

The following is a list of suggested questions to ask a prospective editor:

- How do you deliver your evaluation/comments? (i.e. written evaluation, comments inserted on the manuscript itself - either digitally or hand-written on hard copy of manuscript, or verbal feedback via telephone?)
- Do you have specific experience with... (editing verse, historical fiction, this genre/subject matter, etc.)
- How long will it take to receive your feedback?
- What is your policy regarding follow-up questions?
- How much do you charge for a re-review after I have completed a rewrite based on your recommendations?
- Can you provide a client list or any testimonials or referrals?
- Do you ever make referrals or introductions to editors or agents?
- Do you give any discounts for members of professional writing organizations, published writers, need-based clients, or repeat customers?