

Abbey McLaughlin Editorial Services

Information Booklet

(a service menu but better)



Copyright © 2023 Abbey McLaughlin Editorial Services

All rights reserved.

Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. You may print or for your personal and non-commercial use only. You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute, reuse, or commercially exploit the content.

Abbey McLaughlin
EDITORIAL SERVICES





Content Overview

Abbey as a Person (page 4)

Editing Services (page 5)

Book Coaching (page 9)

Editorial Assessment (page 12)

Developmental Editing (page 15)

Line Editing (page 22)

Developmental-Line Editing Hybrid (page 25)

Copy Editing (page 28)

Proofreading (page 30)

Our Meet-Cute on Reedsy (page 32)

Prices? In *this* economy?! (page 34)

Frequently Asked Questions & Comments (page 35)

Policies & Procedures (page 38)

You Survived! (page 43)

This booklet is your best friend.


Hello there!*

I appreciate your time and attention for this information booklet. It includes the services I offer, thorough descriptions of each, my policies, frequently asked questions, and more! Even if you've worked with an editor before, please take a gander because each editor defines their services a little different.

I have had the pleasure of working with many first-time authors new to the world of editing, so while I hope this content clarifies the needs, the process, and the expectations of getting a book prepared for print, there is no such thing as a dumb question. Feel free to reach out!

If you have concerns or desire adjustments to these service and policy boundaries, please let me know. I'm happy to talk about it and see how we can best serve each other. **Enjoy!**

* If you know what I'm referencing here, we're already best friends.



Abbey as a Person

I felt like I needed my own section not just to introduce myself, but to provide some context for some of the more unique policies later in this menu.

First, heyyyyyyyy!

I'm Abbey. I am a Millennial-Gen Z gal who acts younger than she is but also thinks like someone way older than she is. It's the best of both worlds! It does also mean I have an instinctual urge to end all sentences with exclamation points, and if I do, just go with it.

In the tropical land of Marion, Indiana, I studied English and Creative Writing at Indiana Wesleyan University, graduating ✨ magna cum laude ✨ in December 2017. I'm not a small-town girl, but I did live in a small-town world for a while, and there was a coffee shop in town called The Abbey, so life wasn't too bad.

My Work Experience

I was kind of tempted to just copy and paste my LinkedIn profile here, but sure, let's talk about it. I'm actually quite proud!

My first professional gig was my sophomore year in college, and it was very glamorous. I was an editorial assistant for a magazine specializing in the utility arborist industry—I know. Sexy stuff. They're the heroes when hurricanes and tornadoes rock your world though!

Some titles I wore along the way include: nanny, marketing coordinator, copy editor, editorial coordinator, proofreader, and writing tutor. After I graduated college, I was hired as a part-time, freelance copy editor for an academic publishing company. I fixed up a lot of dissertations and textbooks, but none of you will ever get to read. But I got to learn a lot! My comprehension was not always *perfect*, but I do know a lot about random minutia that might get me through a few rounds at trivia night!

My big break, though, was working at Proverbs 31 Ministry. I was brought on as a proofreader, and worked my way up to Assistant Editor of the First 5 content, which is their Bible study division. I worked one on one with the Bible study writers for developmental in line editing services. I got to learn alongside extremely smart, knowledgeable theologians on staff, and I was mentored by many wise, thorough, insightful editors and directors. We produced scripturally accurate and intentionally approachable Bible study for hundreds of thousands of readers daily.

A mix of health and family emergencies pulled me away from that dream, but God made room for bigger ones! More on that in a sec.



Editing Style

I majored in English Education for a whole three weeks before I confidently concluded I'd much rather fix grammar myself than teach others how to do it—a real “give a man a fish” vibe. Sometimes editing is a “Miss Fix-It” job, but more often than not, it's a collaborative, subjective harmony between the writer and myself. Nothing warms my cynical heart than being knocked over by insane wisdom, brilliant insight, powerful storytelling, crazy courageous truth, and wild conspiracy theories. This profession humbles me every day with how little I know about the world and how excited I am to learn. Can you teach me something? Literally anything. I'm all ears.


My approach to editing is mildly more “professional” than this snazzy service menu, which means I'm going to be direct but compassionate and intuitive. My comments and corrections will improve the book's organization, flow, clarity, efficiency, effectiveness, and professionalism, and they will also provoke deeper intention, instigate a debate or two, and challenge you to think further outside the box (or a little closer to it sometimes).

My goal is to advocate for the reader first, thinking of how your specific demographic might approach the text. I also, of course, speak from the editing perspective, providing correction, instruction, and feedback about how the publishing world works, what the people want, what's cringe, what's cheesy, what's way too formal, what's boring, and what's just really confusing. Lastly, I read your work as your firstborn child in document form—meaning, I respect and admire the heck out of it and want what meets your vision, intention, and calling. My beliefs and opinions are only suggestions; it's your heart and soul and blood on the line.

Narcolepsy? Never heard of her.

I have been sleepy in my entire life I never thought much of it. I never protested naps as a kid, I survived high school with lots of after-school naps, and in college, I loved that I could schedule classes later in the day and spaced out enough for me to go to my dorm, lay down, and fit in a REM cycle. It wasn't until I tried to fit into corporate America, that I realized maybe not everybody wanted to sleep as often or as desperately as I did. My worst year was 2020, when I was sleeping an average of 18 hours a day while trying to hold onto my dream job. Doctors are skeptical when you say things like this, so it took three years of fighting before I finally got an answer.

I have a neurological sleep disorder called narcolepsy, which means my body is programmed with a default level of exhaustion similar to someone who just worked for twelve hours. I am



always at least a little sleepy, and I am easily exhausted by any stimulation, especially noise and high energy social interactions. When I took the diagnostic test, I was given six twenty-minute windows where I was commanded to sleep (or try). I fell asleep in five minutes for five of the six. All that to say, I am really good at sleeping. I can sleep on command. But my body will also sometimes command me to sleep, even when I do not consent. For that reason, work is pretty darn hard.

Hopefully, now you understand why I just told you all of that.

God's greatest blessing to me—in addition to one million other things—is the ability to work on my own schedule, at my own pace, and with compassionate, patient, flexible clients. If that's not you, I totally respect that. Right now, however, I require that my clients do have flexible deadlines by about seven days to accommodate when my body decides to resist my medication, or when unforeseen circumstances overstimulate me to the point of exhaustion. This sounds silly, and yes, I have seen the puppy videos where they just pass out mid-run. Genuinely adorable! I don't have cataplexy, which is what that is called, but trust me, narcolepsy is very real and difficult to predict.

And in exchange for reading this and putting up with my vulnerability, the good news is that I am also a very flexible, compassionate editor. If you need more time for revisions, want to adjust our timeline, or even need a few extra days to pay a bill, I'm here for you. Life is not very cut and dry, nor do we usually see anything coming, so let's just navigate this bad boy together!

A Note on Beliefs


Sometimes it's just helpful to clear the air. I will maybe lose clients for saying this, but transparency is important to me.

I believe in God. I respect and love working with people who do not. No, I'm not going to try to convert you! (*What do you mean you have not been baptized?!*)

I love everyone and believe that God loves everyone.

I do not hate any people group. I'm actively learning how to be a better ally and friend to people who are struggling or with whom I tend to struggle through professional development courses, healthy conversations, and reading.

I like to think I am an open-minded editor, but that doesn't mean I don't have boundaries. For example, I will not edit books that clearly divide people, hate people, suggest it is okay to hate people, suggest that God hates people, or include hate speech as defined in Merriam-Webster's dictionary.



There's more on how I handle books with which I disagree on subject matter in the FAQ section!

The Fun Stuff

I want to add on a happy note, so here are some more fun facts about me that hopefully you find something in common with! (And yes, you can end sentences with prepositions sometimes!)

- I have a fluffy Cavachon dog named peach! She's very independent and loyal to her favorite leader in the world, my parents' timid and dare I say *scaredy-cat* golden retriever named Gus. Ask me for a picture—I have thousands!
- My favorite animals in the world are ducks, whales, and geese—in that order.
- I drink iced caramel lattes like water.
- I have four awesome siblings and two awesome sibling-in-laws. The start of the show *Ida* my nephew, Miles! Born December 24, 2022!
- I am chronically overheating, so I love cold weather, snow, Maine (Acadia/MDI), the Upper Peninsula, and any day I can wear a cozy sweatshirt.
- I'm writing a book about a haunting Lake Superior shipwreck (and its four trapped inhabitants). I got to go to Sault Sainte Marie this past summer (2023) to do some research and see some shipwrecks!
- I am nocturnal by nature like an opossum.

Your turn!

Truth or dare.

Truth: tell me literally anything about yourself!

Dare: hire me to edit your book ;)

Just kidding!! Haha...jk...haha...unless?
(↑ *that's a joke for the Gen-Z— I couldn't resist!*)

Now let's talk services!



Editing Services

These are all the things I can do for you!

The services are usually provided (and recommended to be completed) in this order.

1. Book Coaching
2. Editorial Assessments
3. Developmental Editing
4. Developmental-Line Editing Hybrid
5. Line Editing
6. Copy Editing
7. Proofreading

If ya have to pick just one...

Each editing service provides unique feedback that develops the story you tell and the writing style you use to tell it. However, I completely understand when financial constraints, interest in feedback, or time limit how many services my clients can afford to utilize.

My personal opinion as a human who also pays bills and likes to see a project through is that every piece of writing should *always* be **copy edited**. That is the most non-negotiable service to budget. When budgeting for a professional editor or editorial team, I'd prioritize in this order: copy editing, developmental editing, line editing, and proofreading.

If you cannot afford a proofreader, it's not the *worst* idea in the world to ask any trusted friends, family, or coworkers (in advance) if they'd be willing to carefully proofread the manuscript after it's been typeset (designed). They may not catch style-specific inconsistencies, but they can flag embarrassing typos for you, and that's the main priority of proofreading when a copy editor already read through it.

Later on, I'll help you with the optimal order of tasks when preparing to publish a book or query agents and publishers, so don't panic!



Book Coaching

Members of the jury, *I do not ghostwrite*. Sometimes, it feels like that would be easier, but writing is something I enjoy purely as a creative outlet. I believe that anyone who wants to put their name on a book should be at least *involved* in the creation.

That's why I offer ✨ book coaching ✨

What is it?

The visionary author and I develop their ideas, notes, and rough drafts into a work of art. *Not specific enough?* Fair.

There are three stages of the service: brainstorming and preparation, writing, and editing.

Stage One


First, the client and I establish the intended vision for the book, including the felt needs (Why is the reader opening the book? What are they looking to solve? What are they feeling that brought them to the book?), objective (What is this book going to do about it?), and execution (How are we going to accomplish that?).

We prepare a thorough outline of the book with a general description and goal for each chapter or segment that clearly contributes to the felt need and objective of the book and relates both to the preceding chapter and the chapter that follows. Important components like demographics, appropriate tone and posture, boundaries, expectations, and marketing strategies are also discussed in this stage of the service.

Stage Two

Once the foundation has been laid, we write! Together. Some clients may have rough drafts to start with while others may start from scratch—it's usually easier to start from scratch. Some clients may write in between sessions, while others choose to write only during sessions. This stage of the process is about getting words onto the paper that remain within the goals established.

I offer helpful feedback on what to include or not to include that saves time and confusion as well as writing advice to cultivate a bond with the reader. Most clients choose to write in-session, which means we are creating the content together. Basically, I provide prompts to get the client talking about the topic and what they want to say; while they speak, I write.



It may be word-for-word, or slightly adjusted to match the established tone. After natural pauses or ten minutes, I read the words back to the client and ask them, “Does this sound like you? Is this what you meant?” We adjust as necessary. We calibrate if we’re moving along the path of the outline, or if the outline needs to be adjusted based on the information reviewed. For clients who choose to write independently between sessions, we use our time together to read the writing aloud and tweak it. I provide light copy edits and focus on suggestions, insight, and recommendations where needed. We chisel the work together.

Stage Three

After the words have been put on paper, we review. Even though the writing process includes a lot of review and adjustment time, it’s important to step back and look at the big picture after giving it some space to breathe.

This stage involves “zooming out” to determine how we can improve the reader experience, accomplish the objective, and clarify any loose ends. We also review missing components that may have been added later in the process. This is not a copy editing or proofreading stage. This is a collaborative effort of review from thirty-thousand feet, as they say.

Logistics

The client and I usually meet weekly for one hour on Zoom, Facetime, or Google Meet with cameras on and shared screens. I’m limited to sixty minutes per session because after that amount of intense brain power, my ears start smoking, and we risk frying my precious frontal lobe.


We use Google Drive for collaborative work. You have access to everything I do as it pertains to the book and billing.

This service is billed hourly, and invoices are sent in one of two frequencies: after each session or once a month.

The exact rate depends on the needs and expectations of the client. There is no flat, always-the-same rate for this service, but my starting hourly rate is \$50 as of August 2023.

Most clients require 50-75 sessions of sixty minutes (roughly a year) to complete the three stages.

The cancellation policy per session for this service is very flexible. I ask clients to notify me at least twenty-four hours in advance if they cannot meet at the scheduled time. If done within that



time range, there is no cancellation charge or penalty. I do not guarantee time available elsewhere in my week, but if I do have the time, I am happy to reschedule.

I charge a \$25 cancellation fee for no-shows or cancellations with fewer than twelve hours' notice. If I cancel a meeting less than twelve hours before it begins, I will deduct \$25 from the next session's total. Our time is valuable and respected.

If a client repeatedly misses sessions, cancels, or reschedules, I reserve the right to limit sessions per month until trust is rebuilt.

I also require that all invoices be paid and up-to-date to continue meeting for weekly sessions. If you are behind on bills, that's okay! We just can't meet until we catch up.

Who is this for?

Some creatives have an amazing idea, but writing just does not come naturally. This service is for authors who desire to author a book but struggle with executing either in planning, writing, self-editing, or all three. It's an educational, relational process that provides not only an amazing end result but elevated writing skills, companionship, accountability, and emotional support. This service is vulnerable in nature, designed to create a safe place for authors who need to verbally process the story inside them without trying to get it all down on paper or painstakingly translating a transcription into the intention.

Every book needs ambitious goals in a manageable timeline. This is not an ambiguously ongoing service, meaning we will start the journey with a finish line drawn. However, writing a book in this format requires flexibility and grace. This is not the service for anyone who has already scheduled their book launch event and promised it to their social media followers. Quality is much more important to me than speed. Efficiency is also not the same thing as doing it as fast as technically possible. We can talk about that another time, though ☺

What else should you know?

I only accept two to three book coaching clients at a time. If my slots are full, you may reserve me for the future, or request a one-time session with me to discuss something or workshop together!



Editorial Assessment

A totally optional trip down Abbey's memory

Do you remember writing a paper in high school that really felt like it killed more brain cells than it developed? For me, it was the infamous Russia Project my AP English teacher assigned her class every year. Ms. Scobell was the effective, wise teacher who raised your blood pressure when you heard her speak.

Each student was assigned a specific Russian poet, and the essay required us not only to *understand* the poems laced with complex Soviet political and war-time lament but to *form an opinion* about them (and defend it). My poet, Andrei Voznesenski, was particularly recognized for his use of humor in his poetry, which added a fun extra layer of confusion when desperately trying to annotate his work originally written in a different language.

My teacher knew she was asking a lot of us, and like many kind teachers, allowed each of us to show her our essays-in-progress before officially turning them in for a grade. She'd ask us questions, identify issues with our arguments, and point out missing potential we could unearth. She single-handedly rescued many students from Ds and Es (our school didn't do the grade "F").

I remember being stuck because "there was only so much I could write about this man!" She did what many great teachers do—humbled me, sent me back with lots of ideas and criticism, but any changes were ultimately up to my discernment.

God bless teachers. If you know one, text them a "thank you!" right now on my behalf.


This random piece of Ada, Michigan folklore demonstrates the basic purpose of an editorial assessment (EA), which is to flag the biggest needs, issues, and missing potential of an author's manuscript before they send it to a developmental editor (the metaphorical turning-in-for-a-grade).

What is it?

An EA is the (usually first and preliminary) professional evaluation of a piece of writing. The editor (yours truly) provides a report ranging in word count proportionate to the length of the book (usually 2,000 words). It details what the author should adjust and self-edit before hiring a developmental editor.

Some of the most common aspects I discuss in an EA include:

- Organization (Is this the most effective way to arrange the information?)

- 
- Method (Is this the most effective way to communicate the information?)
 - Elaboration (This concept was not sufficiently explained. Here's what I still wondered...)
 - Focus (How does each section contribute to a bigger objective or narrative?)
 - Loose Ends (I never got an answer about...)
 - Remove (This topic, plotline, or advice is not viable for the reader's felt needs and why.)

Logistics

Step 1: Sign contract and pay 20% nonrefundable retainer.

Step 2: Up to 60-minute phone/Zoom call to review needs and focus points.

Step 3: Abbey reads and composes assessment.

Step 4: Client reads the assessment and digests.

Step 5: Up to 60-minute phone/Zoom call to debrief and establish author's self-editing process.


After a client and I agree to work together, I recommend meeting to review the felt needs (Why is the reader opening the book?), objective (What is this book going to do about it?), and execution (How are we going to accomplish that?), as well as the demographics, general content, and anything else the client wants me to know or that I want to know.

Once I have that information, the manuscript is all mine! I read through it carefully, then write my report. This service does not include in-document comments or suggestions. It is only the separate report.

I recommend clients read the report twice a few days apart from each other, then write down any questions or concerns for me. Clients are free to send them to me via message, and one additional call (limited to sixty minutes) is included in this service. I'll answer what I can for the author as they prepare to revise based on their own discernment of my feedback and recommendations.

As with all services, my rate for a project is determined after evaluating the client's manuscript. However, the *general* average rate for my EAs is \$0.015 per word, which includes the report and two calls, each with a sixty-minute time limit. Additional calls are possible; they're just not included in this price (charged hourly).

Who is it for?



This is a service valuable for almost anyone, but because only one percent of this world has money falling out of their purses and wallets, it's best to pay for this when it's the first book a client has ever done. It's for newer writers still learning how to prepare and write a book. I'm here to "point 'em in the right direction," educate them on what components to consider when writing and self-editing, and prepare them for developmental editing, which is even more detailed.

An EA may also be a worthwhile alternative to a developmental edit when finances are especially limited as it does examine the content in the same nature as a developmental edit—just more generally and without follow-up or specific commentary.

I also recommend an EA for authors with writer's block or whose topics are controversial, loosely developed, or otherwise risky. It's better to know if a concept doesn't work well before getting too deep into the editing process. If the author isn't sure how to connect or conclude the book due to writer's block or really any stagnation, this can provide prompts and suggestions for how to proceed or whether it is really plausible to continue.



Developmental Editing

A metaphor to start us off!

Imagine with me for a moment that you are in a pottery class. Cliche? Maybe. It's effective though. Okay, so we're making a vase, right? And it's just your own unique vase, so how could it *possibly* be considered "incorrect"? Well, it still has to have the certain earmarks of a vase for it to be considered a vase, and if you planned on selling it, you have to give a little bit of what the market wants in order to actually make the sale. After many painful, profanity-filled hours with the wheel and the blob of clay, you call me over to take a look, and I stand with my arms crossed and a paintbrush on my chin like the movies before I tell you that I have some feedback.

Now, you *can* just tell me where I can put my feedback, but if you're paying for a developmental edit, you're going to want to hear me out. The thing is—I know who will be buying this vase. I also know how vases look structurally and culturally. We talked before you started, and you explained your vision for the vase, so I also know what we were shooting for at the start. I'm wise, compassionate, open-minded, and honest, so you've also got that going for you. I inhale and then I speak a whole bunch of truth that kind of sucks but also dramatically improves your perception and confidence in the vase's potential.

For example, I mention, "I like the shape of the rim, but it doesn't work when the whole thing has such big edges and ridges to it. It's overshadowed. We have to choose one or the other, and I personally think the ridges and edges are awesome."


You sigh because I didn't see you take 45 minutes on that rimmed opening to the vase. Still, you agree it made sense when I said it. So, I send you back to the wheel while the clay is still nice and wet, and you go about it.

You call me over after 10 minutes, and this time, I only need a glance to see if we fixed it. Did we? Crap. We made it worse. I stand by my advice, but we're human, so sometimes what I meant and what you heard is not the same. Now the top of the vase is too straight and long. I suggest we adjust it again, and you go about it.

But that detail to the neck? The way you smoothed it is exactly what it needed for its height, and we're great on that part! Great job!

I hope you see where I'm going with this, but I'm still going to explain it more literally now.

What is it?



Developmental editing (also called “substantive editing”) is the in-depth, professional read of the writer’s book after its initial draft has been thoroughly self-edited. The book is still being molded and shaped, but it has confirmed potential worthy of the time and money for an editor whose whole job revolves around this genre, subject matter, and/or service.


My service includes a vision call, in-text annotations, a developmental report (length proportionate to book length, usually 3,000-4,000 words), a debrief call, a read of the revisions with light comments and notes, and a post-revisions call to establish next steps.

Trying to summarize everything a developmental editor (DE) looks for is kind of bonkers because with experience, each DE picks up on more and more nuanced, specific criteria that affects the book’s likelihood for success and vision. Here’s a list to give you an idea, though:

Plot (fiction)

- Does the plot make sense?
- What’s the inciting incident that propels everything else?
- What’s the rising action?
- What’s the climactic peak?
- What’s the falling action?
- What’s the resolution?
- Is it paced in a nice, steady manner (not moving too fast nor too slow)?
- Does everything mentioned “come back” or serve a role in the greater picture?
- Is the plot organized in a specific way (chronologically, character-based, etc.)?
- Are there any plot holes that make the ending impossible or silly?
- Could we do something in addition to or instead of something else to really elevate the climactic build or satisfying resolution?
- Did the story try to fit too much in?
- Did the story drag on without much action?
- Does the plot try to incorporate too many different morals or issues that are honestly kind of irrelevant?
- Does this plot do something original for the genre, tropes, etc.?
- Does this plot have too many cliches?
- Is it unrecognizable to the genre it’s attempting?
- Will this plot appease the reader’s commitment, or will it frustrate them?
- What do you *want* the plot to accomplish and highlight?
- What devices are overused to move plot (dialogue, action, letters, etc.)

Subject (nonfiction)

- 
- How is this subject related to the author? Is that clear?
 - Is this subject matter niche enough to sell well or catch attention?
 - Is this subject matter so niche it probably will only sell to a handful of people?
 - What kind of expertise does the author have on this subject? Is that enough? How do we supplement if they don't?
 - What's the goal of diving into this subject matter?
 - To inform.
 - To convict.
 - To entertain.
 - To explore.
 - To persuade.
 - To encourage.
 - To inspire.
 - Etc.
 - What's the general opinion on this subject matter at the time it's being written?
 - Is this a timeless book or very dependent on the current market and interest?
 - What the author to write this all down? Why do they need to share it?
 - What are the key points being made?
 - And how do they all tie into the bigger subject matter?
 - How does the author organize the key points?
 - By point.
 - By aspect of each point.
 - By timeline.
 - By argument.
 - Etc.
 - What are the common threads between each point?
 - What's the "thesis statement" or mission for this book?
 - How does the author want the reader to respond after reading this book?
 - What was the reader feeling before they opened this book? Why'd they buy it?
 - What does this book promise for the reader?
 - Are there any needless controversies within the book that distracts from important points?
 - Are there any "stretches" in assertions that require more citations or discernment?
 - Was anything in this insensitive or blind to potential misinterpretation?
 - What is missing in this subject matter exploration?
 - Was anything missing that the author promised to talk about?

- 
- Was there anything the author could have talked about?

Characterization (fiction)


- What was the “status quo” for each character before the inciting incident?
- Did you have any “Mary Sue” characters with no flaws?
- Did you have any characters with literally no redeeming qualities?
- Does each character stand out with an individual personality? How can we make sure they’re not all the same person in different bodies?
- Do the characters think, speak, and behave consistent with their age, location, time period, and background?
- Do the characters respond logically or within expectation to events (i.e., are they emotionally realistic)?
- Do any of the characters lack growth or development in the book?
- Do the characters grow and develop at a reasonable and logical pace?
- What does the author want each character to represent / what purpose does each one serve for the plot and theme?
- Is there a clear protagonist and/or antagonist?
- Are there too many “main” characters? Too few?
- Is the writer too attached/similar to the characters (e.g., unable to make changes because it isn’t true to *their* perception of themselves)?
- Does the character have realistic and important stakes to continue?
- Does the reader care about any of the characters’ well-being or outcome?

Reader

- Who is reading the book? Does the book accommodate the reader’s demographic?
- Why did the reader buy this book? Is it accurate to the book’s reality?
- What does the reader expect? Did the book meet the expectations?
- Were there areas that are insensitive to reader experiences?
- Were there areas that played too into the demographic in a cheesy or obvious way?
- Will the reader “get” what the author is doing?

Writing Style

- Does the writing style match the plot or subject matter (too silly, too serious, too descriptive, too bare-bones, etc.)?
- Is the writing style repetitive (character always expresses emotion one way, action always described too dramatically, etc.)?
- Is the dialogue believable and accurate?

- 
- Is the author “showing” or “telling” plot and character points (too frequently)?
 - Is exposition paced and embedded?
 - Does the author *summarize* the story or narrate it? (We’re going for narration.)
 - Does the author *summarize* the point or explore it? (We’re going for exploration.)
 - Is the information relatively unbiased/neutral (for nonfiction)?
 - Is the writing style consistent with or harmonizing with the genre it falls under?
 - Is the writing style consistent with the character personalities?
 - Is the writing style consistent throughout the book?

Plus literally so much more! I just have to read your book first!

Logistics

The first step in a developmental edit is the vision call, which means meeting each other on Zoom or the phone! Let’s chat about your ideas, calling, focus, interests, expectations, and boundaries when I’m going through the book with a fine-tooth content comb. I limit these calls to sixty minutes, and it’s a give and take of my questions and yours, but this is not a consultation. It’s about understanding what you want, where you want to go, what you don’t want feedback or time spent on, and how I can best serve you.


Then, I take the book from you and mark it up with my professional perceptions, understanding of basic book structure and development, sensitivity radar, theological education, light research, and knowledge of the subject matter or genre. My comments will look something like this:

Abbey McLaughlin

I see what you meant by this piece of dialogue, but it comes across stilted and cheesy. I’m not sure there’s a way to really say any of this without being cringe, but we could make the same point by saying ... (but I think honestly it’d be okay to omit altogether).

When you’re reading through my comments, you get to decide if you care about each one, if/how you want to respond to it in the book itself or in a comment back to me, and if I was misinterpreting your intentions.

In addition to those fun in-text annotations and Microsoft Word tracked-changes, I’m also going to cook up a smokin’ report about the bigger issues, strengths, and adjustments the manuscript needs in my opinion (with guidance on how to revise to solve them). It’ll be a lot to read at once, so give yourself grace and time when you bite, chew, and digest. When you feel ready for it, I usually recommend a debrief call.



A debrief call is, like it sounds, a sixty-minute call to review what I said, what you want me to know, what you need more information on, and how you want to go about revisions. I'll guide you more on how to change things to solve the issues, what is really necessary versus more of my own interpretation and creative lens, and anything else you want to know! This call is optional but recommended.

The revision portion is all you, friend. I want this book to be *your* work, so even the changes I suggest should come from your own noggin. Take as much time as you need and just keep me in the loop. Mess with things, experiment, send me little excerpts—whatever works. I'm here to help, answer questions (via message or voice message), and encourage you on the journey.

When you think you've got the vase fixed, call me back in. I'll take a look. The second read, the revision review, does not require annotations or a report. It's my unstructured notetaking on what we discussed, what I noticed went well, what new things I might've identified need help, what still isn't fixed (and why/what I recommend), how proud I am of who you're becoming as a person, and which character I think would be most likely to get picked for a bit on *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

When that's been sent back to you, We Meet Again®. It's your last call. Tell me what questions and frustrations you're feeling, where you're happy with how the book landed, your hopes and dreams, and how I've dashed them (just kidding). If we're not happy with the book yet, this is where we make a game plan for how to get there. The cost quoted only covers everything and this call, so future work would be rated per hour based on the edits necessary (but starting at \$40 per hour). I take your lead on what you want me to use my time on.


The cost, as with all services, depends on the book. I typically start my prices at \$0.03 per word for the steps and calls listed above.

The next step after this is line editing! If that floats your goat. Otherwise, you can skip to copy editing.

Who is it for?

I'm not sure there's a soul on earth who couldn't benefit from developmental editing. Even bestselling authors have trusted editors who give them hard truth on their books. Granted, it gets easier every time, but still.

I'd say any book, particularly one from an author desiring to gain a profit from sales, needs developmental editing. I won't be the perfect DE for every book because my knowledge is (brace for it) *limited*. I'm good at Christian fiction and nonfiction; devotionals and Bible studies;



inspirational nonfiction; memoirs and autobiographies; self-help; romance; contemporary fiction; Young Adult fiction; literary and general fiction; and dystopian fiction. I've dabbled in many genres based on my initial assessment, so don't be shy to run it by me!

This is a service for authors secure enough in their abilities or their need for help that they can handle constructive criticism. This is a service for books still in early stages and able to change and grow in new ways (it's not an end-stage edit). This is a service for authors serious about the content of the book, not just marketing their brand or whipping out something for vanity. It's a humble process and so worth it!

A developmental edit isn't for anyone on a strict timeline either. Because we're adjusting content, rearranging, discussing, and pondering, it can take a while to get all the edits and revisions and reviews under a tight schedule, and that certainly doesn't do creativity any favors either! I tell clients to anticipate at *least* three months required for this process. About one month of that is budgeted for the client to complete revisions, but I'm extremely flexible on time and extensions—I know most are doing this in addition to full-time jobs, families, and keeping sanity!

Well, I hope I haven't scared you! It's also incredibly fun and rewarding. I get to enter your world and geek out with you!



Line Editing

What is it?

If a developmental edit is extensive, thorough feedback on *what* is being said, a line edit is the extensive, thorough feedback on *how* it is being said. A line edit is a review of the writing style to ensure it's consistent with the vision, plot, and/or subject matter.

My edits are typically a mix of in-text comments and in-text tracked changes. Some common reasons for adjustments or feedback include:


Fiction:

- ✓ Grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.
- ✓ Showing, not telling.
- ✓ Creative, engaging, realistic dialogue and dialogue tags.
- ✓ Build suspense.
- ✓ Descriptive imagery and figurative language.
- ✓ Consistency in characterization.
- ✓ Use of description as form of characterization.
- ✓ Use of description as subtle exposition (minimizing overexposition).
- ✓ Matching the tone of the scene with the writing style.
- ✓ Maintaining sensitivity for a variety of reader demographics.
- ✓ So much more!

Nonfiction:

- ✓ Grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.
- ✓ Maintaining sensitivity for a variety of reader demographics.
- ✓ Clear, logical order of thoughts within a section.
- ✓ Succinct, descriptive headings and fundamental statements.
- ✓ Accurate use of sources (credible, within its context, etc.).
- ✓ Tone matches the content being discussed.
- ✓ Use of figurative language to elaborate on a complex or abstract thought.
- ✓ Clear and concise wording.
- ✓ Sentence variety.
- ✓ Demonstrates personal perspective (not robotic or cheesy).
- ✓ So much more!

The book's unique needs will determine what feedback is provided, so it's practically impossible to list all the ways I can help you improve. Writing style is also something that should reflect the author, so my intention is never to rewrite, bulldoze, or co-author. In fact, if I do rephrase, I will



likely comment on it to ensure it's how the *author* would phrase it too (not using words or phrasings that aren't normal to the writer).

Authenticity and individuality are crucial values of mine when editing and writing, so this editing process requires feedback and direction by the author should they feel I overstep that delicate boundary, but it has not happened in my eight years as an editor! If authors prefer, I can provide all line edits in comment form—it just might make the process a little bit more overwhelming for the client and limit how much I can really get done within one sentence or paragraph.

I usually charge \$0.03 per word for line editing services, and the time required largely depends on the length of the book. As with all manuscripts, I need to confirm the rate by first reviewing the full project. This tends to be the most tedious, meticulous round of editing apart from perhaps copy editing. I'm really in the weeds and need lots of time to process and get creative with your content!

This is an excellent service to test out my free 1,000-word sample edit policy!


Logistics

This is the typical workflow:

- Step 1:** Sign contract and pay 20% nonrefundable retainer.
- Step 2:** Up to 60-minute phone/Zoom call to discuss vision and writing style intention.
- Step 3:** Abbey reads and works her magic in the document.
- Step 4:** Client sifts through and reviews all the editor's notes, rephrasings, comments, etc. Second payment (the remaining balance) is due at this time.
- Step 5:** Optional 30-minute phone call to review any questions or bounce ideas off each other before making writing changes based on my comments.

This service is meant to provide my thoughts on the way the book is written in specific, immersive form. Should the client desire some additional revision reviews for second (or third) drafts, we would need to discuss a different rate or a charge specifically for that purpose. Meetings outside the service package is charged at a per-hour rate based on what level of help is expected (e.g., going edit by edit, brainstorming big picture writing style, etc.).

Who is it for?



This is for the new authors who are still acclimating to thorough characterization, pacing, organization, and focus. Experienced, professional writers (those who have been paid for writing and/or receive profits on books they've written and published) are typically already comfortable with the way they word things and their accuracy, reader engagement, and sensitivity. Authors who are self-publishing, especially for the first time, require a little more direction in what writing style is appropriate, sells well, and/or does the subject, plot, or character justice.



Developmental-Line Editing Hybrid

What is it?

Spoiler alert! Not everyone can afford all editing services A-Z for self-publishing. It is quite a financial undertaking, and I'm not blind to that.

Sometimes, if I think of manuscript can thrive in this fast-paced work environment, I will offer a developmental and line editing *hybrid* package. This includes the in-text annotations portion of a developmental edit as well as the vision call and debrief call with the in-text edits and annotations of a line edit.


The idea is to provide both content and writing style feedback in the in-text medium to help you hone your craft and in the direction of elevated plot and characterization.

For this service, I usually charge \$0.04 per word. As with all manuscripts, I need to confirm the rate by first reviewing the full project. A developmental edit on its own costs \$0.03 per word, and a line edit on its own costs \$0.03 per word, so it's a 33% discount.

Logistics

I only offer this service for specific clients I believe have made enough progress already to benefit from fusing two full services. This is the typical workflow:

- Step 1:** Sign contract and pay 20% nonrefundable retainer.
- Step 2:** Up to 60-minute phone/Zoom call to discuss vision and writing style intention.
- Step 3:** Abbey reads and works her magic in the document.
- Step 4:** Client reads the assessment and digests. Second payment (the remaining balance) is due at this time.
- Step 5:** Up to 60-minute phone/Zoom call to debrief and establish author's post-edit revision process.
- Step 6:** Client makes informed changes to the document, additions, etc. as recommended or in addition to recommendations.
- Step 7:** Abbey reviews the work completed with informal notes on what else could be or needs to be improved before moving to copy editing.



As with all my services, clients are welcome to more time at a per-hour rate determined by the state of the manuscript and the requested time (e.g., more editing rounds, more revision review, or more brainstorming and debriefing sessions).

Example

I know that's hard to visualize without first experiencing either/both of those, so here's how it might look:

Example Text (I just made this up):

"All at once, everything happened to Susie. She was sad. It wasn't her fault that her parents were divorcing, her tuition payments were too expensive, she was diagnosed with spontaneous dental hydroplosion, her dog died, her best friend moved to New Zealand, and her fiancée broke off their engagement all in one day. Or was it? That's for next chapter."

Developmental Comments (usually in Microsoft Word margin comment form):

Re: It wasn't *her* fault that her parents... This is a lot of information to disclose out of nowhere for the reader! While it is cool to have that shock value, I think "all at once, everything happened to Susie" is the perfect way to provide it. We risk oversharing and trauma dumping in this form. After all, this is a story, so I recommend narrating this with detail, perhaps even using one chapter per event that happened simultaneously.

Re: "Or was it? That's for next chapter." I appreciate your eye for suspense, but I think it'd be more artful and creative to leave on a cliffhanger than to acknowledge the fact that we have many unanswered questions. I also wouldn't allude to other chapters within a fiction piece because it cuts the suspension of disbelief that this is an actual story unfolding in the reader's imagination.


Line Editing Comments (usually in Microsoft Word margin comment form):

Re: "She was sad." I love the opening line! Very powerful. It's the one right after it that I think we can improve. As everyone and their dog has heard before, a good writer *shows*, not *tells*. To really characterize Susie and bring dimension to her personality, I recommend writing the way a reader would be able to tell she is sad rather than just saying so (and go easy on "crying" as the demonstration). For example, "Susie sat dejectedly on her bare dorm mattress that October afternoon, staring at her roommate's packed whiteboard calendar on the wall."

From that sentence, we know she's packed up her stuff, it's not the time people usually move out of college dorms unless it's abrupt, she perhaps is envious of her roommate's full schedule (her cool life) as a college kid while she's facing adult issues and losing her "life." "Dejectedly" implies she's out of emotion or even care, and with time, we will understand it's because so much happened at once that she is unable to process any of it.

Line Edits (usually in Microsoft Word tracked changes):

Remove last two sentences with same explanation as DE (don't refer to other chapters within a fiction piece).



Add “*on a Wednesday in October*” to long list of woes (with a comment explaining it adds specificity and provides a reference point for later).

Who is it for?

This service was primarily made for people who are not sure they can afford a developmental edit and a line edit, but it can be beneficial for others too! Like authors who have already covered quite a bit of ground on their content and writing style but just need a little bit more help with the nuances of their genre or demographic. Authors who are under a time crunch and cannot commit to a full developmental and line edit. Authors who do not want extensive feedback on their content or writing style—just the musts. It’s a relatively customizable service where clients can tell me what they want me to be especially scrutinizing about!



Copy Editing

What is it?

This is what most people think of when I say I edit books. It's the straightforward, black-and-white details that show the reader this is a professional piece of work. I believe copy editing is the most non-negotiable necessary editorial service a manuscript should receive. There's nothing quite as frustrating and soul-puncturing as getting an Amazon review that mentions loving the book but getting distracted by all the errors. You'd be surprised how often that comes up! Readers care, and they do notice—especially avid readers! If a book is riddled with mistakes and inconsistencies, it leads to a distrust that the author takes their book seriously or is indeed professional and worthy of publication.

Copy editing is the thorough review of U.S. grammar, punctuation, mechanics, style guide, headings, consistency, spelling, scriptural accuracy, citation consistency, completeness, and clarity. A style guide is a list of rules about how specific matters should be formatted, spelled, punctuated, etc. for the sake of consistency and order. When I mention citation consistency, I mean that while I do not personally create entire bibliographies from scratch for my authors (I choose not to provide that service), I am happy to create consistent formatting, style, and appearance of citations with information attainable on the internet or within the document.

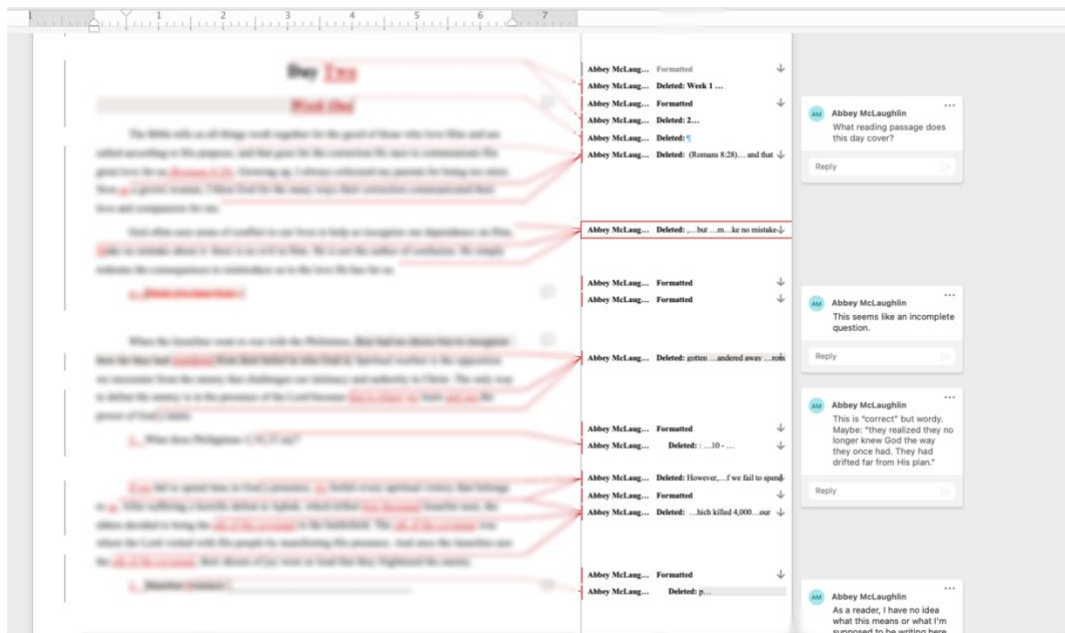
I use Microsoft Word tracked changes to provide edits, and occasionally I provide comments because I'm unable to fix the issue without first receiving information or clarification. Sometimes I get messages from authors who claim I "missed" errors, yet when I receive their critiques, notice that they were not errors at all, or my correction is the "right" way to do it (albeit clearly not preferred!). That's why it's important to create a style guide in advance for me, review the one I create, and ask questions before deeming something a "mistake." This language is pretty darn tricky and nuanced!

That said, I'm fully capable of missing errors. That's why proofreading exists! It's normal for a copy editor to miss a handful of mistakes proportionate to the number of edits a book required. The heavier the editing needed, the more likely some mistakes snuck through.

My beginning rate for copy editing is \$0.02 per word, but like with all services and projects (say it with me now!), I will need to take a look at the full manuscript before I determine the final quoted rate.

Example

Here's one example of what copy edits will look like in a document and how you will be able to review what I've changed.




Logistics

This is one of those fun, straightforward services where the author can sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. The comments I send typically do not require further review on my end, although sometimes if I'm asking for more information and it's complicated, it is easier for me to just quick fix the problem area. Those are on an as-needed basis, but authors can just ask me to take a look now that they have answered the Q, and I'm happy to help!

- Step 1:** Sign contract and pay 20% nonrefundable retainer.
- Step 2:** Confirm that all documents and style guides required have been sent.
- Step 3:** Abbey reads and works her magic in the document.
- Step 4:** Abbey returns the shiny, polished manuscript to its owner. At this time the remaining balance will be due.
- Step 5:** The client is welcome to message Abbey with any questions or concerns, but no phone call is included in this service's price.

As with every other service, if you want more, just ask! We can adjust the rate, or I can charge my hourly rate to provide whatever additional support the client desires.



Who is it for?

Everyone! Even editors need copy editors. If you want anyone whose opinion you care about to read the piece, you should have it copy edited.

Proofreading

You silly goose! We're not done quite yet!

What is it?

This is where someone humbles the copy editor (sometimes it is the copy editor) by finding everything they missed on their clean-up. It's recommended after the typesetter (the person who does book layout) has completed their first draft of the book design. Something about reading text in a new font, new spacing, new design just makes those typos pop ♥ Plus, and I say this with absolutely nothing but respect, designers often introduce new errors to the manuscript simply by trying to move them around, enter the headings by typing them, etc.

Proofreading is the task of reviewing the manuscript one last time before someone presses "print" thousands of times. The proofreader checks for all the errors mentioned in copy editing as well as typos and design elements that are either inconsistent or make something difficult to read. When in doubt, this is one job I believe a trusted peer can help with given they do have a good eye for U.S. grammar, punctuation, and spelling. At the very least, we just want to avoid any obvious mistakes that would irritate the author, reader, and copy editor upon opening up the book later. It's bound to happen, but we all do our best!

Logistics


This step does involve collaboration with a typesetter, meaning it's not just me and the author. The order of actions goes:

Step 1: Reserve a typesetter for one to two weeks after copy editing is projected to be complete.

Step 2: Sign contract and pay 20% nonrefundable retainer.

Step 3: Inform Abbey when the typesetter intends to finish the book layout within a three-day range or less.

Step 4: Send Abbey the PDF version of the typeset book.



Step 5: Abbey will mark up the document in Adobe Acrobat Pro (which most typesetters have but also works on any device), and occasionally Abbey uses her iPad to hand-write edits.

Step 6: Abbey returns the marked-up PDF to the author. This is when the remaining balance is due.

Step 7: The author reviews the notes and signs off on them (approves of them and/or follows up with me on something if needed).

Step 8: The author sends the marked-up PDF to the typesetter to implement the changes.

Step 9: The typesetter will send the author a new draft with those changes implemented.

Step 10: Abbey compares the first proof (the marked-up one) against the second one (the new one) to ensure all changes have been made properly. Any forgotten or miscommunicated changes are flagged.

Step 11: Abbey sends the second proof to the author, who sends to the typesetter.

Step 12: Steps 6-11 repeat until all changes are accounted for, limited to five proofs. After five rounds of checking edits, sending missed edits, then checking again, any additional time will be charged at an hourly rate. This rarely happens and is usually a result of an author making changes at the eleventh hour (it happens! I get it!).

Who is it for?

Whether it's a professional, the author, or a trusted peer, every book should go through a proofread. The ones who especially need a professional are the ones whose book design is pretty immersive, meaning most pages vary from the others, headings had to be typed-in by the designer, etc. If the book also uses illustrations and charts, that would be another good reason to hire a professional who can spot the little inconsistencies and formatting.



If We Met on Reedsy

If we meet on Reedsy, this section is for you. If not, just ignore and move to the next section!

Salutations!

Thanks for being here!

I'm so glad we got to meet each other. Thank you for considering me out of all the people that you have or will probably interview. Most things about the way I go about editing will stay exactly the same even though we work on Reedsy. Still, there are some quirky parts of their website and their policies that I just like to get out in front of.

Reedsy Communication Lockdown Procedure

The first and most important rule of Reedsy is to talk *on* Reedsy. (But yeah, you can talk about Reedsy lol.) They are very adamant that all communication be through their platform and their platform only. If you send me an email address, they'll block it. If you send me a website URL, they will block it. We can talk on the phone and Zoom, but we have to make sure we follow up on their website so they know we aren't conspiring. If something you want to talk about or share is too sensitive for Reedsy's messaging, you may give me a text at 269-479-2775. I ask that you use that privilege sparingly if possible.

Double-Message Me


The other thing to know about Reedsy is that their messaging system is flawed.

Between keeping up with my normal emails and actually getting my editing done, it is pretty hard to stay on top of the Reedsy notification emails, especially when everything is its own notification email. That means—quick humble brag—I get *a lot* of emails from Reedsy. No, I cannot customize what I do or do not receive emails about.

I say this because I'm giving you permission to “double-message” me. If I don't respond within forty-eight business hours, you are more than welcome to follow up with me. I would appreciate it.

The Comments Crisis

If you and I are not actively collaborating (and have not in the past), it gets even more complicated.



Those messages are considered “comments,” and it’s extremely difficult to see if anyone commented, and even harder to find the comments. I’m still figuring out the new website layout they launched this summer, but so far, I’ve accidentally not replied to several comments under inquiries simply because it gets lost in the pile.

If I’m being a silly goose that way, please message me again so it climbs through my inbox!!

Basically, imagine all of your important information is buried in Instagram post comments from a week or two ago, and you get fifty notifications at a time. It’s just hard, but it’s my responsibility, and I’m working on it, I promise!

Updating Our “Collaboration” (i.e., our contract)

Often times, our timelines will change or our pay schedules, and their website does not allow me to make those calls on our contract on my own. We use something called “amendments,” which is where I will send you a change to our contract, and then you need to accept it in order for it to go through. So if you want to change of pay schedule, or if I need to, please accept that as soon as you see it.

I also cannot change the dates that you are charged when I am offering a payment plan on Reedsy. So, even though it might say one date for a payment, we are able to change that after the collaboration is accepted. The collaboration is not considered active, though, until your payment information is entered and saved (per their policy and mine).

If you are struggling with anything on Reedsy, their support team is really responsive! I can usually walk you through quite a bit of it as well. There are no silly questions when it comes to their website!

Thank you for reading these tips and disclaimers!!



Prices? In *this* economy?!

I know you're getting tired of my metaphorical voice, so I'll try to be fast. I just wanted to advocate for my fellow self-employed girl bosses out there when it comes to pricing services.

Each editor defines their service differently, which changes the scope of the work, which changes how much the service costs.

Each editor brings training, skills, and experience to the job in unique ways, which also changes how they price their services.

Each editor lives in a different state (or country) with varying standards of living, costs of living, burdens, and business expenses, which changes how much they charge.

This is to say, you will probably get offers lower than mine. I support you picking whomever is the best fit for your project and working relationship style, and I'm not a competitive person, so I'm genuinely happy for you if you're happy!

My pricing is centered on the Editorial Freelance Association's average [rates chart](#). They survey their association (of which I am a member) to gather a respectable understanding of the common costs of each editing service and genre. As the website clarifies, it's still quite subjective to a number of factors, but it's a starting point and it's how I balance my needs with a realistic price point affordable for my clients.

In addition to this way I keep up with the industry, I offer payment plans. I also provide discounts for authors whose missions I really want to be partnered with on a case-by-case basis. Once a year, I offer my services at fifty percent of my would-be rate to accommodate brilliant books whose authors are doing the best with their means. Books are incredible no matter the bank account of the writer!

But a girl's gotta eat, which is why I calculate my rates as I do. I'm happy to hear why a client may desire a marginally lower rate, but please respect my commitment to quality work by respecting the price I quote and simply selecting someone else if it exceeds the budget.

Lastly, I am no longer accepting Chuck E. Cheese coins as valued currency, and I will not be taking questions on that matter at this time.



Frequently Asked Questions & Feedback

These are some questions and comments I receive often during the acquisitions process.

How do I know I can trust you? I'm scared! So much money on the line!

[Imagine I'm saying this in a dramatic rainy Nicholas Sparks scene]: *You can't!*

Just kidding.

I pride myself on being a lifelong learner, and integrity is absolutely crucial to my philosophy on life and my career.

If I believe I am capable of providing a service, it means I've received training on it, have experience in it (or will admit that I do not), will seek all the feasible professional development on the matter, and provide top-quality work.

I studied and worked hard in school to earn my bachelor's, and while I was doing so, I was also already entering the field in a long-term paid position under personal mentorship with my supervisor.

I'm a member of the Editorial Freelance Association and ACES: the Society for Editing; both professional editorial alliances provide webinars, classes, Q&As, discussion boards, and more to ensure that we develop far beyond our graduations and licensing. I also seek out classes in fields that are of interest to me and/or my clients—in subjects like theology, apocalyptic writing, racial reconciliation, etc.

If a degree, experience, and professional societies are not enough, I also have sixty-three positive reviews on Reedsy (an average of 5/5 stars)! They're verified reviews with customized feedback, meaning I do not have control over what they say, nor may I edit or remove any. Feel free to [take a gander!](#)

How long does editing take?

As annoying as it is to hear, *it depends*. It depends on the length of the book, the intensity of the edits, the services chosen, the time commitment available from the author, the budget, my schedule, and the subject matter. I'm happy to give you an estimate with the details of your specific manuscript and desired deadline, but please respect that quality works takes quality time, and if I cannot meet your time constraints, I will communicate so and respectfully encourage you to decide accordingly.

As a rule of thumb, it's unlikely I will return your work before three weeks' time. If I do, there may be a rush fee involved.



Do you work on more than one project at a time?

You got me.

Yes, I do work on several manuscripts at one time. To keep the lights on, I need to work at a respectable pace, but the specifics of which I do not wish to disclose to my clients.

When I accept a project and offer a timeline, it means that between the start date and the projected completion time, I have enough predicted hours to work on the book and then some.

To make sure my landlord doesn't start sweating, it's nice to guarantee I will have income three months from now, which is why, as much as I can, I like to schedule my work in advance too. If I waited until I finished a project to sign up for another one, I'd live in a constant survival state, which no one wants. If I line up my projects back-to-back strictly, then one adjustment from an author, or one sick day on my end, could derail the entire workflow, and we all know I like my flexibility.

In short, to pay my bills while still providing top service quality, I usually take on one project from each service to complete in a given time period. It doesn't work out that perfectly, but that's the general idea.

Editing on different project timelines means the start dates and end dates of each are a bit fluid, and that's just the reality of self-employment.


What are your office hours?

I don't have set times that I'm in the office. I work when my body allows me to and I'm most alert. Therefore, if you get an email at three in the morning, don't worry about me. I just needed to get my to-do list done, and the opossum in me said, "Let's do it in the middle of the night!"

It also means I'm not on your schedule, but I still respect yours and do everything I can to accommodate what works best for you. I will not ask you to meet in the middle of the night on Zoom (unless you live across the country, which has happened before! In which case, I was up late my time and they were up early their time).

What do you do when you disagree with the subject matter of a book?

Great question! For the most part, just respectfully keep my mouth shut. It can be hard to read content that grinds my gears, but I'm a professional. As I mentioned in the "Abbey as a Person" section, hate speech is where I speak up in the comments or phone calls. If the material is actively attempting to draw an "us versus them" division, is clearly refuted misinformation, or speaking hate over any living thing or person (especially in overgeneralized context), I will usually gently comment on the statement with a sentence or two on how I read the sentence, what I



interpreted its intention to be, and why that is not the best course of action. It's still up to author to determine whether they'd like to heed my advice. If, during evaluation of a manuscript and/or during a consultation, it becomes evident that the author intends to write with hate speech, division, and/or misinformation, I will politely decline working with the individual.

What if I disagree with your edits?

That's a-okay. It's normal to a degree. If you disagree with *all* of them, I think there's probably something bigger going on, but that's never happened before. I do not refund anything because an author did not agree with my edits. That is an impossible standard to uphold on such a subjective field, but I definitely want to hear how my clients feel about my work and do what I can to help them reach their goals.




Policies & Procedures

I'm going to take the following straight from my contract, so excuse the change in tone!


General Policies

1. McLaughlin is not required to promote the client/author's book on her social media, nor is she required to be social media "friends" etc. with any client/author.
2. Unless specified prior to beginning editing, **Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition** will be used, which is the industry standard for book publishing.
3. Unless specified prior to beginning editing, the standard **Christian Writer's Manual of Style** will be used, which is industry standard for Christian publishing.
4. McLaughlin reserves the right to create a manuscript-specific style guide that may be different from standard Chicago and/or Christian manuals of style.
5. If the client/author uses an inaccessible version of the Bible or other reference text, and the contract requires the editor to check the Bible references or other references, the client/author must purchase the required text for McLaughlin and allow extra time in project timeline for shipping.
6. Client/author **MUST** ask for permission to credit McLaughlin as the editor in the book within any service title.
7. If McLaughlin grants permission, the credit **MUST** follow McLaughlin's preferred credit line according to the services provided and be approved by McLaughlin.
8. It is the client/author's responsibility to inform McLaughlin if he or she does **NOT** want her to list the client/author's book within her portfolio, profile, and/or website.
9. McLaughlin does not edit any works that include, promote, or validate hate speech, bullying, profiling, disrespect, and/or objectively (provable) false or misleading information.
10. *Merriam-Webster* Online Dictionary defines "hate speech" as "speech expressing hatred of a particular group of people."
11. McLaughlin reserves the right to cancel the contract should any section of the project material and/or manuscript meet the description of these non-negotiable moral standards.
12. McLaughlin does not return chapter-by-chapter edits to client/authors, nor is she required to.

- 
13. McLaughlin is entitled to modify or cancel the contract's rate and timeline due to a client/author's request for significant changes to terms or service. Significant changes to form of editing could include but is not limited to:
 - a. Request for accelerated deadline.
 - b. Request for change in service scope.
 - c. Request to alter and/or change style guide once editing has begun.
 - d. Request to delay the project's start and/or completion dates.
 - e. Hostile or highly demanding communication expectations by client/author (according to communication policy).
 - f. Request for additional research.
 14. McLaughlin offers a complimentary non-disclosure agreement (NDA) written by a legal professional. It is not required by either the client/author nor the editor, and it is the client/author's responsibility to request it.

Communication Policy

1. McLaughlin guarantees response to messages within 48 business hours unless notice is given prior to an absence or on weekends.
2. McLaughlin is not bound to the client's working hours or time zone. She intends to meet deadlines and respond to messages within 48 hours during business days.
3. If the client/author does not answer a question from McLaughlin via e-mail or work platform message necessary for her to complete the service within ten business days, McLaughlin will use her best judgment.
4. Delays in response that affect edits contribute to reasonable deadline delays and do not require any reimbursement or discount.
5. If the client/author does not effectively respond to McLaughlin's communication for 60 or more days, the contract is considered dissolved, and payment for services already completed is required.
6. All communication **MUST** be via e-mail messaging and/or **scheduled** phone calls. McLaughlin will not answer or respond to unscheduled phone calls or texts.
7. Scheduled calls are dependent on McLaughlin's availability, and she reserves the right to deny or limit the number of scheduled calls, and/or the length of calls the client/author requests exceeding the scope and deliverables of the project.


- 
8. McLaughlin will not respond to messages that include insults, threats, or hostile demands.
 9. McLaughlin reserves the right to limit the methods and frequency of all communication between her and the client/author due to harassment or disrespectful words and/or behavior.

Project Cancellation Policy


1. This contract may be cancelled at any time by the client/author or the editor.
2. The minimum cancellation fee is 20% of the total paid via the non-refundable retainer at the beginning of the service.
3. Depending on McLaughlin's progress in completing the service(s) in the contract and within the agreed start date and deadline, the amount due at cancellation may be higher.
4. At cancellation, all work that has already been completed must be paid according to the agreed rate.
5. The non-refundable retainer will be applied toward the total that must be paid at time of cancellation.
6. McLaughlin may cancel this contract due to family emergency, prolonged illness, or other extenuating circumstances. In such a case, McLaughlin charges for the work she had completed at the agreed rate.
7. If McLaughlin cancels the contract, and the total amount due for work completed is *less* than the non-refundable retainer amount, McLaughlin will reimburse the client/author the difference.
8. Full refunds are up to McLaughlin's discretion.
9. Modifications to these policies are up to McLaughlin's discretion.

Scheduled Meetings Cancellation Policy

1. McLaughlin and client/author set up meetings via written communication in e-mail or web platform messaging system.
2. McLaughlin schedules meetings within the Eastern Time Zone (Grand Rapids, Michigan).
3. McLaughlin reserves the right to limit any meeting to sixty minutes or fewer determined prior to the meeting date and/or time.
4. McLaughlin provides Zoom calls with a professional account with unlimited time and reserves the right to "host" and record all meetings.

- 
5. If a client/author fails to appear for a scheduled meeting within fifteen minutes, the meeting is effectively cancelled.
 6. McLaughlin is not obligated to join or stay in a meeting within the scheduled timeframe when the client/author does not appear or communicate delays before or within the first fifteen minutes of the scheduled meeting time.
 - a. (Basically, say we were supposed to start our meeting at 3 p.m. and scheduled to talk for an hour. You disappear off the face of the earth. After fifteen minutes, if you still haven't appeared on Zoom or sent me a message, I'm not obligated to appear for fifteen minutes at 3:45 p.m. even if you randomly appear at that time and want to use those last fifteen minutes.)
 7. McLaughlin reserves the right to shorten or cancel a meeting before it is scheduled to begin.
 8. McLaughlin will reschedule cancelled meetings included within the contract's deliverables. All individually charged meetings are rescheduled at her discretion.
 9. McLaughlin reserves the right to record and store all virtual meetings and phone calls.
 10. If a client/author does not appear or communicate delays for a scheduled meeting included in their contract's deliverables, there is no charge the first time.
 11. Additional no-shows, no-update, and/or short-notice cancellations for meetings within the contract's deliverables may incur a minimum late fee of \$25.00. Higher late fee costs are determined at McLaughlin's discretion.
 12. In cases of short-notice, no-update, and/or no-show cancellations, clients of individually charged meetings will be charged 50% of the total cost of the meeting.
 13. "No-show" cancellations refer to any clients who fail to show up within fifteen minutes of the scheduled meeting time without any notice.
 14. "Short-notice" cancellations refer to any cancellations made within one hour of the meeting time.
 15. "No-Update" cancellations refer to when clients fail to inform McLaughlin they will not be able to attend on time but plan to join within the timeframe of the scheduled meeting.
 16. "Individually Charged" meetings refer to any meetings charged at a rate *not included* in the contract's deliverables.

Deadline Management

- 
1. McLaughlin suffers from clinically diagnosed narcolepsy and chronic migraines. This means that she works inconsistent hours per day, of the day, and within schedules that vary each week. She tracks her productivity and work hours to monitor any predictable delays.
 2. Still, McLaughlin's work pace and schedule is sometimes at the mercy of a sleep episode, migraine, or anxiety attack. She has exhaustive strategies to combat these variables including prescription medication, physical therapy exercises, and holistic medicine, but she is a human.
 3. **At this time, McLaughlin is only accepting contracts and clients with flexible deadlines and reasonable grace.**
 4. McLaughlin gratefully offers extremely flexible deadlines for her clients as well. Should revisions take longer than anticipated, client/authors are entitled to extend the contract as long as needed without additional costs.
 5. Services already completed by McLaughlin may be charged according to the original contract depending on the length of the extension.

Error Management

This section is specific to clients/authors hiring copy editing and/or proofreading services.

1. While copy editors and proofreaders would love to guarantee perfect manuscripts, we are humans, and errors sneak through. It's just a reality and not abnormal.
2. Every "read" of copy editing and/or proofreading improves the grammar, punctuation, style, spelling, and (when relevant) scriptural accuracy, but it is normal for a few errors to be missed.

The book may contain small and/or insignificant errors and the book will always have room for improvement.



You survived!

What'd I Miss?

I know that despite the egregious length of this service menu, I likely missed valuable information, wrote something confusing, or prompted a personal question. Want to talk about it? Awesome 'cause me too!

I offer *free* consultations of 40 minutes, and I provide *free* 1,000-word sample edits for line and copy editing upon request!

The next step is to reach out, send me your Word document and/or available times, and maybe attach a picture of your pet if you have one! Or your kid. I like those too!

Talk soon!

Sincerely,

Abbey