

Editing: An Order of Operations

1



DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING

- Does the structure make logical/narrative sense?
- Do I capture all of the ideas adequately?
- Have I done all necessary high-level research?
- Are there gaps where I need additional material?
- Do I have adequate supporting material?

2



CONTENT EDITING

- Does each section/chapter have all the necessary information?
- Is there information I can cut?
- Should I create sidebars or callouts to highlight important details?
- Are the section breaks within chapters in the right place?
- Is the tone right and internally consistent?
- Do I have all of the proper source citations?

3



COPYEDITING

- Does each paragraph flow well with a variety of sentence lengths?
- Do I need to break up any paragraphs?
- Are my verb tenses and point of view consistent?
- Do my style choices make sense and sound appropriate for this work?
- Is my research properly cited?
- Is the additional material in place and accurate—title page, table of contents, footnotes, endnotes, appendices, etc.?

4



LINE EDITING

- Are there misspelled words? Grammatical errors? Punctuation errors?
- Did I spell odd or unusual words the same way each time?

5



PROOFREADING

- Run the whole manuscript through spell check and grammar check (but bear in mind that grammar check is often wrong and/or does not take into account style choices made for maximum impact).
- Read for misspellings, grammatical errors, and typographical errors.
- Consider reading the manuscript out loud or listening to it with an app or word processing extension. Your ear will notice errors that your eyes will miss.

