

# Fiction Fix-It Shop

## Line Editing Checklist

When a client purchases a line edit from FFS, they have a right to expect the following services, qualities, and end product:

### **Qualities of Editor and Feedback**

- Published novelist
- Thorough
- Honest
- Encouraging
- Helpful
- Understandable
- Professional yet personable
- Reflective of current fiction publishing standards
- Respectful of writer's own voice and talent
- On Time

### **Qualities of ShopTalk Session**

- Prompt start and finish
- Professional
- Helpful
- Client driven agenda
- Client-focused and client manuscript-focused
- Conversational, not lecture or "therapy session"
- Editor is prepared for session in advance
- Encouraging and friendly
- Positive and solutions-based

### **The FFS policy on endorsements and using FFS or the editor's name in queries is this:**

Mentioning in a book proposal that the manuscript has been professionally edited will not affect the publisher's interest in the book. A publisher wants to see if the story works and is a compelling read. If it is, it's not that important how it got that way. Mentioning the professional edit in the proposal could be seen by some in-house editors as an amateur statement because experienced writers know that in a proposal the manuscript must stand on its own merits. It is acceptable to mention the FFS edit in the proposal, but we do not recommend it.

Having a book edited by FFS does not imply an endorsement of that manuscript by the FFS editor. Quotes from the editor's feedback may NOT be used in a book proposal, query, or pitch. Editors, being also published novelists, have the right to offer an endorsement of a manuscript

once it is contracted by a publisher if they choose. However, there is no obligation for them to do so, and the client should not make that request.

For self-published manuscripts, the author must secure permission to credit the editor in the manuscript. Credits are usually very appreciated—everyone enjoys being thanked for their work. But do seek permission first.

### **End Product**

- Complete read-through of manuscript
- Comments and analysis inserted as needed into manuscript text
- Changes made throughout entire manuscript using Track Changes so author can approve/reject each change as necessary
- Two recorded ShopTalk sessions of 30 minutes each

### **Editing Services**

**During the line edit, your editor will be considering the following aspects of novel writing to comment on as needed:**

There will be comments inserted at various places throughout the manuscript. The editor will also make wording changes and suggestions in the manuscript using Track Changes. The author will be able to approve or reject each change as needed.

Your editor may be the same as the one who did your substantive edit, or it may be a different FFS editor. This decision will be made with the editor and the author and FFS depending on the author's preferences and the editor's preferences and schedule.

- Analysis of scene structure** as needed: Scene Goal, Motivation and Conflict, Climax, Resolution, Tension, Motivation-Reaction Units, and relevance to story arc.
- POV:** problems, errors, or opportunities to deepen POV
- Show-Don't-Tell:** your editor will either flag examples of telling so that you can choose what to change during your own revisions of the manuscript or your editor may make a brief wording change to improve the problem.
- Dialogue:** either flagging awkward, contrived, or unwieldy dialogue or making changes to improve it
- Wordiness or Slow Pacing:** deletions as necessary or possibly some suggestions on how to improve pacing or increase tension
- Unclear Passages:** flagging or rewriting sentences or sections that are confusing or unclear
- Writing "tics":** flagging several examples of repetitive words, phrases, or other writing patterns that do not contribute positively to manuscript. You as the writer are expected to decide how to handle these during your own revision of manuscript.
- Character development:** flagging inconsistent behavior, unsympathetic or unbelievable behavior, stereotypes, unclear motivation, 2-dimensional character development, and other problems as noted by editor

- ❑ **Back story and Explaining:** flagging unnecessary back story, research, and other types of explaining
- ❑ **Clichés and Overwriting:** helping writer avoid “purple” writing, while still respecting writer’s voice, genre of story, and mood or tone being set.
- ❑ **Other problems or areas of improvement:** as deemed important by the editor

Line edits are not expected to rewrite the entire manuscript. They may help improve awkward sentences and reword for clarity, but if large portions of the manuscript require this sort of reworking, it will be the responsibility of the author to make those changes.

They are not required to address continuity issues, grammar, formatting, spelling, punctuation, factual accuracy, or other typos. Though the editor may spot those problems and correct them, the line edit is not the same as a copy edit or proofread. It is not intended to be the final edit before publication, and the author may have additional revisions or rewriting to do based on the line editor’s comments and suggestions. If the book is intended to be self-published, FFS highly recommends an additional copy edit or proofread before publication.

### **ShopTalks**

ShopTalks are designed to give you an additional opportunity to ask questions and discuss your edits further with your editor. Two 30-minute sessions are scheduled for a line edit and should be spaced over several weeks after the your edits are complete. They will be conducted in a similar manner to a paid critique you could receive at a writer’s conference.

- ❑ **30-min. time limits**
- ❑ **What questions do you have about your edits?**
- ❑ **Focus on 1-3 items per session**
- ❑ **Brainstorming is acceptable, as long as it remains client driven and not editor driven**
- ❑ **If client runs out of questions, editor will have a few items from edit ready to discuss**
- ❑ **Editor is acting as a sounding board, may explain concepts and offer suggestions and advice, but not issuing orders**
- ❑ **Positive, craft-focused discussion. Not judging whether manuscript is publishable or marketable.**
- ❑ **May discuss next steps such as self-publishing, seeking an agent or querying editors, but may not involve recommending specific houses or agents. If client asks for information on an agent or house that the editor is familiar with, sharing non-confidential information is acceptable.**