

# Editing – why is it necessary?

## Doesn't the publisher do this for us?

- Stephenie Meyer's editing help,
- publisher sends edits to writer,
- publisher/editor won't read poorly written queries or proposals.
- Readers will put down poorly-written self-pubbed books and slam them with bad reviews.
- Is it expensive? How to do it with tons of money and on a budget

### **IN THIS WORKSHOP, WE WILL:**

1. (Eradicate Stinkin' Thinkin') I will encourage you in your art, and established writers' flames will be re-ignited by her passion and exuberance.
2. (As Perfect as Possible) discuss the importance of editing whether you are self- or traditionally-published.
3. (What are the Levels and the Cost?) Also, she will explain the different "levels" of editing available,
4. (How to do it myself) as well as how to do much of it yourself by presenting your editor with the very best draft possible.

“No one else can write your book, so get to it!”  
~ Ellen Sallas

# I. First off: Eradicate Stinkin' Thinkin'

Your book is important.  
Trust me.

Allow me to eagerly belabor one point emphatically: your book is important. Think about it –YOU the only YOU in the entire world.

When you visit the Barnes & Noble or Borders and see bin after bin of clearance paperbacks, you can easily find yourself discouraged by a little voice that whispers in your mind, *“What could you possibly have to offer? Millions of books have already been written, and these are being tossed out like used shoes. There’s no way your weeny book could make a difference. No way at all...”*

## Squash that voice immediately.

Who is saying that? It is either your low self-esteem or, for those who believe, it could be a more dastardly villain, the enemy of your soul who desires to see you fail in every endeavor. Whichever it is, neither is being useful or helpful. The only voice you need to attend is the one that encourages and lifts you.

**There is no one in the world capable of writing what you have inside of you.** Sure, there might be something similar out there, but you must trust me – no one can bring YOUR heart and soul into a created work – only YOU can.

This is what makes books different to begin with. Think about it. The same themes being done again and again, decade after decade, yet we still find our favorites among them. It is the **soul** of the artist that goes into the work. The very same metaphysical and spiritually-dynamic element that has been instilled in the work of visual artists from the dawn of man. Why do you cry when you look at certain paintings? Why do certain poets arouse passion in you that others cannot? Our Creator has enabled us to become creators, and everything we create contains our essence. Don’t balk; think about it. You know it’s true.

So all that being said, whatever has been laid upon your heart to write, be it fiction or non-fiction, it is my duty to encourage you to go for it.

## Is there only one way to paint a palomino horse?



**Of course not!  
There are infinite ways to express a theme because our talents are infinitely varied.**



## II. As Perfect as Humanly Possible

### *The Importance of Editing Whether You Are Self- or Traditionally-Published*

How many of you think about editing WHILE writing your first draft? The basic rule of thumb is, and this is what I recommend to anyone who asks, don't worry about the minutiae of literary perfection when writing your first draft. Let it flow, get your thoughts and inspiration down on paper first. Why? Fretting over literary perfection and success can and will hamper your productivity, cause writer's block, and/or discourage you from writing at all.

Get it down first. Fiction writers – let the entire book happen before you go back and try to make it perfect. Non-fiction writers – get your outline going and done, your contract or text prepared, before poring over it for errors and inconsistencies.

Okay – you're finished. You may now go back to the beginning and start your proofreading. You're welcome.

These are three main reasons editing is so important in modern publishing:

### 1. Clarity of Message

For the majority of us, being a good writer is a lot easier than being a good editor. Writing flows from us, issuing forth as easily as air, bubbling up from a cosmic, spiritual place where prose has been pre-created in another dimension, and we are simply bringing it forth to our level of awareness... ahhh, waxing philosophical is part of my nature.

You want to edit to be sure your message is CLEAR. Fiction or Non-fiction, excess words and grammatical, syntactical, or discombobulational wordage will destroy the message you are working to convey.

This is NOT a workshop on the How-to Details of editing, but there are a few basics that I would like to share.

**DECLUTTER** – as author and editor Jodie Renner says, look for anywhere you may be overwriting or beating a point to death. Say it once – effectively – and then move on. Twice, max. Otherwise you risk annoying your readers, who will say, "Yeah, I got it the first three times!" - See more at:

<http://crimefictioncollective.blogspot.ca>

In the example below, the first draft had 68 words. The author is trying to convey the character's fear and trepidation concerning awaking with his bedroom on fire. BETTER shows how she got the message across more succinctly and professionally, making word pictures that do not clutter the reader's mind-movie.

He crawled weakly for the shimmering image of the exit before him. It seemed to glow with unnatural appeal. The dark age-stained doors attracted the priest as sure as a moth to a flame and he knew that an angel of the Lord must be showing him the way out. He knew with his entire being that the heavenly hosts were actually rescuing him from a fiery death. (68)

BETTER:

He crawled for the shimmering image of the exit. The brass door handles glowed with unnatural appeal. A spark of hope flared as the priest peered into a fluid vision of haze and shadow. (34)

**Comment [ecm1]:** PASSIVE, do not use "seemed" or "seems"

**Comment [ecm2]:** CLICHÉ, do not use clichés

**Comment [ecm3]:** DO NOT end a sentence on a preposition or adverb unless you simply must do so.

**Comment [ecm4]:** The character under scrutiny right now is the only one with a POV, so don't say "he/she KNEW" anything, it is understood WHO knows what you're saying at the time.

**Comment [ecm5]:** PASSIVE and just icky.

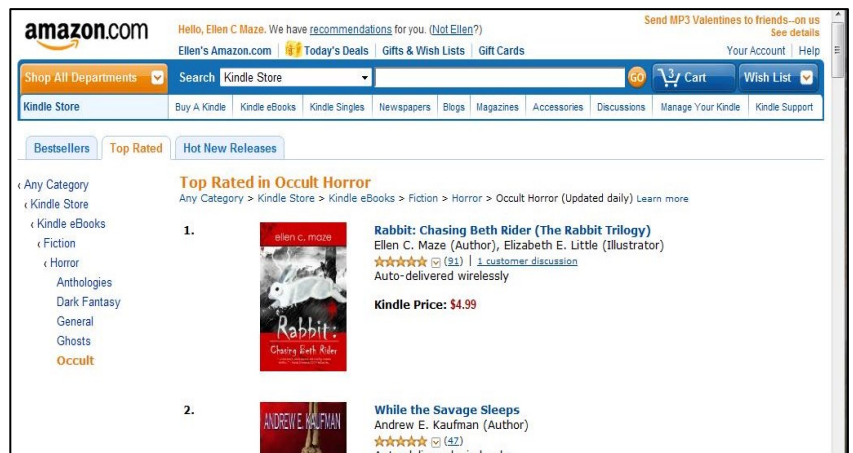


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**Who can leave a review on Amazon?** Amazon’s customer review system is a major way that books gain popularity and sales in this amazing online bookstore. A customer does not have to purchase your book on Amazon to review it, but he does need to have an Amazon account and have purchased at least *something* there in the past. They have a few simple guidelines on what NOT to post in your review including no promotional content, no inappropriate content, no off-topic information, and no objectionable material. Other than that, Amazon encourages reviews and their “machine” heavily relies on them.

**Positive Customer Reviews Move Your Book Up Top-Rated Lists.** This is how your reviews help the author. The more good reviews a book has, the higher it moves up customer top ranked lists. Here is my book when it was number one Top-Rated in Occult/Horror. These customer lists draw shoppers, the ones on top are seen first, and increased sales are the direct result. My book remained #1 for more than sixteen weeks, which led to enough people buying it that it hit the Amazon bestsellers lists as well.

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