Your EDITING journey

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MANUSCRIPT SHINE

BY KRISTINA STANLEY, LISA LEPKI
& JOELLEN NORDSTROM

Fictionary

ProWritingAid

First Editing

To all the writers
around the world
who strive to tell
a powerful story.

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Fictionary   ProWritingAid   FirstEditing

► INTRODUCTION

THE POWER OF THREE

Three women...
Kristina. Lisa. JoEllen.

From three countries...
Canada. England. United States.

Working at three companies...
Fictionary. ProWritingAid. FirstEditing.

Created this book for you.

Kristina, Lisa, and JoEllen have a mutual love of editing and came together across borders to help writers. All cultures love stories. No matter where you live or where you come from, stories are part of your life. And powerful stories are created through editing and revising those stories.

Knowing how to edit, when to edit, and where to get help editing puts you ahead of the pack.

So back to the power of three.

All stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Some stories form a trilogy.

And all require three stages of editing to create a powerful story.

Story Editing. Copyediting. Professional Editing.

Three great companies provide the tools and services you need. We created a special offer to help you through the editing journey.

We are honored to share the editing knowledge you need to make your writing journey successful.

To the power of three!

Kristina Stanley   Lisa Lepki   JoEllen Nordstrom

The EDITING bundle

1 year of **Fictionary** ($200)

2 years of **ProWritingAid** ($100)

Editing Voucher **FirstEditing** ($200)

All for just
$199
(save over $300)

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Offer ends May 5, 2020

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▶ INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHORS

Kristina Stanley
Fictionary.com
Combining her degree in computer mathematics with her success as a bestselling, award-winning author and fiction editor, Kristina Stanley is the creator and CEO of **Fictionary** - creative editing software for fiction writers and editors. Her novels include *The Stone Mountain Mystery* series and *Look the Other Way*. She's a passionate guide-dog trainer and hiker.

Lisa Lepki
ProWritingAid.com
Lisa is a serious word nerd moonlighting as the marketing guru and editor of the **ProWritingAid** blog. With over 15 years' experience in writing, marketing, PR, and producing, she secretly loves the technical elements of writing more than the writing itself (although she won't admit it). Lisa is the co-author of several books, including *The Novel-Writing Training Plan* and *20 Editing Tips from Professional Writers*.

JoEllen Nordstrom
FirstEditing.com
JoEllen Nordström is **First Editing's** Chief Word Wizard and host of the Publishing Power Podcast. As a National Pioneer Award winner in business, JoEllen co-authored her first two books as an authorpreneur in 2005. Since then she has led her army of Professional Editors at **First Editing** in assisting over 35,000 writers worldwide. She loves helping others successfully publish when not escaping to the beach for sailing and surfing!

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WHAT EVERY AUTHOR NEEDS TO KNOW

WHY IS EDITING SO COMPLICATED?

Let's start with the terms. Story, substantive, developmental, structural, and content editing. Line editing. Copyediting. What about proofreading? Lost yet? Many are, so we'll simplify this for you.

It's important to understand editing terms, whether you're self-editing your own story or hiring a Professional Editor. We'll explain why once we've cleared up the terms.

Just like writing your first draft is a journey, editing your story is also a journey. That journey is not straightforward. In fact, it's more like a spiral.
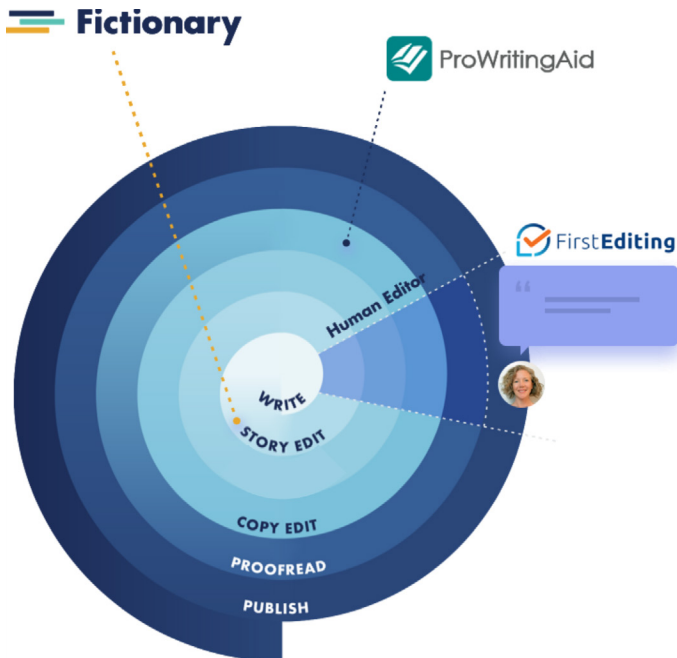
And you have choices to make as you make your way around the spiral, starting with writing your story and ending with publishing it. You can

- self-edit all the way to publication,
- combine self-editing with the services of a Professional Editor, or
- only use Professional Editors.

We recommend both self-editing and working with a Professional Editor. We'll keep you in suspense for now, but we will tell you why. We promise!

The editing journey begins with a **Story Edit** *you* perform after you've written your draft.

Story Edit is the first term we'll clear up. Another promise.😄 And before you ask how one performs a Story Edit, we have an answer for that too. **Fictionary** StoryTeller is *the* online creative editing software designed to help you perform a Story Edit.

After you've performed your own Story Edit, you'll want to **Copyedit** before going to a **Fictionary** StoryCoach. This second phase is where **ProWritingAid** comes in. **ProWritingAid** performs both line editing and copyediting. How awesome is that?

Next, you send your manuscript to a **Fictionary** Certified StoryCoach. At least, we hope you do. A trained **Fictionary** StoryCoach performs a comprehensive, objective Story Edit. This is where **FirstEditing's Fictionary** Certified Professional Editors come in. After you've digested the feedback from your Professional StoryCoach Editor, you'll perform multiple revisions.

Once you're happy with the overall story, and you've done your best self-editing with line and copyediting tools such as **ProWritingAid**, you can proceed to **Line Editing** with a Professional Line Editor from **FirstEditing**.

After another round of revisions (or more), you will eventually self-edit a final time before presenting your final version to a Professional Copyeditor. Once you approve that version, you proceed to formatting, which is then followed by the final professional proofread.

You can take as many twists and turns as you like during your editing adventure. Just like you wrote your first draft seven, eight, nine times, you'll have many rounds of editing. Did we mention we love editing? You will too when you have the right tools and services at your disposal.

This book is designed to help simplify your understanding of the editing levels and your available choices. So as promised, let's get to simplifying things with a definition of the different types of editing.

Based on the bolding we did above, you may have guessed there are **Three Standard Levels of Editing** plus the final round of proofreading:

- Story Editing
- Line Editing
- Copyediting

WHAT IS STORY EDITING?

Story Editing is your most comprehensive edit. It's also called content, developmental, substantive, or structural editing.

Story Editing is the primary structural review of your manuscript and the **story** you're telling.

FICTION
Story Editing ensures you tell a powerful story.

So why use the term Story Editing when there are existing terms? Substantive, developmental, structural, and content editing are industry terms, but really, how do non-intuitive terms help a writer? We don't have an answer to that.

For fiction, a Story Edit focuses on the cohesive development of your characters, plot, and settings within the overall story arc. The 38 **Fictionary** Story Elements help you stay focused on the most important elements of storytelling.

Story Editing is your big-picture approach to preparing for publishing. It's your first structural revision. This is when you rework your characters, plot, and settings to ensure the story line and narrative flow smoothly while every scene contributes to the story's purpose.

Story Editing means looking at the characters and asking why each one is in the story. It means looking for patterns, finding emotion, evaluating the structure of scenes, structuring chapters and word count. It means testing the setting against the plot and so on.

A comprehensive Story Edit with **Fictionary** StoryTeller or from a **Fictionary** Certified StoryCoach from **FirstEditing** evaluates your:

- Story arc
- Word count—for your genre and per scene
- Characters
- Plot
- Settings
- Story flow and pacing
- Scene openings and scene endings
- Consistency and clarity

After a Story Edit, you, the author, will end up rewriting scenes in your manuscript to improve content and structure. This revision is the most time-consuming step of editing. However, your effort spent on evaluating and rewriting your draft will ensure your story is powerful and is ready to line edit, copyedit, format, proofread, and potentially publish.

NONFICTION
Although we are talking mostly about fiction in this eBook, we felt it was important to show where nonfiction fits in the editing journey.

A similar function to Story Editing for fiction is content editing for nonfiction. It's also referred to as developmental or substantive editing.

Your Professional Content Editor ensures your overall presentation, story, and manuscript text make sense,

present cohesively, and maintain a believable proposal, defense, dialogue, and/or plot line. Content editing evaluates your overall organization and presentation while polishing your use of language and maintaining your voice.

In research and professional nonfiction writing, content editing ensures your writing style, statements, references, and presentation consistently support your message and its proposal, focus, and intent.

Content editing ensures you persuasively convey your message as a nonfiction authority. As a researcher, it ensures you're fully representing your proposal while supporting your statements solidly and accurately.

You can see the skills a Professional Editor needs to be an excellent Story Editor differ greatly from what is needed to be an excellent Content Editor. So, when you choose a Professional Editor, make sure you know where their expertise lies.

WHAT IS LINE EDITING?

Line editing is evaluating and correcting the tone, **style**, and consistency of your writing while also checking your basic spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Line editing includes checking your word usage for crutches, overuse, and misuse in the story. Your editor (either **ProWritingAid** software or a **FirstEditing** Professional Editor) may offer replacements, suggest you rewrite, or suggest you eliminate some words entirely.

You may have noticed we bolded style above. That's because the focus of line editing is to bring all of the above together so the style works. Meanwhile, copyediting focuses on style and the mechanics of sentence structure including punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

WHAT IS COPYEDITING?

After you've finished a Story Edit, and perhaps a line edit, copyediting is the most essential and fundamental preparation you need before publishing.

A basic copyedit includes checking your grammar, spelling, and punctuation for accuracy; ensuring consistency in your writing, word choices, style and compositional spacing; and eliminating jargon and repetitious words. It's your last edit before formatting and proceeding to proofreading and publishing.

WHAT IS PROOFREADING?

You may have noticed we didn't include proofreading as a type of editing. By the time your story is at the proofreading stage, you're no longer editing. Proofreading is NOT editing.

Proofreading checks your formatted, edited document before publication. Proofing your completed material is your final line of defense before publishing.

"I made a mistake when I was working with my publisher on the final proofread of my first novel. My publisher was kind enough to give me a chance to perform a final proofread, and I suggested changes to things that should have been made in the copyediting phase. My publisher was not happy. I was embarrassed, but I didn't make that mistake on my second book."
Kristina

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THE KEY PHASES OF YOUR EDITING JOURNEY

With a first draft finished, it's time to focus on story and structure.

> Excellent grammar and punctuation alone won't sell your book. **A powerful story with perfect grammar and punctuation** *will* **sell your book.**

In your journey to a completed draft, you'll perform the edits in the following order:

- 1. Story Edit (Content if you're writing nonfiction)
- 2. Line Edit
- 3. Copyedit

Remember, proofreading is not editing. It's the final step on your way to perfection.

TOP TIP: Use **Fictionary** StoryTeller to Story Edit before using **ProWritingAid** to copyedit. You can copyedit as you go, but make sure you don't spend too much time doing this when you're still making major revisions to your story. You'll have to repeat the copyediting process once your story is set.

WHEN IS IT BEST TO STORY EDIT?

Story Editing for fiction and content editing for nonfiction are the most critical editing steps in publishing and are recommended after your initial draft is written. This comes before line editing, copyediting, and proofreading.

StoryCoach Editing for Fiction is a highly developed method of editing your story using a combination of specially trained story editing techniques with natural language processing technology and a successfully proven algorithm for story structure. Only **Fictionary** Certified StoryCoach editors have access to **Fictionary's** extensive certification training and unique software.

FirstEditing is the first fully certified professional editing company to offer these StoryCoach services in collaboration with Fictionary.

Most importantly, StoryCoaching is your ideal choice for completing your fiction manuscript's first draft when you desire honest, objective feedback and thorough professional guidance from experts.

Choose StoryCoaching for Story Editing your draft as it's the most comprehensive service available and helps you tell a powerful story.

WHEN IS IT BEST TO LINE EDIT?

You've already performed a Story Edit and perhaps hired a Professional StoryCoach. You've revised the story until you're sure it's powerful. From this point on, you won't be making many structural changes and it's time for a line edit.

Ideally, perform your own line edit and then contact a Professional Editor for their personal recommendations, review, and editing sample regarding your specific manuscript. When you're performing your own line edit using **ProWritingAid**, you can combine this step with copyediting.

You can see **ProWritingAid** helps you focus on style as well as the mechanics of copyediting.

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▶ YOUR EDITING JOURNEY
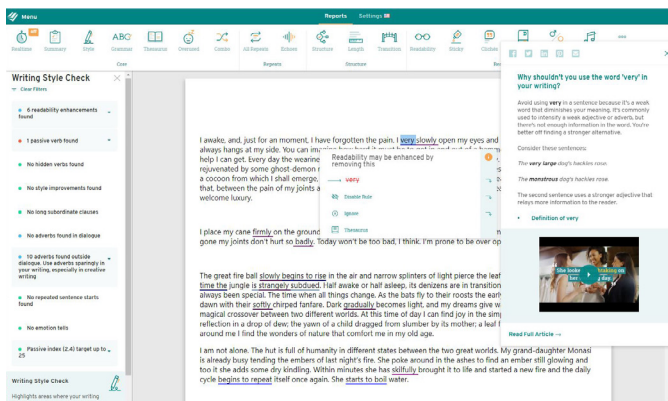
Perform your own Story Edit before performing your own line edit. Only after you've done your own Story Edit, line edit and copyedit, should you move on to a Professional Editor.

In the **nonfiction** world, Professional Line Editing is the industry standard most recommended by agents and university professors prior to submission for distribution, application, and peer review.

WHEN IS IT BEST TO COPYEDIT?

Basic copyediting is your final edit with no planned revisions before formatting, proofreading, and publishing. This level of editing is vital to your reputation as a writer.

In fact, we highly recommend you use a copyediting tool such as **ProWritingAid** when self-editing and before hiring a Professional Copyeditor. It saves you time and money while helping you improve your writing craft.

Professional copyediting is recommended for confident writers prepared to format with no major changes and for researchers prepared to submit for approval or peer review.

You've done your own Story Edit, a line edit, and a copyedit. Now you have the knowledge to work with a Professional Editor. Way to go!

WHEN IS IT BEST TO PROOFREAD?

The proofread is the final check after formatting and before self-publishing or sending a manuscript to an editor, agent, or publisher.

Professional proofreading is also excellent for online websites and business documents, as it protects your reputation.

If you have a formatted manuscript and still have lingering concerns about your story or your writing, you'll want to return to Story Editing or copyediting. Only once you're confident in the content should you proofread. Your proof is the final stamp of approval you desire and need to publish with confidence.

Proofreading is essential. However, we only recommend proofreading when you feel 99% ready for publishing and have a fully formatted document. After reviewing these basics, it's ideal to hire a Professional Proofreader who has not previously read your manuscript. You may then request a final proof and confirmation you're prepared to share, publish, and distribute.

WHY USE SOFTWARE?

Many times over, we've heard writers resist using software as they don't want a robot writing their story. We don't want robots to write your stories either. We want to help you create powerful stories that readers love.

A painter knows how to combine paints to get the exact color they want. That doesn't mean they are using a formula to create their painting. It means they are putting in the effort to learn the craft behind their artistry and are using the tools available to help them.

A musician learns how to create music that follows the form of their genre and still creates unique pieces. That's what we're suggesting for writers.

Both **Fictionary StoryTeller** and **ProWritingAid** are there to help you be the artist you want to be. It's not about following a formula. It's about using knowledge and form to create powerful stories.

▶ HOW TO STORY EDIT YOUR OWN FICTION

A powerful story is made up of powerful scenes. **Fictionary StoryTeller** is an online tool designed to guide a writer through a scene-by-scene analysis of their story. So let's start by defining a scene.

Total Scenes **44**
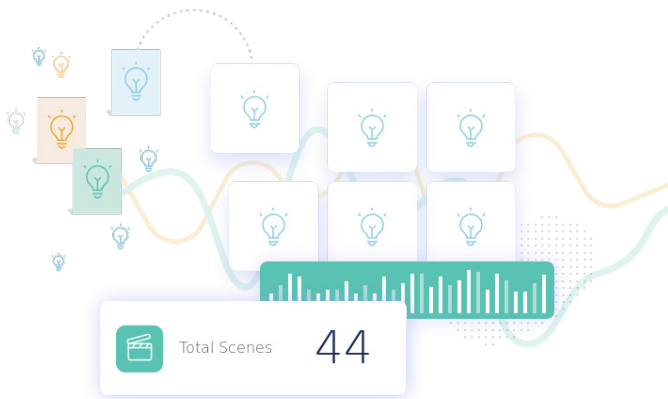
CREATING A SCENE

A Novel Is Just a Scene Followed by a Scene, Followed by a Scene...

A scene is a section of your novel where a character or characters engage in action or dialogue. You can think of a scene as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

A chapter may contain one scene or many scenes. We recommend scenes within a chapter are related by theme, action, or point of view characters. Some novels have one scene per chapter for the entire story. Others have multiple scenes per chapter.

> Deciding how to structure the story is where your artistry comes into play.

Where you choose to start a new scene influences the experience you give your readers.

Usually, you'll start a new scene when you change the point of view character, who is in the scene, the storyline (plot), the scene location, or the time.

Element #1

Element #2

Element #3

ELEMENTS OF A SCENE

CHARACTERS

Most likely you have at least one character in a scene. The character doesn't have to be a human. It could be a storm. It could be a haunted house. It could be an animal. You get the idea. Whatever "it" is, if you give "it" a scene, "it" must be relevant to the story.

When a portion of your story told from one character's point of view changes to be told from another character's point of view, we recommend starting a new scene. Characters entering or exiting the action are also a good place to start or end the scene.

PLOT

Each scene needs a great opening line, an entry hook, a middle, a climax, and an exit hook.

Consider starting a new scene when the direction of the story changes, the action is significantly different, or you're sharing a subplot.

SETTING

The scene must take place somewhere. When the location changes, consider starting a new scene. You can also start a new scene when the time changes.

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TRIGGERS FOR STARTING A NEW SCENE

Just to recap, a good time to start a new scene is when one of the following changes:

- **POV character**
- **Characters in the scene**
- **Storyline**
- **Scene location**
- **Time**

When you start a new scene, you let the reader know to expect a change, and this helps the story flow from one scene to the next.

You can also start a new scene if the word count of a scene is getting too long for the overall structure of your story.

HOW LONG SHOULD A SCENE BE?

The length of a scene affects the pacing of the story. The shorter the scene, the faster the pacing. The longer the scene, the slower the pacing. This, of course, has exceptions.

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▶ CHARACTERS AND NOVEL STRUCTURE

WHY DO PEOPLE READ NOVELS?

We think it's to find out what happens next. But what happens next is only interesting if the "what happens next" involves characters or something important to a character.

CHARACTERS ARE YOUR STORY

Characters act and react. They create emotion. They show motivation. They have goals. Without any of this, you don't have a story. That's a tall order for your characters. So how do you make sure you're getting the most out of them?

You rewrite and revise until your characters are performing at their best.

You've finished your first draft, so most likely you know who your characters are, what they look like, where they work, and so on. But what about how they fit into your story structure?

To understand this and make the most of it, you must evaluate your characters in the context of the structure of your novel.

Fictionary StoryTeller scans your manuscript, lists your characters, and links them to a scene.

Let's start with the basics. **Who is in each scene?**

The list of characters in a scene and in your novel helps you:

- Keep track of characters from one scene to the next
- Assess whether you have too many characters in a scene
- Count how many times the protagonist and antagonist appear together
- Quickly determine which characters were present for a major event
- Ensure you haven't used character names that can be easily confused

In **Fictionary** StoryTeller, all characters active in a scene or mentioned in a scene are listed for you and your StoryCoach to assess.

[?] View Character List [View]

POINT OF VIEW

Point Of View (POV) is the perspective the story is told from. It's generally accepted that each scene is written from the point of view of one character.

When you choose a point of view character for a scene, you're making a promise to readers that they will experience the scene from that character's eyes.

The feelings, actions, senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, sound) are all from that one character's point of view.

You can write your entire novel from the point of view of one character, or you can write from multiple points of view.

If you write your novel from multiple points of view, ensure you don't change POV characters by mistake.

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▶ CHARACTERS AND NOVEL STRUCTURE

If the scene is "following" the character of the police detective, don't suddenly tell the reader what the suspect is thinking. This is called head hopping and can jar the reader out from under the spell of the story.

It's important to choose a POV character per scene and stick to it. This may seem minor, but head hopping can create confusion, lessen tension, or generally dilute the scene. Head hopping can give the impression the author is not in control of their writing. Even if a reader doesn't know why, they may not trust the writer and lose confidence in the story. Head hopping diminishes the tension because the reader knows both sides of the story, so there is no suspense or mystery left.

The other issue with head hopping is you can't be direct with thoughts if you're writing in 3rd-person close POV. You'll have to tell the reader whose thoughts they are hearing. If the scene is written from one character's POV, that's not necessary.

If you change POV characters within a scene, do so carefully. Make sure it's clear to the reader the POV character changed

Once you've written a draft, you'll know if you're writing from first-person point of view or third person. You've also decided if you're writing from multiple points of view or a single point of view. In essence, you know who is telling your story.

Fictionary StoryTeller helps you and your StoryCoach keep track of POV characters and how you balance your POV scenes throughout the novel.

StoryTeller takes a first pass at listing your POV characters for each scene. It's up to you and your StoryCoach to confirm the list is correct.

Storyteller allows you to confirm the POV character for each scene by quickly scanning the POV character on the Evaluate Page. Here you can see the POV character for Scene 1 is Kalin Thompson.

Your Edits   StoryTeller Tips   Your Story Element Updates
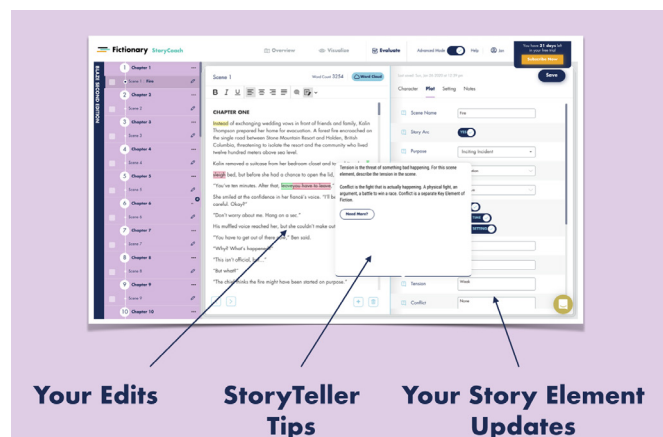
Once you've confirmed your POV characters, the POV Characters insight in **StoryTeller** shows you who your POV characters are, how many scenes each POV character has, and the order they appear throughout the novel. This gives you full control over your characters by ensuring you get the balance right.

Below, you can see Kalin Thompson is the POV character for 46% of the scenes. This is great as she's the protagonist, so she should have the most scenes.
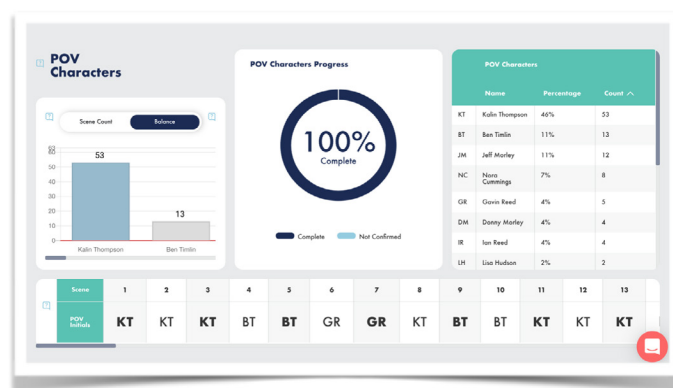
As you go through each scene with **StoryTeller**, you can focus on the basic story elements and give the POV character a goal for the scene.

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▶ CHARACTERS AND NOVEL STRUCTURE

When thinking about the POV character for each scene, ask yourself:

- **What is the POV character's external goal for the scene?**
- **What is the POV character's internal goal for the scene?**
- **How does the goal relate to the plot?**
- **What happens if your POV character doesn't achieve the goal?**
- **How does the scene affect your POV character?**
- **How does the scene affect the protagonist (if that's not the POV character for the scene)?**
- **What knowledge does the POV character gain?**
- **Are the characters in motion?**

Once you've answered the questions, check each scene to ensure the reader will understand the answers. You can show, tell, or imply the answers.

It's up to you and your StoryCoach to find the right balance within your story. The more important the event, the more you should "show" the reader what's happening. The less important could be "told" quickly, so the reader can move on to the good stuff.

CHARACTER GOALS

A character goal is simply what a character wants. Goals drive the story forward. If a character doesn't have a goal, then what are they doing?

When you know the goal, you can start thinking about all the ways the character will fail at achieving the goal, what obstacles you can put in the character's way, and how the character will feel about failing.

If there's no character goal for the reader to cheer for and no meaningful obstacle put in the character's way, then there is no reason for your reader to keep reading. A scene where the POV character doesn't have a goal and nothing stands in the character's way will lack tension. And without tension the reader gets bored.

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▶ PLOT

T he plot events are the bricks that build your story and occur in a sequence, and that sequence forms the structure of your novel.

Eight of the **Fictionary** Plot Story Elements are:

- 1. Story Arc
- 2. Scene Name
- 3. Purpose of a Scene
- 4. Scene Opening Type
- 5. Scene Entry Hook
- 6. Scene Anchoring
- 7. Scene Closing Type
- 8. Scene Exit Hook

THE STORY ARC

A good story contains key plot events. **To tell a powerful story readers love, these events must happen at the right time.** The story arc helps you see the structure of your manuscript and decide on the best placement of the plot events.

The key plot events are the:

- inciting incident
- plot point one
- middle
- plot point two
- climax
- resolution

INCITING INCIDENT

The inciting incident is a major turning event no later than halfway through the first act. It's the moment the protagonist's world changes in a dramatic way. This should happen before 15% of your novel. Readers are impatient, so don't wait too long to write this scene.

The inciting incident does not have to be the event that gets your story started. That's called the opening hook. The opening hook happens at the beginning of your novel.
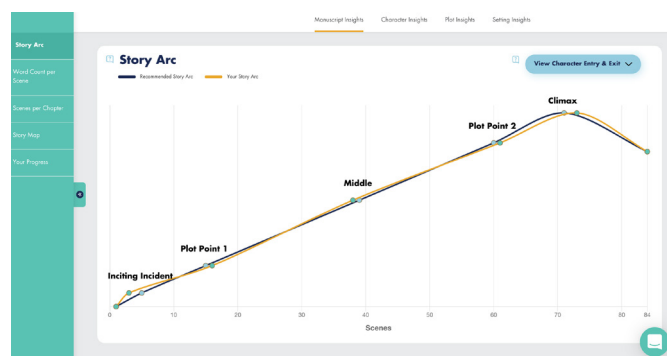
PLOT POINT ONE

Plot is how the events in your story impact your protagonist. Plot points force your protagonist to change behavior and change the direction of your story.

Plot point one is the point of no return. The character can't back out of the central conflict. The character's desire to engage with it overrules all else. Luke Skywalker makes the decision to leave home and search for the missing princess.

Plot point one typically occurs at the end of Act I. Try to place this around 25% into your story.

In plot point 1, there must be something at stake. If the character doesn't care about the outcome, a reader won't care either.

Example plot point types (there are many more):

- The character is obligated to take action.
- The character is trapped.
- Tuning back means returning to a life of unhappiness.
- The character's desire for something overrules all else.

▶ PLOT

THE MIDPOINT

If you've written the inciting incident and plot point one well, then at the midpoint, you'll be taking your readers on a journey where the protagonist moves from a reactionary mode to a proactive mode.

The midpoint of your novel happens at around 50% of your story's total word count. It's also about halfway through the second act. So that was a little obvious...but had to be said.

The events following your midpoint lead the reader to plot point two (at the end of Act II), and then on to the climax.

PLOT POINT TWO

Plot Point two will be a low point for your protagonist. The actions they've taken since the midpoint have caused disaster and they don't know if they can recover. Some writers call this 'hitting rock bottom' or 'the dark night of the soul,' and it marks a turning point in the story. After this plot point, it's a rush to the climax.

Plot point two occurs at the end of Act II. This should happen around 75% into your story.

CLIMAX

You've built your story up to the climax with rising action, and now the climactic scene (or scenes) will have the highest level of conflict, the greatest tension, or the most devastating emotional upheaval.

The protagonist must be in your climactic scene or you'll confuse and alienate your reader. The protagonist should face the biggest obstacle in the story and determine their own fate.

This is the climax of your novel, not a scene. It should happen somewhere around 90% into your story. Ninety percent is a guide so you can check you're not writing too much after the climax.

If the climax occurs too early in your story, the reader may get impatient with a long resolution and start skimming.

If the climax appears too late, the resolution may lack depth and the reader finishes the story without being satisfied.

RESOLUTION

The resolution is everything that happens after the climax. The resolution must provide the reader with an emotional payoff, tie up some loose ends, show the characters returning to normal life or reveal the aftermath of the climax.

THE SCENE NAME

The scene name is connected to the "Purpose of a Scene" and helps you discover what the scene is really about.

The names of the scenes might give you insight into the theme of your chapter or of your novel. To speed up your Story Edit, you can name your scenes at the same time as you define the purpose.

THE PURPOSE OF A SCENE

The purpose of the scene must relate to the overall story. If the scene is not driving the story forward or developing your characters, then ask yourself why the scene is in your novel.

Here are some examples of the way the purpose of a scene can drive the story forward. You can choose one of these to define the purpose or come up with your own definitions.

The scene could:

- Build suspense
- Develop character
- Introduce characters
- Create a mood
- Establish a setting
- Intensify conflict
- Move the story

▶ PLOT

Review each scene in your novel and define the purpose. You can do this fairly quickly. Try to describe the purpose in a couple of words.

After you've created your first draft, you may find you have scenes that don't serve a purpose. Delete these from your novel but save them. You never know if you'll write a prequel or a sequel and need the scene.

When reviewing the purpose of the scene you can look for hints on what to name your scene. At this point, you may want to re-evaluate the purpose of the scene in case you've changed your mind based on naming the scene.

THE SCENE OPENING TYPE
Don't Bore Your Reader With Repetitive Scene Opening Types

You have four choices for scene opening type:

- Dialogue
- Thought
- Description
- Action

Go through each scene of your novel and label the scenes with one of the above. Then check you haven't been repetitive. Variation keeps the reader more interested.

THE SCENE ENTRY HOOK
Get the Reader's Attention With A Great Scene Hook

When creating a scene entry hook, consider:

- Starting in media res (opening in the middle of action)
- Foreshadowing trouble
- Using a strong line of dialogue
- Raising a question
- Not wasting words on extraneous description

After your first draft is complete, check each scene and list how you created a hook. As with the scene opening type, you want to vary the method you use. Variety keeps the reader engaged.

ANCHORING EACH SCENE
Anchor Your Readers, So They Won't Put Your Book Down

Check whether the reader will know who has the point of view, where the scene takes place and the timing of the scene within the first paragraph or at least within the first couple of paragraphs of each scene. If not, the reader might find this frustrating.

THE SCENE CLOSING TYPE

You have four choices for scene closing type:

- Dialogue
- Thought
- Description
- Action

As with the Scene Opening Type, vary the closing type. Once you have a list of each closing type, you can "see" if you've been too repetitive. Be sure to vary these types of scene closings.

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THE SCENE
EXIT HOOK

The exit hook is the magic that keeps your reader wanting to begin the next scene.

You can ask yourself: Why would the reader keep reading once they reach the end of a scene?

Types of Exit Hooks:

- Cliffhanger–perhaps your protagonist's life is at risk

- Revelation–show the reader something that changes the course of the story

- Setback for the protagonist or antagonist–one of these characters should be very unhappy about the latest event

- A secret revealed–you can either reveal a full secret or only part of a secret

- A question left hanging–this teases the reader, making them want the answer

- An unexpected plot twist–this keeps the reader guessing

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▶ SETTINGS

When describing settings, it's important to only describe things that are relevant to the plot or characterization.

Four of the Fictionary Setting Story Elements are:

- 1. Location
- 2. Date/Time
- 3. Objects
- 4. Senses

LOCATION

Location is the place where a scene happens.

When describing the location, ask yourself: Is the location important to the plot, characters, or theme? If no, fewer details are required. If yes, be more generous with the details.

Once you've determined the location for each scene, ask yourself if the setting is the best place for emotional impact. This one little question helps you:

- **Increase or decrease conflict**
- **Increase or decrease tension**
- **Set the mood**
- **Highlight emotion**
- **Show characterization**
- **Slow down or speed up pacing**

Thinking about location in terms of emotional impact will wake up your creativity. Let us give you an example.

Suppose you have a character who is afraid of the dark. Imagine the character is about to have a confrontation with an employee. If the character feels confident being in their office and you want the character to be in a position of strength, then use the office as a setting.

If you want the character to feel vulnerable during the confrontation, try locating them outside, at night, in an isolated parking lot. And make it very dark. The streetlight is broken. There is no moon. Maybe it's windy, so a yell for help won't be heard.

Do you see the difference? The location can help you bring out emotion in the scene by showing conflict, tension, mood, and characterization.

You decide what emotion you want the reader to feel, then decide how the location can help elicit that emotion.

If you think the location is not the best place for emotional impact, it's time for a rewrite. Set the scene where you can elicit strong emotions, then rewrite the scene in that location.

DATE & TIME

Keep track of the date, day of week, time of day, or exact time that is important for your scene.

For example, if you write a story that happens in one day, you may want to track time of day.

Maybe your novel takes place over a month, so just listing the day of the week is enough for you to keep track of timing.

For a novel that jumps back and forth in time, you could just list what time in the present or in the past the scene takes place in.

OBJECTS

An object is any inanimate thing that appears in your novel. Keep track of objects that are important to the story. If the object serves no purpose, then you might want to remove it from the scene.

A list of objects will tell you if you have any smoking guns. This means you've planted a clue but haven't used it. If an object appears and could be a smoking gun, but isn't used later in the novel, then perhaps you should remove the object from the earlier scene or use it in a later scene.

Objects can be used to orient readers in time. If you're writing a novel that bounces between past and present, you can use objects to show the reader what time they are in.

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▶ SETTINGS

Objects might also trigger your imagination. Sometimes, after you've written your first draft and you go back and review the objects in your story, you'll discover a new way to write a scene or get closure in a scene.

SENSES

If you haven't used any senses, you probably aren't writing in a close point of view. The character with the POV for the scene will smell, touch, taste, hear, or see something.

Using the POV character's senses to describe the action in the scene brings your reader closer to the character.

Be careful how you do this. If the character touches something hot, don't tell the reader it's hot. Show them.

The character puts her hand on a surface, whips her hand away, gasps, and rushes to run cold water on her skin.

This description of events shows the reader the surface is hot. You shouldn't write the character touched the surface and it was hot.

You don't have to use all five senses in a scene, but you should use one or more.

Try not to favor one of the senses over another. Perhaps a character smells something in every scene. This might be an overuse of the sense unless the character is a superhero with an unusually strong sense of smell.

TEN BENEFITS OF FICTIONARY STORYTELLER

Fictionary StoryTeller analyzes your manuscript and automatically creates 13 powerful reports, including the story arc, to help you visualize your story.

With this you learn how to evaluate your writing against 38 **Fictionary** Story Elements. You also keep track of your characters, tighten your plot, and create engaging settings.

StoryTeller can identify and help you fix problems within your manuscript by focusing on the structure of your story, not on the words.

Nine critical structural areas are:

- 1. Pacing
- 2. Character names and appearances
- 3. Point of view characters and goals
- 4. Story arc
- 5. Plot holes (scenes without a clear purpose)
- 6. Flow from scene to scene
- 7. Absence of tension or conflict
- 8. Empty stage syndrome
- 9. Confusing timelines or missing objects

The 10th benefit of using StoryTeller comes from the built-in **Editing Tips**. These tips explain why each **Fictionary** Story Element is important and how to use it within StoryTeller. Editing tips provide you with specific advice on the area of the manuscript you're working on just when you need it. No more endless searching for writing advice!

Fictionary   ProWritingAid   FirstEditing

HOW TO LINE EDIT AND COPYEDIT YOUR OWN STORY

We all know good writing is about more than just good grammar. Certainly, you must find and fix all grammar and spelling mistakes if you want to be taken seriously, but good copyediting is also about strengthening your text. It's about using the best possible words and constructions to paint the clearest, most compelling picture for your reader.

Let's look at an example:

VERSION ONE
The year is 1587, and the month is February. I am constantly pushed to be married by everyone around me, but I don't think it to be a wise idea. Should I easily give my country over to someone else who will recklessly run England? No. I very much owe it to my subjects to keep them very safe as long as possible, and for as long as I am alive. I also at the moment need to keep my country safe from France and Spain, who always seem to be plotting against me, planning to take over this country, destroying everything that I have built.

The task at hand requires only a signature from me. My name, written identically countless times before, over and over. The consequences of signing this paper are far bigger than signing any paper put forth in my past up until this time, unfortunately. This time my signature means the death of a fellow human being. My cousin, Mary, the Scottish queen.

Thinking deeply about it, I realize that there isn't a question about what I must do. Mary has been kept in many different prisons here and around the rest of England after being accused of plotting her husband's murder. She made her escape from prison in Scotland and came asking for my help. I had no choice but to keep her here. Now I have kept her here for over twenty years. I could not leave her helpless and keep us dangerously at risk. Now, however, Mary is guilty of high treason. She was found to be communicating with France and Spain, who always seem to be plotting against me. She has been devising plans with them to take over England. To let her live would be wrong.

VERSION TWO
The year is 1587. The month, February. The world commands me to marry, but I think it unwise. Why should I give control of my country to someone else? No. As long as I am alive, I owe it to my subjects to keep them safe. France and Spain conspire against me, wishing to destroy everything I have built, but I will not allow it.

My secretary, William Davidson, requires only my signature: my name, written countless times before. Yet, the consequences of signing this paper are far bigger than any paper put forth in my past. This signature means the death of my cousin Mary, the Scottish queen.

There is no question what I must do. When Mary escaped from prison after plotting her husband's murder, she came to me, begging for help. I had no choice but to keep her here. I could not leave her helpless, but to let her go would put us all in danger. She has been confined in Fotheringhay Castle for twenty years now. This has not stopped her from colluding, however: she was communicating with France and Spain, planning to take over England. Mary is guilty of high treason. It would be wrong to let her live.

The first version is grammatically perfect—it's not very well-written though, is it? It contains a lot of issues common to inexperienced writers like over-reliance on adverbs, passive voice, unnecessary words, and awkwardly constructed sentences.

Below, I'll share some key writing issues that flag a writer as an amateur. **ProWritingAid** exposes most of them in your text, so you can rewrite when necessary and look like a pro.

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▶ HOW TO LINE EDIT AND COPYEDIT YOUR OWN STORY

STOP YOUR 'WRITING' FROM GETTING IN THE WAY OF YOUR IDEAS

We all get it. You're a wordsmith. That doesn't mean you need to use only polysyllabic words to show off your prowess. Common words help readers understand your meaning immediately, without turning to a thesaurus to figure it out.

> **"If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it."**
> Elmore Leonard

Whenever your reader stops and goes back to re-read a sentence because they didn't understand it, they are coming out of your world for a moment. Your writing is the tool to get your ideas out of your head and into theirs. If you use a word they don't understand, they either must stop and look it up (most of us won't bother) or guess at the meaning based on context. And they might guess wrong, which means your idea is not reaching them correctly.

Most readers prefer you use words the average middle-schooler easily understands. Don't mistake this for juvenile writing—the ideas can be complex while the writing is clear.

Use **ProWritingAid** to check your manuscript's readability score to make sure your readers won't feel overwhelmed or distracted by the writing itself. Allow readers to focus on your ideas and not your vocabulary.

DON'T USE ADVERBS AS A CRUTCH

> **"The road to hell is paved with adverbs."**
> Stephen King

Contrary to what Mr. King might say, adverbs aren't inherently good or bad: it's all in how you use them.

Let's unpack when you should—and shouldn't—use adverbs.

Adverbs are modifiers. They alter the meaning of words—verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even whole sentences. Writers use adverbs to add color and refine meaning.

Examples of Adverbs:

- Helen walked quickly back to John's apartment. "Quickly" modifies the verb "walked."

- Unfortunately, we can't make it to your wedding. "Unfortunately" modifies the entire sentence.

Most (but not all) adverbs end in -ly. Examples include quickly, helpfully, apprehensively, grumpily. The adverb adds more nuanced information to the verb.

- He gave her a ride home.

- He helpfully gave her a ride home.

- He apprehensively gave her a ride home.

- He grumpily gave her a ride home.

Each of those sentences paints a different picture because of the adverbs.

Adverbs are problematic in two ways:

- 1. When writers use them to boost a dull verb, and

- 2. When writers use them to tell emotion when they should show it.

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USING ADVERBS TO PROP UP WEAK VERBS

When you're editing, be vigilant when you search for adverbs that prop up weak verbs. Look at these examples:

Weak verb: **Weak verb + adverb:** **Strong verb:**	James **ran** to school. James **ran quickly** to school. James **sprinted** to school.
Weak verb: **Weak verb + adverb:** **Strong verb:**	Nicola **spoke** to her daughter. Nicola **spoke quietly** to her daughter. Nicola **whispered** to her daughter.
Weak verb: **Weak verb + adverb:** **Strong verb:**	Scarlett **looked** at Stan. Scarlett **looked angrily** at Stan. Scarlett **glared** at Stan.

Verbs are the most powerful elements of language—use them to say exactly what you mean. Don't use a weak verb and then try to give it power with an adjective.

USING ADVERBS TO ADD EMOTION

Adverbs are also problematic when writers use them to add emotion to a scene instead of using the action of the scene to show that emotion. It's the old "show, don't tell" rule.

Let's think about the example above: "He **apprehensively** gave her a ride home."

What are some other ways you could show his apprehension to your reader? Perhaps he hesitates and looks around before unlocking the door. Maybe he tried to make an excuse before relenting and offering a ride. Is he gripping the steering wheel more tightly than usual? Is he sweating?

If you say "apprehensively" then your reader must try to imagine what apprehension might look like on him. If you paint a clear picture with your words, then there is no need for the adverb. Your reader already understands he's feeling apprehensive.

GET PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

Passive voice is another one of those things that really irks experienced editors and agents. It's not grammatically incorrect, it just often weakens writing. It's always worth double-checking if you can improve the sentence by rewriting it in an active voice.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE?

The passive voice means you've written the object of your sentence first and then put the subject of your sentence at the end.

Passive voice:
The bottle was recycled by Joe.

Active voice:
Joe recycled the bottle.

Think about who is doing the action. In this example, Joe is the subject, he is the do-er. He is doing the recycling, and the bottle is the object of the recycling.

Both sentences say the same thing, but in the first one, the focus is on the bottle; in the second, the focus is on Joe.

In the first example, the reader waits until the end of the sentence to discover who is doing the action, which means the sentence has less impact. Action and the verbs showing action give your writing power. It's usually better to put your action up front.

Here are a couple more examples:

Passive voice:
I was shushed by the librarian.

Active voice:
The librarian shushed me.

Passive voice:
The crime scene was monitored by local police officers.

Active voice:
Local police officers monitored the crime scene.

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HOW TO LINE EDIT AND COPYEDIT YOUR OWN STORY

Imagine you're painting a picture of the scene in your reader's head. They can't visualize the scene until they know who performed the action.

Use **ProWritingAid** to scan your document for passive voice. You won't need to rewrite all sentences written in passive voice, but you will improve many of them by changing them to active voice.

Insulin was discovered by Frederick Banting

Passive verbs make your writing less direct

⟶ Frederick Banting discovered Insulin

📖 Thesaurus   ✕ Disable Rule   🪶 Ignore

THE IMPORTANCE OF SENTENCE LENGTH

Don't let your sentences go on (and on and on and on).

Long sentences meander around your meaning, leading your readers down one path and then abruptly switching to another and confusing them along the way, resulting in an uncertain understanding of what you truly meant to say and the particular point you intended to make.

Phew! That last sentence was a doozy. Over 40 words long, and what did it really convey?

Cut down long sentences specifically to separate your thoughts. A good rule of thumb is to offer your readers one concept to take in. When you give them too much to assimilate per sentence, you risk losing them.

The last thing you want is for a reader to toss your book aside because it's too hard to follow your train of thought. Let's try that first paragraph again:

Long sentences meander around your meaning. They lead your readers down one path and then abruptly switch to another. The result can be an uncertain understanding of the particular point you intended to make.

See? Your brain takes in each point individually, which makes a bigger impact.

ProWritingAid counts every word in every sentence of your selected text and gives you two scores:
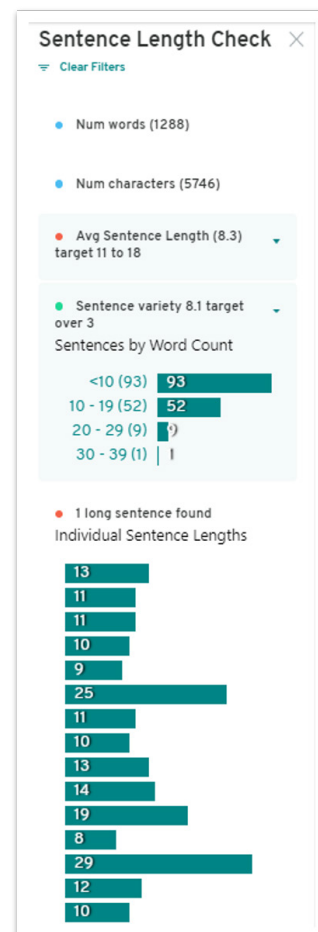
■ **1. Average Sentence Length**

The average sentence length for most published writers is between 11 and 18 words. If your average is above 18, then your writing might be too verbose or complicated. If your average is below 11, your writing will likely feel choppy. Check your score and then rework your text if you need to.

■ **2. Sentence Variety Score**

The sentence variety is calculated using a concept called standard deviation. This is a mathematical measure of variety from the average. The higher the standard deviation, the more your sentence lengths vary within the document.

You can also create a visual representation of your work, so you can easily scan to find areas that need more variety.

Sentence Length Check ✕

⟲ Clear Filters

● Num words (1288)

● Num characters (5746)

● Avg Sentence Length (8.3) target 11 to 18

● Sentence variety 8.1 target over 3

Sentences by Word Count

<10 (93)   93
10 - 19 (52)   52
20 - 29 (9)
30 - 39 (1)

● 1 long sentence found
Individual Sentence Lengths

13
11
11
10
9
25
11
10
13
14
19
8
29
12
10

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CREATE FRESH METAPHORS INSTEAD OF RESORTING TO CLICHÉS

A strong metaphor has an unparalleled ability to convey your meaning. We understand new things by relating them to things we already know.

Writers often use events from their lives that parallel what they are trying to explain. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players." Of course, he didn't literally mean the planet is a giant stage. He used his own understanding of theatre to create a metaphor that helps us understand a larger point about human nature.

Shakespeare's use of a metaphor is much more effective than if he had just written, "People undertake many different roles throughout their lives and sometimes pretend to be something other than their true selves." The metaphor gets across a nuanced insight because readers and audience members are able to take everything they know about stage performances and apply it to this concept. As such, there is a great deal of depth already embedded in their understanding.

> "Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print."
> George Orwell

Whenever you use a cliché, however, you're knowingly writing something unoriginal. Clichés are metaphors that have been victims of their own success—everyone has heard them a million times before and so they are instantly forgettable.

Writers often use clichés when they are working on their first draft because thinking up original wording takes time and can interrupt creative flow. That's fine. But when you go back to edit, be creative and brainstorm for fresh ideas. A new analogy or metaphor makes more of an impression on your readers than a dusty old cliché. A good writer may create and reject over a dozen images before finding the right one, so don't worry if it takes you a while.

CUT SPLASHY DIALOGUE TAGS

Dialogue tags are the words that refer dialogue to a specific character. The two most common examples are "said" and "asked".

- "I'm not going!" Charlie said.

Dialogue tags are essential in writing, particularly in scenes that include several characters, because they help the reader follow the conversation. Ideally, your dialogue tags should be invisible within your writing, just signposts that point out who is speaking.

Novice writers, however, have a tendency to use more flowery dialogue tags and pepper them with adverbs (and you know how we feel about adverbs!).

- "I'm not going!" Charlie <u>said</u> <u>angrily</u>.
                                   tag adverb

- "I'm not going!" Charlie <u>shouted</u>.
                                   tag

- "I'm not going!" Charlie <u>roared</u> <u>furiously</u>.
                                   tag   adverb

More than anything, tags like these are usually signs of writers breaking the "show, don't tell" rule again. The character's actions or the dialogue itself should be carrying the emotion. Don't depend on an adverb to make your reader feel something.

Where possible, omit dialogue tags altogether. Instead, use description and action to point out your speaker and build your scene.

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▶ HOW TO LINE EDIT AND COPYEDIT YOUR OWN STORY

■ Charlie slammed his fist on the table. "I'm not going and that's final."

In this example, Charlie's anger was shown, not told. The reader knows he's the one speaking—even without a tag—and his fist shows he's angry instead of an adverb. It gives a much stronger sense of the scene.

CHOP AWAY DEAD WOOD

If you take one key message from this section, it's that when it comes to writing, less is more. Make every word count. If it doesn't move your plot forward or express an essential idea, cut it!

Writers often use dead wood phrases: the wordy ways of saying simple things. Why write "has the ability to" when you can write "can"? You're just using more words to say the same thing, which actually makes your writing less readable. Look through your writing for a simpler way of saying the same thing.

> "I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil."
> **Truman Capote**

LINE EDITING AND COPYEDITING

Writing can be grammatically perfect but still feel awkward and clumsy. **ProWritingAid** searches out elements like repetitiveness, vague wording, sentence length variation, over-dependence on adverbs, passive voice, over-complicated sentence constructions, and so much more (25 reports in all).

OVERALL SCORE	GRAMMAR	SPELLING	STYLE
● 100 /100	● 100 /100	● 100 /100	● 100 /100

And when you get this result, you'll feel awesome!

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **First Editing**

▶ HOW TO PROOFREAD YOUR OWN STORY

As proofreading happens after the editing and formatting stages, a proofreader shouldn't be finding many errors. You're not changing your story or your style during a proof.

Check for final spelling or grammar mistakes and ask yourself:

- Are all chapter headings formatted the same?
- Are any pages or headings omitted?
- Are scene break characters consistent?
- Is the page numbering consistent?
- Are the headers and footers formatted the same?
- Are italics consistently used?
- Are paragraph indents formatted the same?
- Are there any double or triple spaces between words?
- Are there any double spaces after a period?
- Are times formatted the same — am, a.m., AM?
- Is the spacing between ellipses consistent (... and not . . .)?

THE MAGIC OF THE HUMAN BRAIN

The human brain is always trying to be helpful by filling in missing information. Most of the time, that's great. It's how animation works. Animators just need to show you a succession of images, and your brain links them all together and provides the missing information that turns them into a movie.

The same thing happens when you're reading, especially if it's your own writing. I'm sure you have all carefully proofed a sentence and still missed an obvious typo. That's because your brain guesses what's supposed to be there and replaces it in your head with the correct word or spelling. This was circulating on the Internet a while back:

I cdn'uolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg: the phaonmneel pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aoccdrnig to a rseearch taem at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Isn't your brain clever to make sense of all that nonsense? Yes, but, this same skill is what makes self-editing difficult. Your brain sees what you meant to say, rather than what you wrote.

There are a few ways to get around the helpful brain issue:

READ ALOUD
When you're reading aloud, it's much harder to skip over errors. You're more likely to hear what is actually on the page rather than what you meant to write.

CHANGE YOUR FONT
When you're self-editing or reading aloud, it's a good idea to change the text to an unfamiliar font. Your brain needs to work that extra bit harder to read each word, so you're more likely to catch those errors.

USE TEXT TO SPEECH SOFTWARE
You could also try listening to your text by inputting it into a Text to Speech app like Ivona. Hearing your words read aloud, even if it's by a computer-generated voice, is a great way to catch errors.

Be sure you proofread every sentence before you send anything off to your Professional Editor. You will get so much more out of their time and experience if they can focus on making your manuscript shine instead of fixing many minor mistakes.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **FirstEditing**

▶ PROFESSIONAL EDITING

PREPARING FOR PROFESSIONAL EDITING

Once you've performed a Story Edit and copyedit of your story as a final self-edit, it's time to prepare and send your manuscript to a Professional Editor such as **FirstEditing**.

The interaction with another person always sparks ideas, you'll know if you're ready for publication, and you'll know how others see your story.

For all three types of editing, a Professional Editor often asks you for a portion of your manuscript. This helps the editor determine what editing level you need and the price for such services. They may also provide an editing sample, so you can understand the spectrum of services you will be receiving.

Additionally, a **Fictionary** Certified StoryCoach editor provides a comprehensive Story Edit and needs more information from you than a Line Editor or Copyeditor. The latter two only need your manuscript.

For a Story Edit, a StoryCoach will request some or all of the following:

■ **1. Total word count:** The editor uses this for pricing and reviewing genre expectations.

■ **2. Blurb:** We recommend sending a blurb but not a synopsis. A synopsis gives away the ending of the story. It will be difficult for the editor to react as if they are reading the story for the first time. They'll lose the ability to determine if a plot twist worked or not.

■ **3. Genre:** Some editors specialize in specific genres, others in commercial fiction, and others in literary fiction. Knowing the genre helps the editor know if they are a good fit for you and if your story is following the genre guidelines.

■ **4. Character list:** Some editors ask for a character list ahead of time. They'll want to know who the protagonist and antagonist are. This helps them read and pay attention to how you're introducing major and minor characters.

■ **5. Point of View:** An editor may also want to know what point of view you're writing in. There's a big difference between third and first person, and the editor will want to check you're being consistent.

■ **6. Fully formatted manuscript:** As Professional Editors, we ask the writer to have the manuscript formatted properly before sending it. This tells us if they are serious about their story, are mindful of industry standards, and are willing to work hard to succeed.

A NOTE ON FORMATTING:

It's been a long-standing tradition to indicate a new scene is starting by inserting several blank lines between the end of one scene and the start of the next. That was great when eBooks didn't exist. It's still great for print books.

The problem comes with eReaders. As the writer, you'll never know when a page changes. This is dependent on the size of the eReader screen and on the font size the reader chose for the text.

In print books, the page change was set, so that if a scene break occurred between pages, a visual indication, called a scene break character, would be inserted at the end of the scene. The last character on the bottom of the page would be something like *** or ~. The reader then knew the text on the following page was the start of a new scene.

With eBooks, this capability disappears. We strongly recommend using a scene break character between every scene when you format your manuscript. Then you know your reader will never be confused about when a new scene starts, and your editor will know you have control over our scenes and you've thought about the structure of your story.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **First Editing**

WHEN TO SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO A PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

One mistake an author can make is sending their manuscript to a Professional Editor before it's ready. This is like showing up to a job interview in your pajamas having just rolled out of bed. No matter how qualified and clever you are, the interviewer is going to have trouble getting past your bedhead and unwashed PJs to see your underlying brilliance.

When you finally send your manuscript to a Professional Editor, you want them to focus on going deep and making the biggest difference to your work. If they are spending their time fixing basic writing errors and story inconsistencies, you won't be getting the best of their time or making the most of your money.

> You're the best person to do the first (and second, third...sixth) edit to your story, because you know better than anyone else what you're trying to get across.

An in-depth Story Edit teaches you an amazing amount about what it means to tell a powerful story. It helps you deliver a respectable story to a Professional Editor, and it also helps reduce the editing bill.

By the way, Professional Editors love to work on powerful stories. We do our best work on a story that already impresses us. Our dream is for you to publish a bestseller. Who doesn't want to be associated with greatness?

Have you noticed we keep referring to the editor as your editor? That's because the Professional Editor works for you. You're the artist, and the story is yours. The more you know about the different types of editing, the more you know when to accept a Professional Editor's advice and when to be true to yourself.

WHAT TO SEND A PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Professional Editors such as FirstEditing provide three different standard levels of editing:

- 1. Story Editing—also known as structural, developmental, or substantive editing as a Fictionary certified StoryCoach
- 2. Line editing
- 3. Copyediting

And don't forget proofreading—not performed by an editor but important to the process!

Now that you have a better understanding of the different levels of editing available, we always recommend you submit a portion of your manuscript for a professional review and editing recommendation.

Your Professional Editor will then be able to assess your needs and abilities while providing some general feedback and a brief critique of your writing style. Always feel free to include your overall concerns, questions, and personal goals for your manuscript. Be sure to outline your preferred methods of communication along with your desired level of editing and interaction during the process.

After reviewing your manuscript and any supplemental information such as style manuals, character lists, blurbs, and instructions, your Professional Editor will return an editing sample and assessment. This includes their professional recommendations and review of your writing needs along with the price quote and delivery timeline. You can receive such a professional sample and price quote from **FirstEditing** within 24 hours.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **FirstEditing**

▶ WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

We've edited numerous novels where the writer already had one edit performed on their story. These authors all thought they'd paid for a Story Edit, but they'd actually received a standard line edit or basic copyedit. When we performed a comprehensive Story Edit for them using Fictionary StoryCoach, we think it was a bit of an eye opener (to use a cliché).

It's important to fully understand what each type of editing is and what you should get in exchange for your money. Usually the most expensive edit is the Story Edit, followed by a line edit, copyedit, formatting, and then a final proofread.

WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL STORY EDITOR DO?

A Story Edit is the most difficult type of fiction edit to perform. At Fictionary and **FirstEditing**, this is provided by a Fictionary Certified StoryCoach who acts as your Story Editor. Fictionary's StoryCoach is the online collaboration software used by **FirstEditing**'s certified StoryCoaches to edit your story.

From a StoryCoach, you should receive:

- A summary letter explaining what is great in your story and what you need to work on. The letter should include explanations for each recommendation.

- Notes on a per scene level.

- Inline comments with recommendations at the sentence level. This does not mean commenting on style, it means comments on structure.

- Inline additions and deletions using track changes.

- Copyediting only when there is a repetitive mistake of breaking a grammar rule or style rule. For example, not starting a new paragraph for each new speaker.

You should receive all the above from any Professional Editor who is performing a Story Edit for you. You can ask ahead of time and confirm you're getting the highest standard of editing performed.

What you should not receive:

- An in-depth line edit, copyedit, or proofread

A Story Edit requires a strong knowledge of what makes a powerful story using creativity, objectivity, discipline, and hard work. It takes **FirstEditing**'s Professional Certified StoryCoaches years of experience and training to successfully work with authors on this level of editing.

This editorial expertise is combined with new technology and proven writing structures to create a powerful story. A Certified Fictionary StoryCoach works in conjunction with Fictionary's StoryCoach software—the online Story Editing tool for Professional Editors.

Most importantly, with Story Editing you receive in-depth personal and professional editorial comments throughout your manuscript which advance your writing skills and knowledge for future projects. Many authors value this objective feedback from a hired professional as it's often this insight they desire most.

Be aware comprehensive Story Edits are usually more expensive than professional line editing or copyediting.

Thus, you're paying for an in-depth, high-end Story Edit.

From this edit, unless your story is almost perfect, you should be receiving recommendations that cause you to change your story, revise scenes, move scenes around, cut in places, and add depth in others. This means you'll be doing a lot of structural revision, so why bother line editing or copyediting things that are going to be changed? This is a waste of time and money.

Often with StoryCoaching you may also submit follow-up questions via email or a phone/video call. Authors typically need a week or two to go through the suggestions and comments. It's then a good time to ask questions after the initial review. Additionally, some editors return the edited manuscript with no scheduled follow-up. Both methods work, depending on what you want or need and what you're looking for.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **FirstEditing**

▶ WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Remember, you don't want the editor focusing on line editing, copyediting, and proofreading, as all are different skills from Story Editing. An editor who is focusing too much on the words or sentence level is probably not focusing on your story.

A Story Editor provides the most comprehensive, big-picture editing level available. Thus, this type of editing is considered the premium standard for fiction in today's industry.

Your Story Editor focuses on the cohesive development of your characters, plot, and settings within the overall story arc to help you stay focused on the most important elements of storytelling. They help you ensure the story line and narrative flow smoothly while every scene contributes to your story's purpose.

Story Editors look at the characters and ask why each one is in the novel. They look for patterns, develop emotion, evaluate the length of scenes, chapters and word count. Story Editors also test the setting against the plot and so on.

A comprehensive Story Edit with a Fictionary Certified StoryCoach from FirstEditing evaluates your:

- Story arc
- Word count—for your genre and per scene
- Characters
- Plot
- Settings
- Story flow and pacing
- Scene openings and scene endings
- Consistency and clarity

In short, Story Editors transform everyday writers into great storytellers.

NONFICTION

If you're a nonfiction writer with strong statements or facts, your Content Editor ensures the information clearly states and strongly supports your manuscript's proposal. Content Editors follow the formal style guides necessary for your writing, genre, professional field, organization, university, industry, or journal.

A Professional Content Editor approaches your project from a high-level perspective. They review, inspect, dissect, and replace passages according to your document's purposes and goals. Research with extensive technical details requires consistency in presentation with support statements, facts, and references throughout your study. Your Content Editor ensures these are all presented clearly and effectively within the English language.

Content Editors for nonfiction, academic research, and technical writing also address issues such as:

- Clarifying statements which need support or elaboration
- Defining clarity of purpose for information presented
- Polishing the use of English language for a more natural read
- Inserting transitional phrases for flow and progression
- Reducing and simplifying word choices and paragraphs
- Eliminating confusing digressions
- Improving the pace of a section

Regardless, a Professional Content Editor ensures a flow within all documents that provides quality and consistency to your writing style, its subject, and the surrounding details.

Your Content Editor often possesses a PhD and ensures you're delivering the best quality product possible.

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WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL LINE EDITOR DO?

Line editing is the minimum level of editing necessary when you have been advised to seek professional editing services, hire an academic editing service, or prepare to publish and distribute independently.

If you're unsure whether standard line editing is the appropriate editing level for you, please review the different professional editing services. Compare line editing with copyediting and Story Editing. Determine what it is you want and need as an author.

Your Professional Line Editor reviews your writing with precision to catch inconsistent speech, style, or thematic variances. Their job is to make sure your manuscript achieves a professional level of readability.

Your manuscript is read "line-by-line" during this process to ensure it's technically prepared for publication, review, and distribution.

A Professional Line Editor dissects your writing **style** so you can improve as an author, industry authority, or academic researcher. The Line Editor identifies your strengths and weaknesses revealed in your various writing patterns and highlights these within your manuscript.

As such, your Line Editor perfects your sentence structure and subject-verb agreements to ensure continuity throughout your writing. Transitional phrasing is also evaluated to ensure your statements flow smoothly from one idea to the next.

A standard line edit eliminates jargon and repetition; ensures style consistency and compositional spacing; and often includes basic copyediting which corrects your spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

Professional Line Editing includes changes that are highlighted and supported with remarks and some minor feedback throughout your manuscript.

By adjusting your language, tone, and usage, a Line Editor ensures your writing is consistent, professional, and appealing to your specific target audience while supporting your statements.

Line Editors often make important suggestions for improvement. For example, they will remove overused, redundant, or extraneous words.

For nonfiction, your Line Editor may recommend confirming or supporting your statements by providing citations or referencing sources of authority.

Always hire a Professional Line Editor to ensure your writing presentation and techniques are correct before sharing with peers, agents, professors, or the general public. Never attempt self-publishing without line editing first.

WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL COPYEDITOR DO?

A Professional Copyeditor checks for accuracy and consistency within your manuscript. Copyediting is the process of reviewing and correcting documents for readability. As a result, a Copyeditor ensures your writing is free of errors before you share your manuscript publicly.

Specifically, a Copyeditor takes your raw text material and prepares it for publication. Copyediting is done before formatting and is your final step in the editorial process.

Hiring a Professional Copyeditor allows fresh eyes and perspective on your manuscript. Your Copyeditor provides you with precise edits individually outlined in with track changes. You just review the final document and accept or reject each change as appropriate.

During a professional copyedit you learn more about your writing strengths and weaknesses. In this editorial process, you have an experienced, neutral reader identifying your crutch words and repetitive mistakes you may not have been aware of.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **First**Editing

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

With a final professional copyedit, you can confidently assess your writing, make all necessary final corrections, and move forward in the formatting process towards publishing.

Even if you love the Professional Editor who performed your Story Edit or line edit, we recommend using a different Professional Editor for the next phase of copyediting. Your Story Editor will have read your story several times. This means it will be hard for them to see errors. It becomes like reading your own story. You need fresh eyes.

If we're asked to perform a copyedit or final proofread on a story we've Story Edited as a StoryCoach, we say no and recommend another good Professional Copyeditor or proofreader. We don't believe we could do a good job the second time on the same manuscript. FirstEditing.com is a great place to start looking for an additional Professional Copyeditor.

Remember, a good Copyeditor asks for a sample, assesses what you need, and determines how much to charge for the work provided.

A Professional Copyeditor helps you achieve clarity in your writing and style by carefully reviewing and correcting your every word for intent and grammar. Your Copyeditor also determines that the specific details, names, dates, and locations within your writing are consistent.

Professional Copyeditors have the trained skills of a proofreader combined with the additional expertise of reviewing various styles of writing. They can ensure your writing adheres to your required style guide for publication.

A Professional Copyeditor is your best friend when you need to honestly assess your basic writing skills. They provide neutral and constructive criticism, so you can grow as a writer and improve some repetitive errors within basic grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Anytime you have **any** writing that you plan to publish, distribute, or share publicly, you need a Professional Copyeditor. They help build and maintain your reputation and credibility as a writer, researcher, and professional.

Once the story is powerful, it's time to get into the details of each sentence with a focus on style. Your copyeditor checks for:

- Language errors including punctuation, grammar, and spelling
- Run-on sentences (you may want these in dialogue or thought—just make sure you do this on purpose)
- Repeated information or words
- Clichés
- Too much description
- Unclear or confusing passages
- Boring or passive language
- Showing versus telling
- Too many adverbs
- Sentence length variation
- Consistent spelling (For example: USA versus Canada versus the UK)
- Consistent hyphenation, fonts, and capitalization

A great online tool for copyediting is the **ProWritingAid** plugin which easily corrects while you write. **ProWritingAid** helps you in your day-to-day writing tools and saves you time and money when later hiring a Professional Copyeditor from **FirstEditing**.

First impressions are so incredibly important. Don't gamble on your future publishing opportunities and reputation with basic grammar or spelling mistakes.

If you're unsure about what type of professional editing you genuinely need, contact a Professional Editor at **FirstEditing**. They can easily assess where you are in the writing process and which editing level would serve you best, Story Editing, line editing, or copyediting.

Fictionary   **ProWritingAid**   **FirstEditing**

WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL PROOFREADER DO?

Before you send your manuscript to anyone, and we mean anyone, proofread it. If you're looking for comments from beta readers or a writing critique group, it's important for your readers to focus on the story and not the typos. If you're sending your manuscript to a Professional Editor, the less time they have to spend on proofreading the basics the less expensive it will be.

Professional Proofreaders check your text before it's printed or published. Your Professional Proofreader ensures your writing is correct and complete. A Professional Proofreader checks merely for errors but makes no revisions of the text as a whole. All corrections to the sentences and word compositions should occur during editing and before proofreading.

A Professional Proofreader provides you the final assurance your writing is ready for publication. Proofreading ensures your content is free of spelling, punctuation, grammar, typographical, and fundamental formatting errors.

Your Professional Proofreader carefully reviews your final work and the editing already performed on the document. Proofreading is checking the work of your Professional Editor in combination with the formatting before you share or independently publish. A Professional Proofreader catches the smallest typos and provides a final quality check.

Your Professional Proofreader checks your final document for grammar, spelling, punctuation and inconsistent formatting. Proofreading is a post-editing service. It happens after extensive editing and revisions.

You hire a Professional Proofreader for the final cleanse before publication. Thus, proofreading is your last step before publishing a document; handing in your work to a journal, professor or other authority; submitting an application; or sharing your manuscript with an audience.

Lastly, a final proofread is just that—the last stage of correction before publishing.

Your Professional Proofreader provides no comments, suggestions, evaluations, or feedback during this last review. You will get the necessary corrections made on your text without reference to your overall presentation, style, or support of statements/facts within your document.

Professional Proofreaders provide the technical evaluation without any regard to the content's message.

If you're sending your manuscript to an agent or a publisher, you have a much better chance of being accepted if your work is professionally prepared.

A publisher will perform a second proofread prior to publication, but that does not mean they'll accept errors in your submission.

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▶ DEALING WITH EDITORIAL FEEDBACK

We don't mean emotionally. We're not experts in that. We mean practically. You've probably guessed by now that this depends on the type of edit you've had done.

> "At its foundation the role of the editor is a blend of meddler and midwife."
> Neil Frizzell, Jounalist

STORY EDITING FEEDBACK

This one's the biggie. You may need months to revise your story after you've received a Story Edit. Even if your manuscript is close to being ready for publication, there may be a recommended structural change that takes time to fix.

Below is an example of a Story Edit you would receive from a StoryCoach. You'll see inline comments and track changes, writing tips that go with each element, and your Professional Editor's comments on the 38 Fictionary Story Elements:

Your Edits   StoryTeller   Your Story Element
Tips   Updates
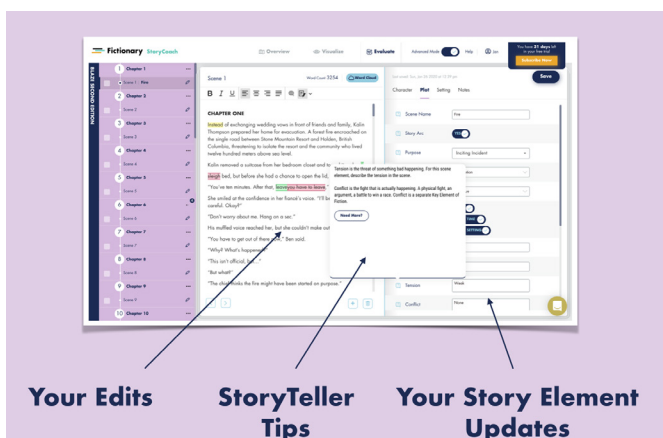
You'll also receive per scene notes and a summary letter:

Notes & Summary Letter
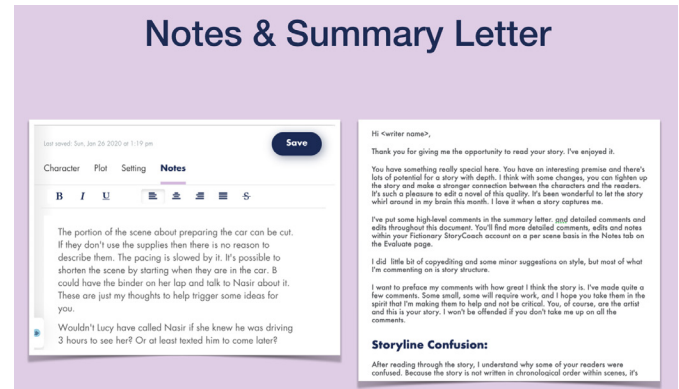
It may take months to revise your manuscript after you've received feedback from a Fictionary StoryCoach. You should feel great about that, as it means you've gotten your money's worth.

You'll work on the structural recommendations first. This means anything that requires moving scenes around, deleting or adding scenes, splitting or joining scenes, and word count per scene.

Once you've updated your manuscript with the structural changes, you'll work through your manuscript on a scene-by-scene basis, focusing on story flow, characters, plot, and settings.

After you've done all that, it's time to move on to the next phase of editing. We recommend performing the next phases yourself prior to going to a Professional Editor. This is where **ProWritingAid** comes in. As we've mentioned, the higher the quality of the manuscript you send to a Professional Editor at any phase, the higher the quality of feedback you're going to get. You'll also save money because the Professional Editor won't have to focus on areas you could have fixed yourself.

Fictionary   ProWritingAid   FirstEditing

A PROFESSIONAL LINE EDITOR'S FEEDBACK

Professional Line Editing is the industry standard most requested by publishers and professors.

A PROFESSIONAL COPYEDITOR'S FEEDBACK

You've performed your own copyedit, sent your manuscript to a Copyeditor, and received their response. You may be amazed by the number of errors the Professional Editor found, but don't worry. That's normal. It's very hard to see your own mistakes, and you've paid a Copyeditor to see what you can't.

Your Copyeditor has done their best to find every mistake and correct it. We know some writers click "accept all" to in-line changes and figure they're done. We strongly recommend **not** doing this. Editors are people, and people make mistakes. Although the first rule of editing is **do not introduce mistakes**, mistakes can happen. You'll want to check each and every recommended change before accepting them.

This takes time, but once your novel is published, it's too late.

A PROFESSIONAL PROOFREADER'S FEEDBACK

The same advice for copyediting applies here. **Your story—your responsibility.**

As proofreading is the final step after formatting and prior to publishing, you should review and approve the changes. Ideally, you have prepared completely and do not need to complete another editorial revision.

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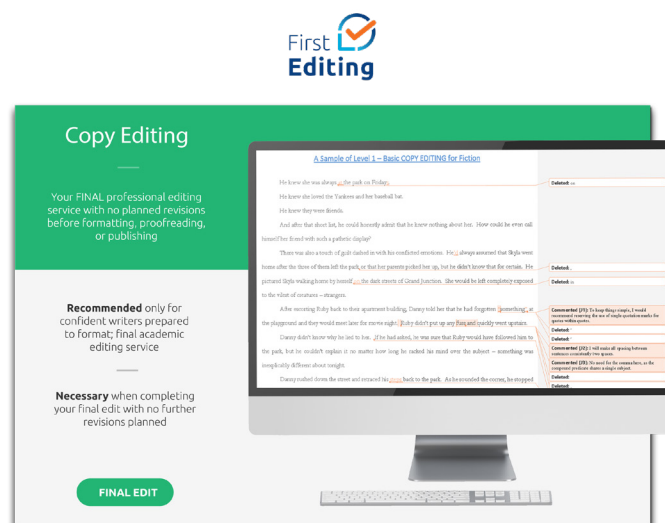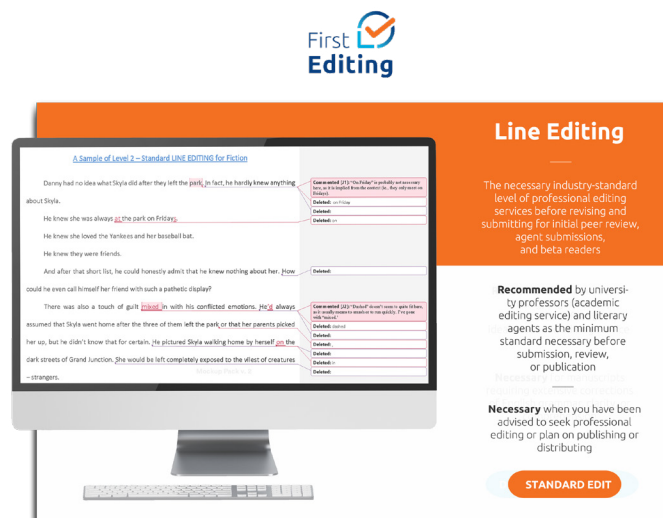
► SUMMARY

We hope that after reading this book, you find the editing process less daunting. Each of these three phases is equally as important if you want a tight, compelling manuscript at the end.

STORY EDITING

Remember, Story Editing is about helping your reader on their journey. It's the primary structural review of your manuscript and the story you are telling.

Story Editing looks at the plot to make sure that your key events are in the right sequence to move your story along. It looks at your setting to make sure that your reader can imagine the world you've created. It helps you develop believable characters that will evoke strong emotion in your reader.

If you are writing nonfiction, you story needs Content Editing. It's about making sure that your writing style, statements, references, and presentation consistently support your message and its proposal, focus, and intent.

This phase is all about telling a powerful story.

COPY EDITING

Copy Editing is about correcting and improving the technical elements of your writing: word choice, sentence structure, grammar and punctuation. It goes beyond just grammar to include checking for clarity, repetitiveness, crutches, vague words or over-complicated structures.

Taking the time to evaluate every sentence to see if you have said it in the most effective way, is worth it. It's too easy for your ideas to get lost behind unclear writing.

A good copy edit is about finding the best possible words and constructions to paint the clearest, most compelling picture for your reader.

PROFESSIONAL EDITING

Once you have taken your self-edit as far as possible and you feel like your manuscript is ready to be published, *then* it's time to bring in a professional editor. We cannot overemphasize the value of a new, fresh set of eyes.

Regardless of what level of editing you need, having an experienced professional on your team is essential. A professional Story Editor helps you evaluate the content and structure of your story while developing a strong story arc. A Line Editor works through the mechanics of each paragraph and line to ensure that it is grammatically and cohesive. Lastly, a professional Copy Editor will give you the final edit and confidence that you are ready to share your document publicly and pursue publishing.

You will get more value out of your professional editor if you have put the time and effort into self-editing. If your editor spends their time fixing basic errors, then they will never be able to go deep. Thus, it is best to use as many tools as possible before hiring your professional editor.

Thank you!

The three of us, Kristina, Lisa, and JoEllen thank you for exploring editing with us. We sincerely hope it helps you through Your Editing Journey and helps you tell powerful stories.

We've put together a very special bundle for you:

1 year of **Fictionary** ($200)
———————————
2 years of **ProWritingAid** ($100)
———————————
Editing Voucher **FirstEditing** ($200)

All for just
$199
(save over $300)

www.prowritingaid.com/editingbundle

Offer ends May 5, 2020

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▶ COPYRIGHT

Your EDITING journey

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MANUSCRIPT SHINE

BY KRISTINA STANLEY, LISA LEPKI & JOELLEN NORDSTROM

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