SELF-EDITING ASSESSMENT

WE WILL COVER:

- **Developmental Editing**
- **Line Editing**
- **Copyediting**

How to Use

Use the scoring system to determine which levels of editing you can complete yourself versus where you should hire a professional.

This quiz will only be helpful if you are honest in your personal assessment. While it is by no means scientific, writers should consider their results when deciding to pursue professional editing or not.

RATE YOURSELF USING THIS SCALE FOR EACH STATEMENT:

(0) I'd Only Be Faking It

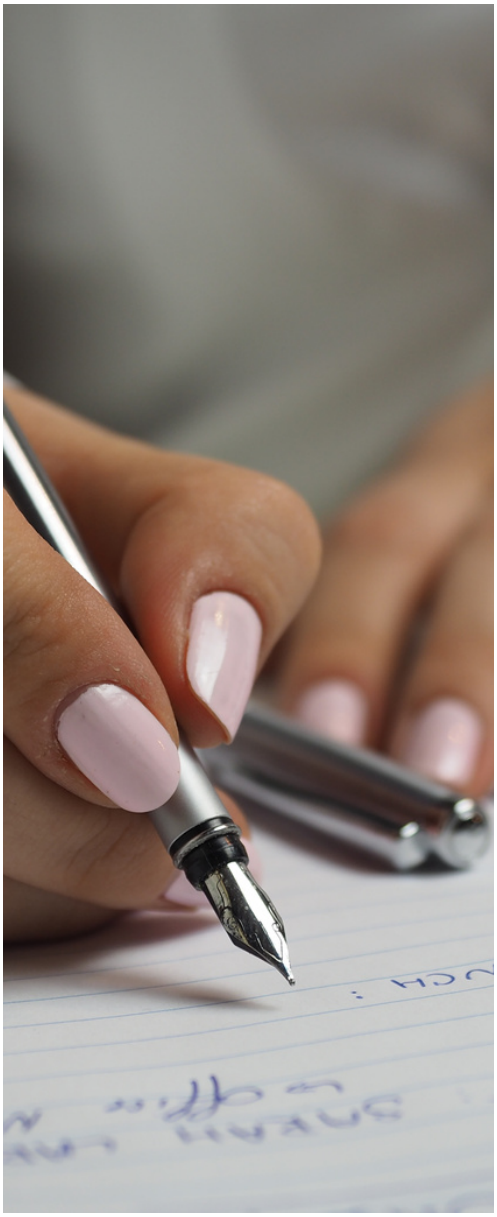
(1) Probably Poorly

(2) I Could Try to Get By

(3) I'm Decent at That

(4) I Can Definitely Do That

(5) I'm an Expert



Developmental Editing

1. I can look at the big picture of a novel's plot and see where there are "plot holes" or gaps in continuity. _____
2. I easily spot errors in consistency, such as with character names or traits. _____
3. I can plot a novel using a traditional method such as the three-act structure or Hero's Journey. _____
4. I understand character arcs and can see where and how each character grows and whether that is "within character." _____
5. I know the expected plot points, voice or POV, tropes, and details expected of my genre. _____
6. I hold big-picture details in my head as I read, and I follow a story well. _____
7. I can divide my work into chapters or sections, and I understand where the natural breaks for readers are. _____
8. I can identify nagging issues or things that just don't sit right about my story. _____
9. I understand narrative techniques, themes, and thematic elements and can apply them to my writing. _____
10. I can evaluate front and end matter (such as prologues, introductions, and epilogues) for their consistency with the rest of the work. _____

Total Score:

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Line Editing

1. I notice repetition and can vary the pattern of my sentences within the paragraph or section. _____
2. I can hear the "flow" of each sentence and modify sticky sentences until they roll off the tongue. _____
3. I can recognize POV and tense and correct slips such as head hopping or accidental tense shifts. _____
4. I can tell when the tone or pacing of a scene does not match the action or mood I intended. _____
5. I catch inconsistencies in character dialogue style and can choose better words to match their personality and keep them in character. _____
6. I can discern when I need more dialogue, action, or exposition. _____
7. I easily spot gripping writing and can identify where the text needs something more. _____
8. I am aware of biased and offensive language and stereotypes and can remove these as necessary/desired from my writing. _____
9. I can connect sentence structure to plot action, such as recognizing when a character starts an action they never complete. _____
10. I know my crutch words and can "kill my darlings" when it comes to unnecessary phrases. _____

Total Score:

Copyediting

RATE YOURSELF USING THIS SCALE FOR EACH STATEMENT:

(0) I'd Only Be Faking It

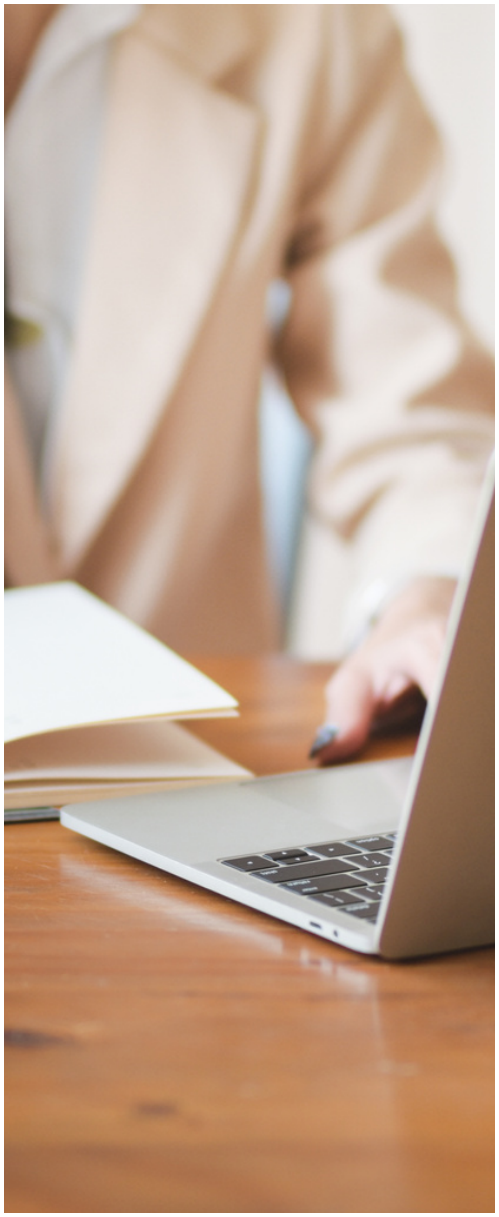
(1) Probably Poorly

(2) I Could Try to Get By

(3) I'm Decent at That

(4) I Can Definitely Do That

(5) I'm an Expert



1. I know where the commas go. _____
2. I am well versed in grammatical sentence structures and know how to change structure without changing meaning. _____
3. I use good judgment when it comes to punctuation so that sentences flow and paragraphs make sense together. _____
4. I can spot passive voice and determine when it is appropriate and when I need to change it. _____
5. I can use references such as style guides and dictionaries to ensure my grammar and spelling choices align with expected norms. _____
6. I catch formatting and punctuation errors such as weird fonts, double spaces, or hyphens where I needed an em dash. _____
7. I can discern when things "don't look right" and know how to look them up for verification. _____
8. I can distinguish between a grammar rule that has to be followed and a guideline that can be ignored for the sake of style. _____
9. I often cut down sentences in ways that retain clarity while enhancing conciseness. _____
10. I put in the due diligence to check facts, dates, place names, and other minor details. _____

Total Score:

SCORING

DOUBLE YOUR 0-50 SCORE
FOR EACH SECTION

Developmental Editing
Score x 2: _____

0-65
Hire a professional

66-80
Consider a manuscript evaluation to get you started

81-100
You're probably good to do this on your own

Line Editing
Score x 2: _____

0-50
Hire a professional

51-70
Study a bit more before attempting

71-100
You'll be fine to do these edits

Copyediting
Score x 2: _____

0-75
Hire a professional

76-85
Take a copyediting course before attempting this

86-100
You're going to get most of this right

What Next?

Whether you need self-editing instruction or professional copyediting done for you, email a sample to **Jeanette@Jeanettethewriter.com** and let's discuss!

ABOUT THE QUIZ

Why an assessment?

This assessment was designed to help writers identify their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to the necessary steps of editing so they can determine when and where to spend their editing dollars.

Who are you?

Jeanette is a freelance writer and editor based in Dallas, Texas. Since 2017, she has been helping writers enhance their works through self-editing and her professional editing services.

Scoring

The scoring was arranged according to the following logic.

Developmental: This layer of editing requires imagination and structure. Whether you're stuck for plot ideas, unsure what a character arc is, or don't know how to structure the book, a score lower than 80 means you should likely hire a professional to help.

Line: This layer of editing requires craft knowledge, creativity, and voice. Because many of the choices made during line editing are a matter of style (not rules), a score lower than 50 is better suited to seeking help.

Copy: This layer of editing involves technical knowledge and good judgment. Because of its technical nature, a score lower than 75 should find an editor to complete this step or gain more knowledge before attempting.