



Angela James' Advice on Freelance Editors

Carina Press editor Angela James shared her advice and insights on hiring a freelance editor, including things to prepare for (costs and research), things to ask (which can also apply to beta readers), and the differences between types of editors.

by  Jami Gold · 4 years ago · 1 Like · 443 Views ▾

For example, developmental editors look for opportunities for improvement in:

- story and character arcs (and if applicable, the romance arc)
- plot events and turning points
- conflicts, stakes, and tension
- pacing and information dumps
- characterization and likeability
- goals and motivations
- story and character themes
- general writing issues, like showing versus telling and point-of-view usage

(Copied from jamigold.com/for-writers/ed...)

In contrast, copy editors look for grammar and mechanics, spelling, etc.




Angela James
@angelajames

Things freelance editor you hire should know: Difference between a developmental edit, line edit, copy edit, proofread. 4 different stages

9:55 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♥ 10 💬 17 people are talking about this



Angela James
@angelajames

The person who does the content and line edits should not be the same person to copy edit. They'll miss their own errors.

[@ilona_andrews](#)

9:58 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♥ 5 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




Angela James
@angelajames

Also, in my (not so uneducated opinion) people are good content editors or they're good copy editors. Very difficult to be excellent at both

9:59 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♥ 6 💬 18 people are talking about this



Angela James
@angelajames

The reason is because it takes different type of thinking to do the different content vs copy editing. Different skill sets.

10:00 AM - Jan 4, 2014

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**Angela James**

@angelajames



I also say pedantic (in a nice way ;p) RT [@ArianeArborene](#): You are totally correct! Copy editing is completely separate--more scientific.

10:04 AM - Jan 4, 2014

2 See Angela James's other Tweets

**Kate Johnson**

@K&JohnsonAuthor

Replying to [@angelajames](#)

[@angelajames](#) absolutely. I had an editor once who was clearly a trained copy editor, but doing content edits. Didn't work out well.

10:19 AM - Jan 4, 2014

See Kate Johnson's other Tweets

**Cyndy Aleo**

@cyndyaleo

Replying to [@mostlybree](#)

[@mostlybree](#) but yes... and I'll be honest... if you can't spout verb declensions in your sleep? I don't trust you as a copy ed [@angelajames](#)

10:22 AM - Jan 4, 2014

See Cyndy Aleo's other Tweets

**Linda S**

@WritePaintDraw

Replying to [@angelajames](#)


[@angelajames](#) It's great to specialize if you can, but many clients cut costs. I wish clients would pay for all the roles! Thx for educating.

10:26 AM - Jan 4, 2014

See Linda S's other Tweets



She also discusses how it's hard for authors to recognize a good editor:





Angela James
@angelajames

I think it's hard for new authors especially to hire freelancers, because if it's not your skill set, how do you know they're missing things

10:05 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 2 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




Angela James
@angelajames

If you hire an editor, you should lay out your expectations up front. How many rounds of edits are you expecting? Things you don't want?

10:07 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 3 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets





Angela James
@angelajames

Have clear (reasonable) deadline expectations, ask them to use track changes, ask them if there are extra charges. Don't be shy!

10:08 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 4 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




Angela James
@angelajames


Also, though some editors charge less to build a reputation, you shouldn't expect to pay little for a truly skilled editor

10:10 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 4 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




So that brought up the question of *how* to recognize a good editor:

 **Blacksheep20**
@Mat_Cauthon07

Replying to @angelajames

[@angelajames](#) But how does a new author know if they're hiring someone worthwhile? That's where professional agent can be very useful.

10:11 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 2  See Blacksheep20's other Tweets

 **Angela James**
@angelajames

Here are some things to ask/do when [#hiringeditor](#): How much experience do they have & where did they get that experience?

10:14 AM - Jan 4, 2014

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 **Angela James**
@angelajames

[#hiringeditor](#): Do they have a list of books they've edited? Look up books on Goodreads & Amazon, do reviews mention editing errors?

10:15 AM - Jan 4, 2014



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 **Angela James**
@angelajames

[#hiringeditor](#): does editor have firm stance on certain writing "rules"? ie: cld be warning flag if they're going to change all POV switches.




10:16 AM - Jan 4, 2014



♡ 4  See Angela James's other Tweets

 **Angela James**
@angelajames 

#hiringeditor: ask their definition of whatever form of editing you're hiring them for (content, line, copy, proofing)




10:17 AM - Jan 4, 2014



 4  See Angela James's other Tweets 

 **Angela James**
@angelajames 

#hiringeditor: do they use track changes & comments? What types of things will they change in line vs what types will they comment?




10:17 AM - Jan 4, 2014



 3  See Angela James's other Tweets 

 **Angela James**
@angelajames 

#hiringeditor: How much do they charge? I am very hesitant to rec anyone who charges by the hour. Hard for you to monitor their speed.




10:19 AM - Jan 4, 2014


 3  See Angela James's other Tweets 

 **Angela James**
@angelajames 

#hiringeditor how many rounds will they do? Will they write an editorial letter or will all edits be in the manuscript?

10:19 AM - Jan 4, 2014

 4  See Angela James's other Tweets 




Angela James
@angelajames

#hiringeditor how many passes will they take through your book (minimum should be two). Will they go through it after you've applied edits?

10:23 AM - Jan 4, 2014

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Angela James
@angelajames

#hiringeditor: finding out about their favorite reading authors/genres can also give you an idea if someone will be hate-editing your book

10:23 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 4 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




Angela James
@angelajames

#hiringeditor: hate editing is when someone edits your book for money, but doesn't enjoy it. This can result in less thorough edits.

10:24 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 3 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets




Angela James
@angelajames

#hiringeditor: always ask for edits of sample pages. You shouldn't expect more than 15 though. But shld get more than 3 pages.

10:26 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♡ 4 👤 See Angela James's other Tweets






Angela James
@angelajames

Replying to @OnlyCassandra

.@OnlyCassandra the problem w/sample edits is that if authors don't have editorial skills, they don't know if your sample edits are good!

10:12 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♥ 1  See Angela James's other Tweets 





Angela James
@angelajames

Replying to @OnlyCassandra

.@OnlyCassandra difficult for an author to know if your punctuation/grammar changes are correct or if you missed a lot of things.

10:13 AM - Jan 4, 2014

♥  See Angela James's other Tweets 



Angela James
@angelajames

Replying to @OnlyCassandra

@OnlyCassandra example: Saw a freelance CE that inserted en dash instead of em dash & also inserted a space. Author had no idea was wrong

10:21 AM - Jan 4, 2014

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More advice from others in Angela James's timeline:

 **Cyndy Aleo** 
@cyndyaleo

[@mostlybree](#) [@angelajames](#) Other things I'd add are to find out how many the editor does in a time frame.

10:28 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Cyndy Aleo's other Tweets 

 **Cyndy Aleo** 
@cyndyaleo

Replying to [@mostlybree](#)

[@mostlybree](#) [@angelajames](#) I've seen MSs come to me with rushed edits because the editor doesn't take any time with them.

10:28 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Cyndy Aleo's other Tweets 

 **Filth and Efexor** 
@FilthAndEfexor

Replying to [@angelajames](#)

[@angelajames](#) I also ask them to come forward with any suggestions they might have once they've completed the project. (1/2)

10:16 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Filth and Efexor's other Tweets 

 **Isobel Carr** 
@IsobelCarr

Replying to [@angelajames](#)

[@angelajames](#) I think this is why rec's from other authors & client lists are super helpful.

10:29 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Isobel Carr's other Tweets 


 **Cyndy Aleo** 
@cyndyaleo

Replying to @angelajames

[@angelajames](#) I'd also add in that I don't think any content editor can say they do all genres. I know my strengths. And what I won't touch.

10:32 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Cyndy Aleo's other Tweets 

 **Angela James** 
@angelajames

Replying to @cyndyaleo

.[@cyndyaleo](#) great point that content editors aren't good at all genres. Example: mystery isn't a strength of mine.

10:35 AM - Jan 4, 2014

 1  See Angela James's other Tweets 



 **Ann Marie Gamble** 
@amgamble

Replying to @cyndyaleo

[@cyndyaleo](#) [@angelajames](#) And that can just be knowledge base--I can't tell you about cliches, general tropes, etc. in an unfamiliar genre.

10:37 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Ann Marie Gamble's other Tweets 




 **Cyndy Aleo** 
@cyndyaleo

Replying to @amgamble

[@amgamble](#) That's definitely a factor. You need to be able to see that an author can spin a trope instead of sit on it.

[@angelajames](#)

10:38 AM - Jan 4, 2014

  See Cyndy Aleo's other Tweets 

Angela James shared great advice and I hope others find it helpful! :)

Jami

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Jami Gold, Paranormal Author & Developmental Editor

<http://jamigold.com>

