



Maria Kuzmiak Writing & Editing Services

Let's tell your story!

What Is Copy (or Line) Editing?

First, a word about what copy editing **is not**. Copy editing is not rewriting. Clients sometimes ask me to edit a piece, but they really want a rewrite or revision. As an editor, I do not change the author's style or tone, even if I would write the piece differently. If you want me to rewrite your copy, let me know. I provide that service as well.

So, what **is** copy editing?

Copy editors (or line editors) go through a manuscript line by line to address issues of **spelling, grammar, punctuation, style, flow, and content**. This is done on one of three levels.

LIGHT EDITING

In this case, the content is finished and the manuscript is almost ready for publishing. It needs one more look, during which I will focus on:

- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Capitalization
- Numbers
- Lists of items
- Table of contents

With a light edit, I will have few or no questions about content or style. I *will* point out significant inconsistencies or obvious factual errors (formal fact checking is a separate service), but these are rare at the light editing stage.

MEDIUM EDITING

Here, I will do everything I do for a light edit as well as address format, content, and style. This typically involves reading the manuscript at least twice. I'll be sure titles, headings, subheadings, lists, and tables are formatted consistently. I will also address logic, clarity, and word usage. I will ask the following questions as I read and either edit the copy or comment/query you so you can make changes yourself:

- Logic and clarity: Is the content logical, clear, and coherent?
- Word usage: Are the right words used? Are clichés and hyperbole overused? Does the text create a clear picture for the reader?

SUBSTANTIVE EDITING

This level of editing may also be called *line* or *content* editing. Editing at this stage requires several passes because it isn't possible to address everything during the first round of editing.

I'll first address:

- Redundancies
- Wordiness
- Vagueness
- Weak or awkward sentence structure
- Organizational issues
- Lack of focus

The second, and sometimes third time I read the manuscript, I'll focus on the tasks of medium and light edits as described on the previous page.

I will not rewrite large parts of your copy unless you ask me to do so. At first, I will comment and ask questions so you can revise the copy and send it back to me for another round of editing. Once you're comfortable working with me—that is, once you're confident I understand your work and can match your writing style—you may decide to let me do the revisions.