



DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING: WHAT IS IT?

An excellent developmental editor works collaboratively with a writer or author, thoughtfully evaluating and advising on issues in the planning and execution of their manuscripts, including examination of such issues as structure/organization, form/style, plot/plotlines, and character/character development, and much more. Because of this focus on both broad and deep critical story elements, complex developmental editing normally won't address sentence-level errors such as punctuation and/or grammar or typos. That particular type of basic, although also important, editing is called line-by-line editing, or copy-editing. That comes later in the process. While developmental editing can be accomplished once there is a draft of a manuscript, or a full piece of writing - for best results, developmental editing occurs first as the project is beginning, and also during the writing. Otherwise, much time can be wasted back-tracking, re-writing, re-conceptualizing the directions and depth of the piece or the book.

A strong developmental editor will consider the potential target audiences, and advise the writer according to those potential audiences on the themes and directions to consider. Accordingly, a skilled developmental editor assesses your work in relation to industry standards, and expectations based on genre, or cross-genres. Cross-genres are known to potentially generate higher sales for a book or a blog. Later, once your manuscript has been revised, reshaped, and developed, it will be ready to be thoroughly copy edited for more basic errors - and for a proofreader to go over the manuscript line-by-line to find any remaining grammatical, punctuation, word choice errors, obvious omissions, or awkwardness.

The challenge becomes - where do you find a developmental editor with the depth of experience and the right personality for collaboration to work with you to take your story to its highest potential?

This is where *OdysseyIndigo* can make that crucial difference, no matter where you fall on the talent spectrum as a writer. At *OdysseyIndigo*, Kate is not just your editor, but if you need coaching, she is an experienced writing coach, and also a mentor. She is a genuine writer as well as a fine developmental editor and a committed writing coach.

Some Key Elements of Developmental Editing:

- Original ideation
- The story arc of the piece/essay or book project – the structure
- Organization / Presentation
- Frameworks/Tension/Building Suspense or Excitement or Intellectual depth in a Narrative
- Development of narrative voice/P.O.V./Potential innovative narrative devices
- Relationships between characters
- Relationships between/order of chapters [organization]
- Titles [working & final]
- Topics covered – where depth is needed/themes missed/how certain themes inter-relate/corelated
- Where development could add substantive or particular meanings/depth of field
- Where knowledge should/could be gained [research]/detail
- How best to gain perspective/distance
- Where to sharpen/tighten
- Lessons on concision/clarity/cohesion
- Greater perspective generated on your project and its full potential

The above is not necessarily a comprehensive list.

The essential characteristics in a substantive and skilled developmental editor is their ability to understand the publishing market; what is valuable in that market; what skills as a writer you have which can be further developed or strengthened; and their commitment and skill in developing also an authentic editor-client relationship that is professional, and that possesses a full understanding of your project goals – as well as the potential goals. If the ultimate project goal is usually to create a well-written, innovatively structured writing project that reaches with depth and insight into the subject[s], touching or moving most readers in significant ways – this outcome is more likely to push the needle on sales/positive outcomes. Quality text usually almost always means greater sales or greater popularity with readers. The relationship developed between editor and client is essential to the foundation of trust involved in together working on a quest to write something meaningful, and therefore valuable. This is where a fine developmental editor with exceptional talent becomes a strong writing coach when a relationship of integrity is established.

This is the editorial value you will find with *OdyssseyIndigo*: we have the talent, skill, experience, and motivational abilities to collaboratively create texts that have outstanding potential because of the work accomplished in developmental editing/writing coaching. Great books or texts are never accidents.