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## Who we are

A.K. and Maeghan are both writers and independent editors with several books published. We also work with NaNoWriMo and can be seen hosting write-ins and events across Fairfax County.

A.K. is originally from the Pacific Northwest but has been in the DC area for over 20 years. She has been participating in NaNoWriMo events since 2007 and has been a Northern Virginia region co-Municipal Liaison for several years. She has four independently published novels under the name A.K. Child and is a professional editor.

Maeghan, currently residing in Sterling, VA, is a lifelong Virginian, with 4 books published under her name and 4 under a pen name. Her most recent publication is Incident Zero, a dystopian fantasy, which can be purchased from your favorite online retailer.

Marguerite grew up traveling all over the place but settled down in Maryland. She writes Gay Romance mixed in with Paranormal, Sci-Fi, Horror. While she doesn't offer editing services, she's a great resource for up-and-coming writers.

# Editing: The Basics



**Maeghan Jo Kimball  
A.K. Child &  
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<https://www.feralwritersclub.net>

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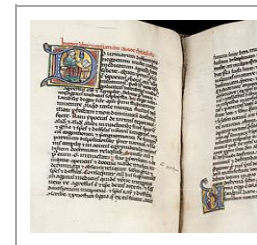
# What are the End Goals?

## Beta Readers/Developmental Editor



Is this next step the right one for you? Could be. Could also be peer revision? It's time to think about what is your end goal for this manuscript. Depending on what you want, it could go to Beta Readers. Could go to a Developmental Editor. Or even a Copy Editor.

## Shopping/Selling the Manuscript



Is it time to look for an agent? Or start sending query letters? If you have gone through beta readers/peer review/developmental editing, it's time to talk about shopping and possibly selling your manuscript.

## Self-Publish/Traditional Publish



The ultimate question. Should you pursue a traditional publishing contract? Or should you self-publish the manuscript? And how does one do that?

Only you can decide which way to go. Base your decision on how you feel about your story and your manuscript.

# Things to Remember

Set a timer. Editing can be overwhelming. Only work for an hour or half hour at a time. Stand up. Take a walk. Then sit back down.

Don't be afraid to rewrite an entire scene. We do this a lot. Sometimes we get something better. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes we combine revisions.

Don't be afraid to read out loud. Hearing it helps.

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*Every morning, we choose between milk or tea or coffee. Usually, I know what I like, but I don't rule out changing my idea sometimes. The editing process is one of the most important parts in everyday life. The same with my work: mistakes are a part of the decision-making process. –Maurizio Cattelan*

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## Getting Eyes on Your Manuscript

So now you have to decide, am I ready for the world to read this? If the answer is yes, then move on to beta readers. It's always a good idea to get other eyes on your manuscript before you prepare to publish. The best eyes are fellow writers who have experience with critiquing and publishing.

# Overview of Editing

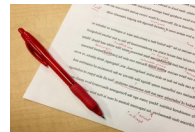
## Step 1



Once you have finished a manuscript, put it down for at least 30 days. Once that is over, it's time to read it. Just read it.

This is where you can build an “outline,” if you don't already have one, or revise it if you do. Create a summary of each chapter and scene as you read. You can also keep a running list of notes, including what you like, don't like, what is confusing, or needs more/fewer details.

## Step 2



This is where it starts getting hard. Use your favorite grammar/text editor: Grammarly, Pro-Writing Aid, etc. You don't have to agree with it all the time, and we suggest you don't, but look at it from an outside perspective. You can even turn off some suggestions, based on your writing style.

## Step 3



Using your notes and the corrections, start identifying what needs to be fixed. Decide what scenes to add, to delete. What needs fleshing out. Look at every sentence and every word. Does it say/convey what you want it to convey?

# Getting Started

## The Daunting Beginning

So you've put your manuscript down for 30 days, right? Right?

We're serious, you better take this step. Now you are ready to edit.

Make a clean copy of your manuscript. If you will have issues not correcting things on the computer, print it out. Once again, I am very serious about this. Okay? All right, let's go.

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*"I've found the best way to revise your own work is to pretend that somebody else wrote it and then to rip the living shit out of it." –Don Ruff*

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## Red Pen

So our first step is to read what we wrote, with as much detachment as possible. Printing out the manuscript can help you stay on task and see things from a different perspective. Use a colored pen; red, purple, green, whatever makes you happy. The color should make notes easy to see.

While reading, start a summary, or outline, of what is on the page. Not what you intended, but what is on the page. This will help identify what is incorrect, what needs to be added, and what needs to be deleted.

Try not to make specific notes. Big notes, happy faces, perfect, but you are not correcting sentences/words/grammar at this point.

Once you finish the read, how do you feel about it? Do you like it? Why? Do you hate it? Why? Looking at your outline, do you see the story you wanted to write? If not, how do you fix it? Once you have a plan, it's time for the text part.

## Grammar Editing/Sentence Level Revisions

If you're doing this on the computer, it's time to make some decisions. Turn on your track changes. If you're doing this on paper, you don't have to. Now decide on your favorite grammar program. Grammarly, Pro-Writing Aid, etc. Many word processors are already plug-in ready. Turn it on and let's go.

Now it's going to return a lot of things for you to look at. Don't get overwhelmed. Set a timer and work through each suggestion. Some will be easy, some won't. Some will require a later response, and some you will turn off. This is where it is helpful to know your genre and audience. This is also where a lot of people get bogged down. Take it easy on yourself, but be objective. I know, I know, it's hard.

## The Fun Part of Editing. Yes, the Fun Part.

By this time, you should know where your story falls apart. Especially if you look at the outline you made earlier. Now is when we start fixing the story. Write those scenes you're missing. Add to scenes where necessary. Move other scenes. Make a mess and then fix it. Your manuscript may have a million little comments and suggestions to work through. Write the scenes, or even rewrite them if necessary. This should feel like fun, I swear.

## Repeat

Go back to step one. Rinse and Repeat. Though, try to limit this to 3 or 4 times. At some point, it's time to get someone else's eyes on it.