

## **Saving Money on Editing Services**

### **1. Don't send your first draft (or second or third)**

Wait until you feel you can do no more with your story beyond changing that comma to a full stop and back again. It's at that moment, when you feel you're ready to self-publish your manuscript or send it to an agent, when you should, in fact, send your manuscript to a professional editor.

Unless you've been through a revision process with a story consultant or writing coach, then your first contact with an editor will be for substantive editing where you'll get help with plot, structure, character development and flow. If these story elements aren't already well established, you'll be paying for the editor to help you rewrite.

### **2. Reduce your word count**

This is particularly important when dealing with editors who charge per word. But generally, more words mean more work, so you'll still win with editors who charge per hour.

Here's one editing trick that can get rid of whole chapters: cut the backstory. Backstory is anything that happened before your main story started. You're most likely to find it in the first pieces you wrote, those that have survived every redraft. That's because you, the author, needs to know these specific incidents to understand the characters. That's why you think they're so important. In truth, the reader doesn't need quite so much information and you've probably included the same details in a shorter and more subtle form elsewhere in the text.

### **3. Go for quality**

There's more to finding an editor than looking around for the cheapest. You've worked long hours on your story, and there's a lot of personal investment in every word. You need someone to handle that manuscript, and you, with care. And you want them to get it right first time.

Look for editors that suit your maximum budget and ask them for a sample edit. I've found that the first 1,000 words (about four pages) is enough for author and editor to make a good assessment of the other's work.

### **4. Negotiate**

Editors and authors clearly have something to offer the other. And authors can make use of what they have when trying to cut the cost of a professional editor.

For example, if you have a strong social media following you could promote the editor's services through your networks (as long as you think they're worth promoting.) You could agree to give the editor a mention in the acknowledgements when the book is published or write a testimonial for their website. An honest one, of course.

Or maybe you have other skills that would be valuable to an editor. You could offer advice to help them build their own social network, improve their website or marketing strategy. Think creatively!

### **5. Write a masterpiece**

A good editor will be able to spot potential, and those sample pages are usually enough to judge if your manuscript is significantly better than average. At that point, don't be surprised if the editor comes back to you to offer a discount. This is another reason why you shouldn't send an early draft, and only contact an editor when you've given your manuscript your very best work. That's when you're in the best position to bargain.