

Submitting a final first draft manuscript to an editor...

Let's say you have a super book, a novel or a dandy nonfiction winner, that you have shopped to a publisher—and to your horror they said “yes, get it in final form and send it to us.”

Or you have a book in final first draft form and you are having a firm prep the edition that you [or they] will publish.

In both cases, what do you do next?

I'm a niche [publisher](#) (and first-draft editor) and I'm often (including right now!) on the recipient side of this exchange (for nonfiction). To make this process as fast, amicable, and smooth as possible, here are some tips. They are what I tell/ask the writer to do—so we can all get to the pay line quicker!

1. I've already read all of your correspondence with our staff and I've seen all the writing you submitted, plus any advice or direction your particular editor sent to you, so please follow the suggestions you were sent. I will assume that will be the case unless you tell me otherwise.

2. We will exchange text in Word (though we will convert it to other software to print). So please send your work in .doc or .docx and also do all of your formatting in Word. Don't convert to .pdf. Send your submissions to me as attachments, please. That will be chapters, the full book, or specific segments you are working on. Please use Times New Roman 12-point for all text, including titles, headings, or sub-heads. Indent every paragraph two marks (we will adjust that later).

If you are using em dashes, no space before or after the em dashes. I will do the final layout after I have all of the first-draft text and artwork.

3. I am sending you a sample code list of how we want every mailing titled, so we can keep track as we go along. I will respond using the same title you send me.

4. Please insert a page number bottom center on every page beginning with the table of contents. The numbers should be consecutive. No headers or footers, and simply put "Chapter __" and its title below, then begin the copy in that chapter. Do not insert any artwork (charts, photos, anything) in the running text. Rather, insert a short description (like *** CHART ABOUT TEMPERATURE IN TIBET ***) about where it would most likely be in the book, with a space before and after the description. Continue with the book text.

5. I will send instructions soon about all artwork and photography. Focus now on submitting the text in final first-draft form.

6. Please submit your copy to me at the address above. While we are creating the final copy, if you wish to speak with other staff members during the time we are working together, email them directly and cc: me a copy. They will do the same with their response so I know what is happening as it's happening.

7. Your copy to me will be clean (no tracking) and will be in page order. If there is missing text, write all of the copy that will appear in the book, then insert a missing-text explanation, like *** MISSING COPY CONTAINING ABOUT-TO-BE-RELEASED POLICE REPORT ***.

8. Remember, I am compiling your first draft text, not editing it at this stage (though, if the book is acceptable, it will be returned to you edited, with tracking. You will have an opportunity to make changes then with your content editor.

So your task now is to get your book written and in as final a form as you can make it. Nothing more will be done to/with the book until we see the full text and know what artwork is needed and available.

If you have questions, please email me. (No calls, please, unless you have an emergency.) Ours is a print media (at least at this stage) and it works best for us to see the copy in print form. If what I've written above is understood and acceptable, just drop me an email OK—and get writing! We're all eager to see your final words being sold by the pound. Better, by the ton!