blurb

FINISHING YOUR BOOK: EDITING AND PROOFING

Good proofing makes or breaks your book. When you spend your time and energy on creating something to sell, you want it to read, look, and feel like it came off the shelf in an actual bookstore. Getting that professional look is all about nailing each and every detail—from including conventional auxiliary pages to double-checking text styling to triple checking for errors. After working on a project so long, it's hard to get fresh eyes. Use this checklist to make sure you don't miss anything.

ANATOMY OF A BOOK

Make sure your book includes the following ancillary pages that are found in professionally-published books. It should be noted that all of these specialty pages, except the copyright page, are traditionally on the right, so you skip the left pages.

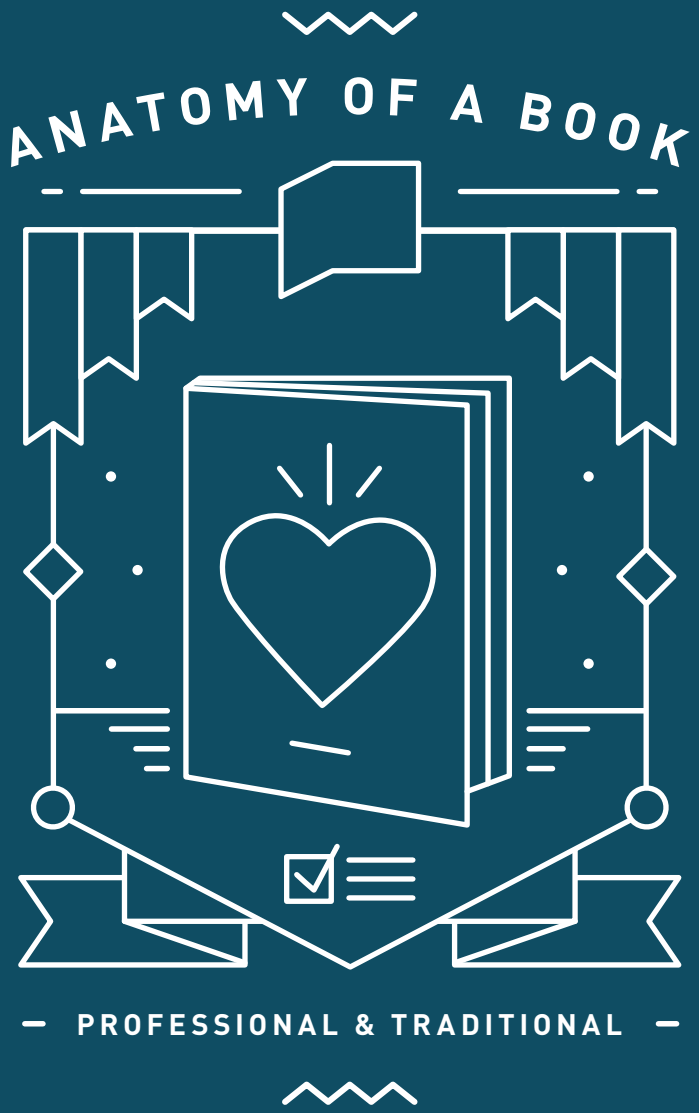
ANCILLARY CHECKLIST

Front Matter

- [ ] Copyright Page. Check the back of the title page in a book like yours and include the same information, such as ©2018 (Your Name), the year of publication of the book, the name of the owner of the works, which is usually the author or publishing house name, Reservation of rights, Copyright notice, book editions, ISBN Number, your website Credits to the book (cover designer, editor), Disclaimer
- [ ] Optional: Also by Author Name. A list of other publications by you, if you have them.
- [ ] Title Page 1 Your title and author name. Centered, and in a large font size. That's it.
- [ ] Dedication
- [ ] Optional: Table of contents

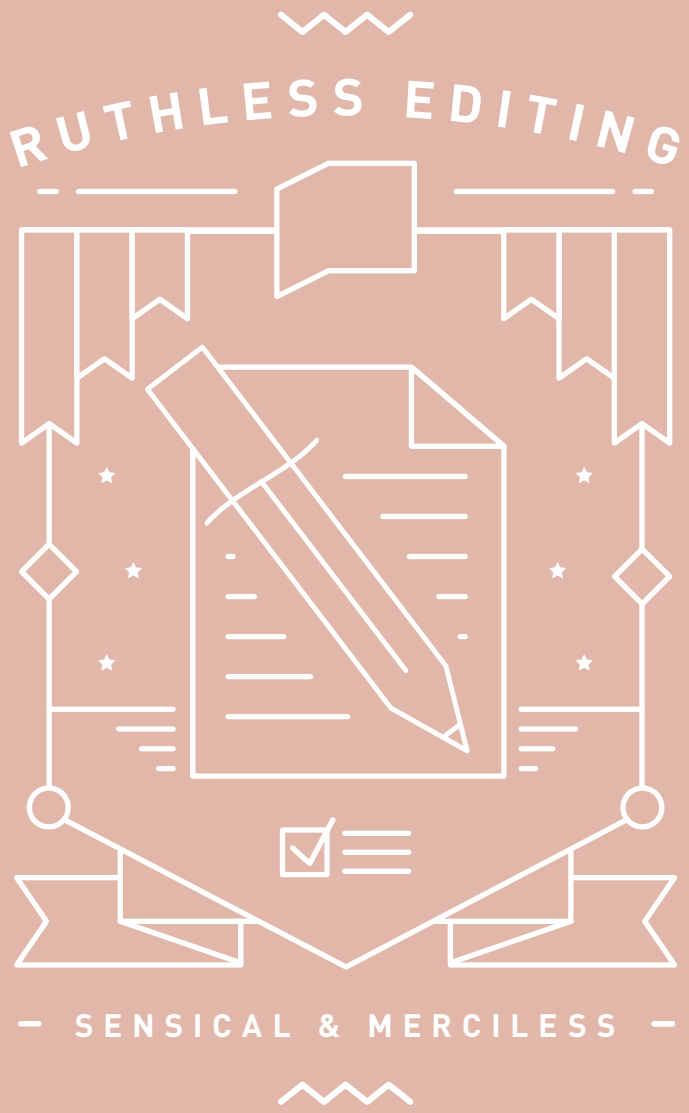
Back Matter

- [ ] Endnotes
- [ ] Acknowledgements
- [ ] Optional: Any discussion questions
- [ ] Optional: Author interview
- [ ] Optional: Advertisements for other titles



RUTHLESS CONTENT EDITING

Most people making a book end up having too much material, instead of having not enough. To make your book the strongest it can be, mercilessly remove anything that isn't absolutely crucial. If you can remove something and your book or story doesn't become confusing or nonsensical, you should.



EDITING CHECKLIST

- [ ] Find your best ten images, then your best overall image. Edit around these.
- [ ] Consider printing small copies of the images you plan to use and laying them out physically. You'll get a different sense of what's important.
- [ ] Beware of images you love too much. If it's a favorite, make sure it really belongs in the book.
- [ ] Check for images that are duplicates—not just identical, but communicate the same idea.
- [ ] Second-guess the necessity of second-best images. You'll be remembered for your worst image.
- [ ] Enlist a friend to help you see relationships between images. Ask their opinion of the best image.

Learn more: 6 Ways to Choose Images for Your Book

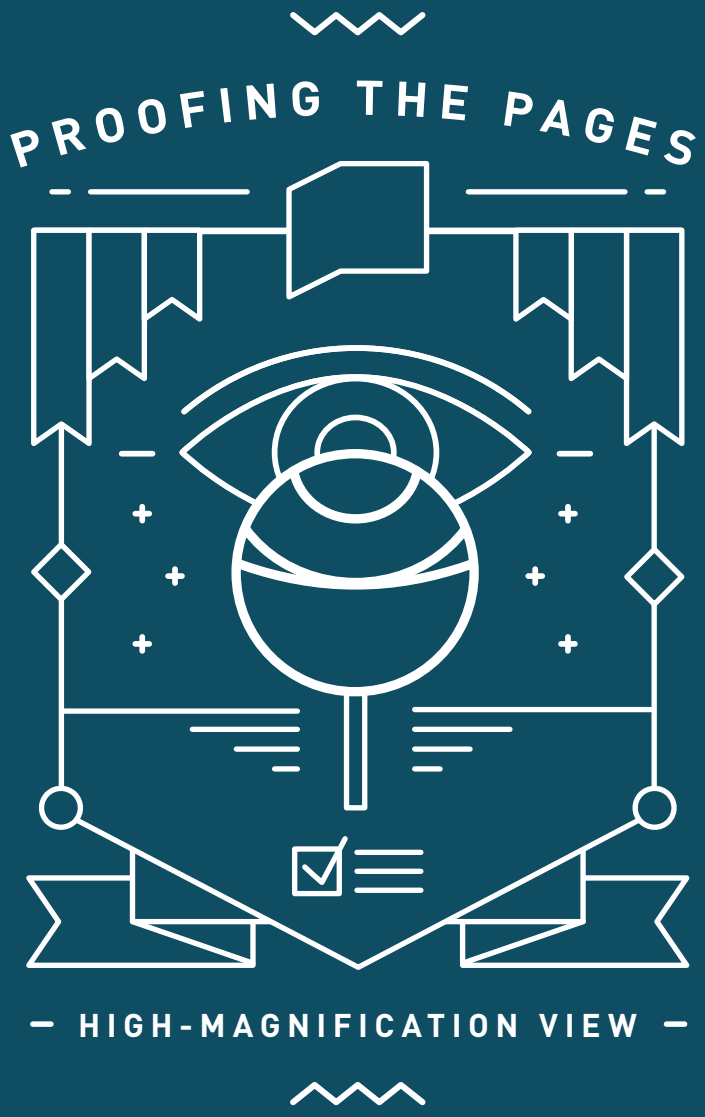
PROOFING EACH PAGE

Read your pages backwards, from right to left to make sure you catch everything. This is best done at a high-magnification view, so catch things you'd miss at a glance. Also consider printing the PDF of your book. So much jumps off the page that can hide on a screen.

PROOFING CHECKLIST

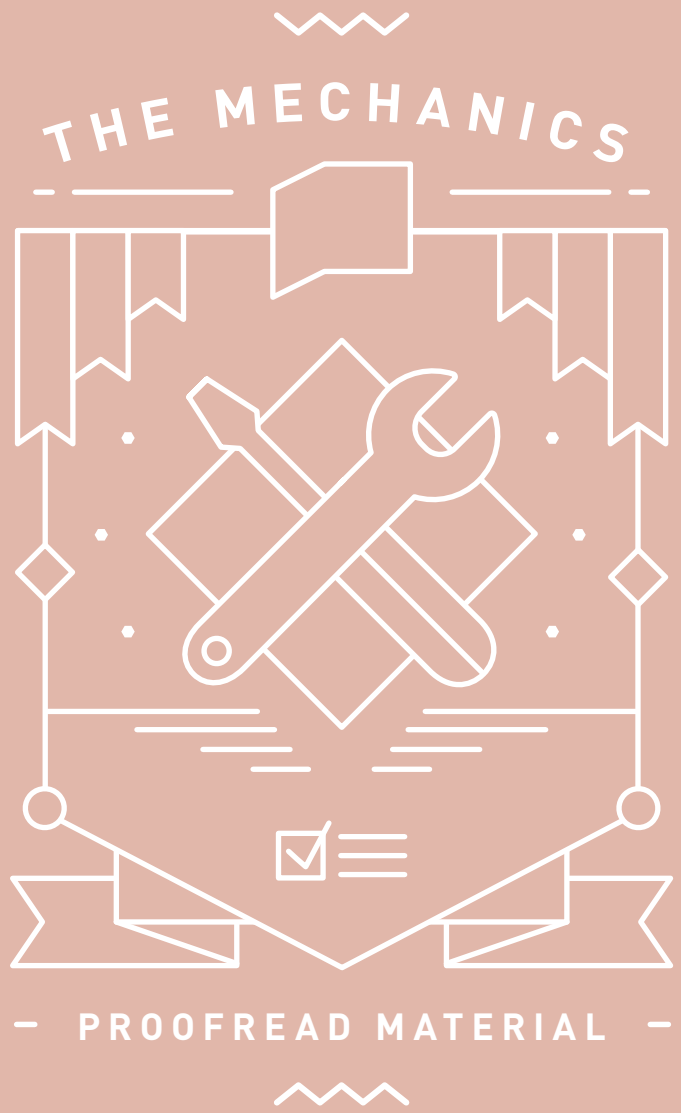
- [ ] Check to make sure all text and image containers are in the trim lines for the page.
- [ ] Check to make sure any image that goes to the bleed line is fully outside each edge of bleed lines.
- [ ] Check each image container, make sure your image placement is as you want it.
- [ ] Check each text container for cut-off words or alignment.
- [ ] Take a couple days off. Go back and do it all again.

Learn more: How (and Why) to Proof Your Book



MECHANICS: GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

Grammar and punctuation can trip up even the most seasoned writer. For some, it's about proofreading. For others, it's about trying to recall material you haven't considered since secondary school. Here are some refreshers.



MECHANICS CHECKLIST

- [ ] Title Case: All nouns, verbs, pronouns and prepositions (over 5 letters) get capitalized.
- [ ] Book titles and other full publications get italicized.
- [ ] Use offset or “block” quotations for any quote that is 5 lines or longer.
- [ ] Watch for run-on sentences. If there are two subjects and two verbs, consider two sentences or a semi-colon. Vary short and long sentence.
- [ ] Read your work backwards, sentence by sentence. This helps you isolate each line and truly check for errors without getting caught up in what you meant.

Learn More: Polish Your Writing Skills

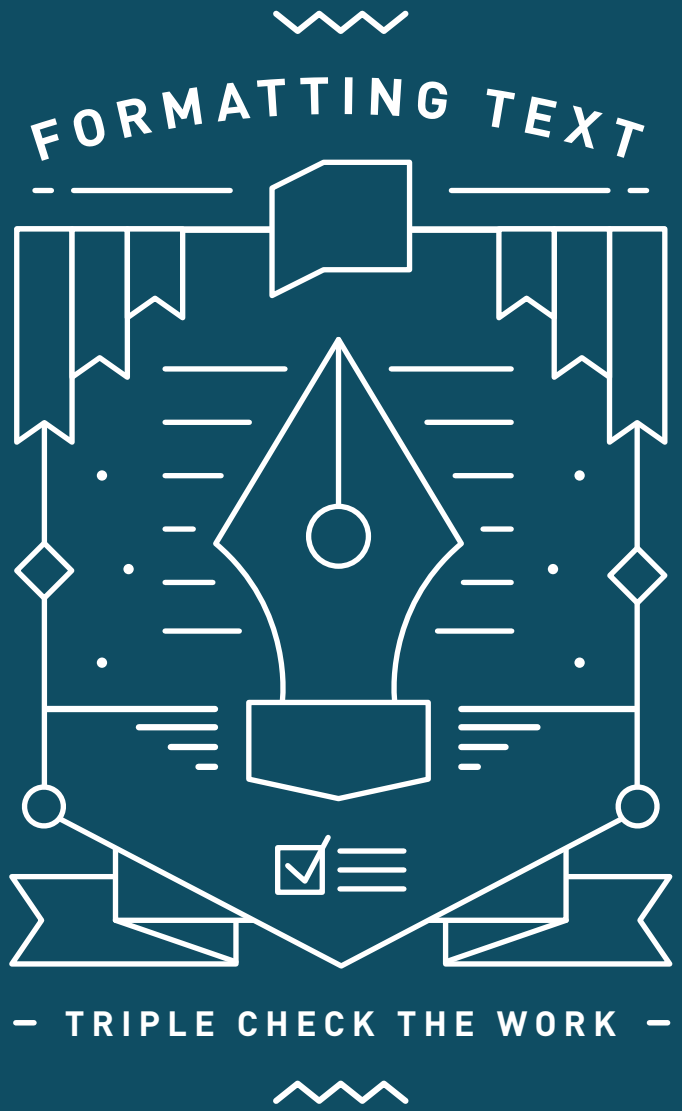
TEXT FORMATTING

This will be your book's biggest amateur giveaway—mismatching text sections or poor formatting. For the pros, getting the formatting perfect is as important as perfecting the content. Honor your work by double and triple checking your formatting for mistakes and oversights.

FORMATTING CHECKLIST

- [ ] Chapter/section treatments. The first page of each chapter or section should mirror the formatting of your title page, or be similar.
- [ ] Page numbers. Front and End Matter don't get page numbers like the rest of your page numbers.
- [ ] Captions and text blocks. Each block of text should match every other kind of text for formatting. Be sure to check each caption for matching capitalization, font, and bold/italic scheme, not to mention correct captions and spelling.
- [ ] Margins and justification: For each page, each text block, check the borders. Is every word visible? Does the justification (right, left, or centered) match for each? Is all of your content safely inside container borders and trim lines?
- [ ] Paragraph format: Ensure all paragraphs are shaped the same way. Did you choose to indent or carriage return? Make them all match.

Learn More: 8 Design Fundamentals for a Professional-Looking Novel



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Before you place an order for more books, order a copy to hold in your hands, and repeat the above process. Nearly every book needs fixing. Make the edits to your book file, upload, and print again. You can also consider ordering a copy of your book in a couple different paper types, so you can see in person what works best for your content.