



Module Five

Handout: Introduction to editing techniques

A well-edited picture book is a pleasure to read. It rolls off the tongue, is memorable and the text interacts seamlessly with the illustrations.

When we create a picture book text, we want to let go and let it flow. We can't worry too much about the finer details of writing technique and editing considerations as this might inhibit our creativity and our natural picture book voice. Write your draft in the flow, let it rest (a week or more is good!) and come back with fresh eyes as the reader. Now, you are ready to edit.

In this module, we will be breaking editing into two levels:

- Big picture structural edits
- Line edits (also called copy edits).

Your goals for this module are to:

- Learn key editing skills from big picture to line edits
- Learn how to assess your own work objectively
- Learn to recognise when your work is ready.





When you are editing, prepare to be flexible and ‘kill your darlings’ so to speak. Nothing is lost in the editing process. Everything you cut will go back and feed the compost of your future stories and ideas. Also, prepare to reimagine the story altogether. Try not to get too attached to one idea. It’s worthwhile cracking open the story sometimes and trying it from a completely new angle. For example, what if the character became an alpaca, rather than a child?

Also, allow plenty of ‘rest’ time between writing and editing. Some of the best work happens in your subconscious, where ideas kick around and problems are often solved. Sitting in front of your computer is not the only way to write and edit!

And always read your work aloud! Remember, it’s meant for children! Get others to read it to you too.

