



FICTION EDITING MASTERCLASS

OVERVIEW

The *Fiction Editing Masterclass* is a professional development program for **practising editors with at least two years' experience in fiction editing** who wish to extend their knowledge, skills and expertise. The program comprises a series of closely designed workshops, each focused on a different story element in fiction.

About the Masterclass

A masterclass is commonly understood to be a lecture or seminar given by an expert in the given discipline to highly talented students or scholars. It is a specialty class in which learning objectives are achieved through detailed instruction and in-depth practice. The *Fiction Editing Masterclass* seeks to cultivate advanced thinking and engagement with theoretical knowledge, research, scholarship and best practice in fiction editing.

The **group sizes** are strictly limited, to encourage discussion and 'thinking out loud' within a safe, non-judgemental and collegiate space. If you have questions you wish to raise outside of the group, you will have direct access to your trainer by phone and email.

AIM AND OUTCOMES

The aim of the *Fiction Editing Masterclass* is to provide a forum for practising editors who wish to enhance their professional development.

At the conclusion of each Masterclass, participants will be able to identify, analyse and evaluate the given story element/s in narrative fiction, and to advise their authors/clients on the effective use of these devices in their manuscripts.

NARRATIVE FORMS AND GENRES

The Masterclasses will consider:

- Narrative prose fiction in short story, novella and novel formats
- Most narrative fiction genres, except for horror, speculative fiction and poetry
- Narrative non-fiction, such as memoir and autofiction, which employ the techniques of fiction



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TOPICS AND DATES

The program runs from January to November 2022, and the workshops are held on Tuesdays, starting at 3pm AEDT/AEST (2.5 hours' duration).

Topic	Date
1. Plot and subplot	18 January
2. Characterisation	8 March
3. Narrative exposition versus Action	19 April
4. Point of view	31 May
5. Voice	12 July
6. Dialogue	16 August
7. Tense	20 September
8. Pace	25 October
9. Communicating with authors and publishing clients	29 November

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Masterclass 1: Plot and subplot

Date: 18 January 2022

Trainer: Renée Otmar

In fiction, the plot is more than a sequence of events; it is the dramatic question driving the narrative, from the opening line to the very final word. It is the central question the author is inviting the reader to answer through every element employed in telling the story. Subplots are secondary strands that connect the plot and supporting characters.

In this workshop we focus on the 'big picture', using diagrammatic and storyboard techniques, including Freytag's dramatic arc, to advance the traditional three-act structure. We also explore how to work with your authors to raise the stakes with increased tension, obstacles and complications.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of plot and subplot in a range of published works.
- Analyse and articulate the dramatic question, and determine whether the narrative is driven by plot, character or another story element.
- Distinguish between different plot types and how they can alter the dramatic question.
- Explore a variety of approaches in ensuring balance in the structuring of a novel.

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Masterclass 2: Characterisation

Date: 8 March 2022

Trainer: Pamela Hewitt

Much contemporary fiction is character driven.

Editors fulfil the role of test audience and ally in improving the depth of characterisation. They gauge the believability of and emotional reaction to each character in a work of fiction. Does he ring true?

Is she likeable, memorable, intriguing? What emotional responses do they elicit?

This workshop devises options for deepening characterisation, investigating central and minor characters and sharpening their roles in the narrative.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Identify the central or main characters in works of fiction, distinguishing their importance to the narrative.
- Analyse features of characters seen through the prisms of dialogue, point of view and style.
- Devise options to improve common pitfalls in characterisation, including stereotyping, cliché and heavy-handedness in portrayal.

Masterclass 3: Narrative exposition versus Action

Date: 19 April 2022

Trainer: Renée Otmar

Narrative exposition, also known as story exposition, is critical to progressing the narrative and providing the reader with information about the story's setting and the characters' backstories.

But, while narrative exposition is used to create rising action, it is not the action itself.

In this workshop we explore different techniques to help the reader experience the narrative through exposition, action, sensory description and dialogue (minimally: note that dialogue is covered in detail in the Masterclass on 16 August). We also explore the well-worn adage of 'show, don't tell', and the idea that this 'golden rule' is culturally biased.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between dialogue, thoughts (including internal monologue), action/plot, description, exposition and resolution, and their respective roles in progressing a story.
- Analyse the effectiveness of choices for exposition, plot (action) and narration in a range of published works.
- Identify ways to avoid common pitfalls.

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Masterclass 4: Point of view

Date: 31 May 2022

Trainer: Pamela Hewitt

Point of view is the window into a fictional world.

Adjusting point of view is a powerful editing tool. Selective tweaking of perspective can be an effective technique to deepen and broaden a text.

We will survey successful examples of different points of view in fiction, including multiple perspectives, unreliable narrators and breaking the fourth wall. We also discuss ways editors can handle, say, a straight author writing about gay characters.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish different aspects of point of view, including the perspective from which the story is told and the points of view that emerge through the narrative, internal monologue and dialogue.
- Identify first, second or third person perspectives, close (tight) or omniscient, direct or indirect, and combinations of different approaches to point of view.
- Analyse the effectiveness of the choices in points of view and pinpoint problem areas and technically difficult passages in order to come up with options for improvement.
- Investigate changing attitudes to perspective in contemporary fiction and apply those insights to texts.

Masterclass 5: Voice

Date: 12 July 2022

Trainer: Renée Otmar

The rhetorical mix of language, tone, register, point of view, style, syntax and vocabulary is the voice that readers 'listen' for in a text. But stories are usually conveyed through several different voices, including the voice of each character, the writer's unique voice (or style) and the narrative voice they adopt in a particular work, which can vary from one work to another.

In this workshop we employ our eyes, ears and hearts to explore the concept of 'voice' as a vital aspect of any work of fiction, and unpick the key elements that characterise distance, proximity and other features of voice.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Examine the range and tenor of voices characterising different works of fiction.
- Distinguish and describe the voices of fictional characters in a given work, as well as the narrative voice and the author's voice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the voices in a given work and devise ways to strengthen and sustain them.

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Masterclass 6: Dialogue

Date: 16 August 2022

Trainer: Pamela Hewitt

Careful attention to dialogue opens up economical and subtle ways to deepen characterisation and advance the plot.

This workshop considers how each character's voice is conveyed through dialogue, checking for consistency and repetition and how to avoid unsubtle and unnatural dialogue. We'll look at speech tags and ways to present and punctuate dialogue. We'll also cover techniques to improve the flow of dialogue and transitions from the narrative voice.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Analyse the power of dialogue as a means of illuminating characterisation, motivation and plot.
- Investigate techniques to adjust the narrative balance, for example changing descriptive passages to dialogue.
- Identify the main ways of presenting dialogue in text, including discussion of quotation marks, punctuation, font and formatting.
- Examine dialogue in a range of texts, identifying successful techniques and common problem areas.

Masterclass 7: Tense

Date: 20 September 2022

Trainer: Renée Otmar

Although most works of fiction are written in the past tense, a feature of contemporary fiction is the inclination to the present – as though the author is telling a story in 'real time'. Many contemporary writers choose the present tense because they wish to bring a sense of closeness and immediacy to the narrative. But there are pros and cons (and many pitfalls), regardless of which tense is chosen.

In this workshop we examine what works in the use of past and present tenses, and possible solutions when they clash. We also explore the use of other tenses, and ways to make a story compelling, regardless of the chosen tense.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Identify the role and relationship of tense to genre, voice and pacing in a given work of narrative fiction.
- Analyse how tense contributes to the structural development of a work of narrative fiction and the potential benefits and pitfalls of changing tense.
- Devise solutions to problems in clashes of tense.

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Masterclass 8: Pace

Date: 25 October 2022

Trainer: Pamela Hewitt

Pace affects mood and emotional colour in fiction. When the story drags, focusing on pace can often solve the problem. The 'temperature' of passages in fiction can be raised – or lowered – by close editing of the pace of the text, making the balance and cadence more satisfying.

Varying the length of sentences and paragraphs can refine pacing. We will examine how strategically placed hints heighten suspense, making readers aware that a point of climax is approaching.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Identify means to accelerate and slow pace so as to understand the effect on the tone of the writing and the messages sent to readers.
- Analyse the benefits of employing pacing techniques such as the use of white space on the page, variation of sentence and paragraph length and introduction of dialogue.
- Investigate pacing techniques in passages from published texts and apply these techniques to sample texts.

Masterclass 9: Communicating with authors and publishing clients

Date: 29 November 2022

Trainers: Renée Otmar and Pamela Hewitt

Confidentiality and professionalism are important considerations in editing for publication.

Some authors and publishing clients may require their editors to sign non-disclosure agreements, but all deserve our respect for their intellectual property, commercial-in-confidence and privacy.

All of this starts with effective communication. While some editors are comfortable communicating by phone or videoconference, others prefer the written word, including the exchange of emails and collaborative document development.

This workshop covers ways to initiate and develop professional, friendly lines of communication with fiction clients, including troubleshooting skills for unanticipated problems. We examine the pros and cons of different forms of communication at various stages of editing, including the roles of in-text comments, editing reports and author queries.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

- Identify various means of communication with clients, focusing on their relative strengths in different contexts
- Highlight the important phases in the working partnership and explore ways to initiate and sustain a good working relationship
- Evaluate different styles of editorial responses and author queries, including in-text comments, editorial reports and iterative document development.

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ABOUT YOUR TRAINERS



Renée Otmar PhD, DE, HLM

Renée Otmar has been a professional editor since 1989. As a consultant, her services include developmental editing, copyediting, proofreading, ghostwriting, copywriting, project management and just about every other aspect of editorial and publishing, across corporate, government, non-government, trade and self-publishing sectors. She edits mostly fiction, memoir, narrative non-fiction, academic and reference works.

Alongside her writing and editing, and a parallel research career in public health and research ethics, Renée offers training and coaching services for writers and editors, including careers coaching and professional supervision for writers and editors working with sensitive, explicit or disturbing content.



Pamela Hewitt AE

Pamela Hewitt is an accredited editor who has worked in editing and publishing for over 30 years. After an in-house career in educational and academic editing, she established a freelance editorial practice specialising in fiction, memoir and narrative non-fiction. Many titles she has edited have won literary awards.

A qualified teacher, Pamela has taught editing in universities and colleges, and presented face-to-face, on-demand and interactive online editing and writing workshops around Australia and internationally.

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PRICING

\$200 per single Masterclass

We offer discounted pricing for multiple registrations, as follows:

\$760 for 4 Masterclasses

\$960 for 5 Masterclasses

\$1155 for 6 Masterclasses

\$1355 for 7 Masterclasses

\$1540 for 8 Masterclasses

\$1720 for 9 Masterclasses

EARLY BIRD \$1700 for 9 Masterclasses

All prices in Australian dollars and excluding GST

REGISTRATION

Registrations open on 1 December 2021.

Payment: A fortnightly payment plan is available for registrations of 4 or more Masterclasses.

There are two options for payment: (1) **bank transfer** (by invoice) or (2) **PayPal** for credit card payments or from a PayPal balance, or to access the payment plan.

Cancellations and registration transfers

If a Masterclass is cancelled you will receive a full refund.

Sometimes life gets in the way of the best-laid plans. We will do our best, where possible, to accommodate your changing needs, within reason. Please note that registrations are not transferable. A refund, less a 15% administration fee, may be possible for a cancellation if a replacement can be found to take your place. In the event that a replacement is not possible, a refund **may** be available, on a case-by-case basis: up to 14 days prior to commencement, full refund less 15% administration fee; 7-13 days prior to commencement, 50% refund of fees paid; less than 7 days prior to commencement, no refund.

Waiting list

A waiting list will be kept in case of cancellation and places will be offered on a first-come basis.

Your registration will be confirmed after your first payment – please note that if you miss the payment due date your place may be offered to someone on the waiting list, so do keep an eye on your spam/junkmail folder, to ensure you keep your place in the program.

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