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Four Tips to Impress an Editor

by

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What's an editor's favorite snack food? Innocent writers—or so many writers believe. We leave behind crumbs of a writer's self-esteem among shreds of their work-in-progress (WIP).

If you're serious about being published, you can't avoid editors. You'll meet them at conferences, pitch to them during those dreaded 15 minute appointments, hand your manuscript over to them, hoping and praying they offer you a contract. Once you get the long-awaited call, editors don't disappear. We're still around for revision letters and galley proofs and back cover copy.

Sigh. You just can't shake us, can you?

Rather than using an editor's professional photo as a dart board, why not do everything you can to impress an editor? Here are four basic ways to impress an editor:

1. **Hand in clean copy.** My 10-year-old daughter Christa and two of her friends were bemoaning how much they hate grammar. One friend reminded Christa that she needs to know grammar because she wants to be an author. "That's what editors are for," Christa replied. It's funny when my daughter says something like that—but it's a lousy attitude for a writer. Don't expect an editor to clean up your messy manuscript. Correct misspellings, misplaced commas and typos.
2. **Know a publisher's editorial preferences.** Most publishers post their writers guidelines online. Before you submit a proposal, find out what an editor wants. Do they prefer Times New Roman font (usually) or Calibri? Do they want size 11 or size 12 font? Do they want your paragraphs to be double-spaced?
3. **Meet your deadline.** In the publishing world, you control one deadline: yours. Turn your manuscript or article in on time. It's called a deadline for a reason: If you miss it, you're dead.
4. **Be willing to rewrite.** You've written your heart out and turned in your best work. And then ... your editor calls and requests revisions. Don't whine—just do it. Be a professional. Sulk after you turn in the rewrite.