

# Some Questions to Ask About Potential Work

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*Has this happened to you? Right after a phone conversation with a prospective client about potential work, you realize you forgot to ask a key question or clarify a fine point. After having this experience once too often, I compiled a database of questions that I draw from during the initial contact. Of course you don't want to overwhelm your new client by asking all the questions on this list! All questions don't apply to all projects. Be selective; pick and choose only those questions that are relevant to the job at hand.*

**What is the scope of the job?** What are the components of the project (text document, slides, e-learning storyboard, workshop materials, etc.) or what is the total page/word count?

**What kind of an edit is needed?** Is it mostly proofing, copy edits, style comparisons, how many iterations are anticipated? Are you looking for minimal cleanup—just fixing grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors? What about consistency in capitalization, styles, sentence structure? Any need to look at formatting? Organization? Is this a first edition, a revised edition?

**Does the job entail reviewing a bibliography, references, index?**

**How many figures and tables are there?** What kind of formatting do you require for the tables?

**Is any fact-checking involved?**

**Would I need to work onsite or can all work be done remotely?**

**Is the document ready to be edited, or is it still being worked on?**

**How much work might there be?** How many hours a week? How long do you anticipate the editing part will take?

**What format is the document in**—hard copy, Word, Adobe, etc.? How would my edits be indicated (marked-up hard copy, Track Changes, double underlines, Comments, marked-up PDF)? Would I enter edits myself? How would I transmit an edited file—e-mail attachment, ftp site, shipped hard copy, etc.?

**Will you want my work on the project to include cleanup after the author has reviewed the editing?**

**What is the schedule/deadline for this project?**

**What style guide and dictionary do you prefer to follow?** Do you follow a certain style manual (Chicago Manual of Style, AMA Manual of Style, APA, MLA, AP, GPO, Bluebook, etc.) or certain dictionary (MW)?

**Do you have a style sheet or standards document?** If not, would you expect me to create one?

**Who would my contact person be?** Does my contact person prefer to communicate by phone or e-mail? Would I interact with any other team members? Is there any direct author contact?

**Would you want me to sign a contract/nondisclosure agreement, etc.?** Do you have a standard contract, or would you like me to provide one?

**What is your budget?**

**What are your payment terms, specifically your payment cycle?** If this project is scheduled to last 30 days or more, I'd want to invoice every 2 weeks. Does that work for you?

**If materials are to be copied or go back and forth on paper, may I use your account number** (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.)?