Editing Checklist

Use this checklist to help you determine the levels of editing you need. Once you have approached the appropriate editors, use this sheet to discuss your needs and expectations. While this list isn't comprehensive and your individual needs will vary, it's a good starting place.

Developmental Editing
Before beginning my manuscript, I need help with:

☐ Getting started
☐ Brainstorming and developing ideas and concepts
☐ Determining audience and purpose
☐ Developing an outline and planning
☐ Staying motivated and moving forward in the book-writing process
☐ Checking my progress and ensuring I'm staying focused and
  on track

Substantive (Content) Editing
After writing my manuscript draft, I need help with:

☐ Making sure the structure and flow is effective
☐ Checking for gaps in logic
☐ Ensuring transitions work between paragraphs, chapters, and ideas
☐ Evaluating tone to make sure it aligns with my intended audience and doesn't alienate readers
☐ Identifying areas that need work, along with feedback and suggestions for revision

Copyediting
After revising my manuscript draft, I need help with:

☐ Formatting my manuscript for design
☐ Editing for grammar, syntax (word order), punctuation, capitalization, parallelism, and spelling
☐ Identifying areas that need clarification or revision
☐ Checking for alignment with the chosen style guide
☐ Checking for consistency (e.g., between the table of contents and chapter/section titles, font types
  and sizes, and use of terms)

Proofreading
After my manuscript is in its final version and prior to design, I need help with:

☐ Catching errors, including grammar, spelling, capitalization, and word use
☐ Rechecking for consistency (e.g., between the table of contents and chapter/section titles, font types
  and sizes, and use of terms)

After my manuscript has been designed, I need help with:

☐ Verifying that the entire manuscript has been placed into the designed document
☐ Checking characters and formatting*
☐ Verifying that images/tables are present when mentioned
  in the text
☐ Catching any typos that weren't caught pre-design, including grammar, spelling, capitalization, and
  word use

* Note: Design programs often replace certain punctuation with characters, such as "€"; furthermore, certain formatting elements, like italics, will not copy from the manuscript text file to the design program. A designer has to compare the text document to the design document, and it is easy to miss small errors. It is the job of the final proofreader(s) to catch these errors.