The editing process takes place in several steps and involves reading the same text several times, each time with a different focus.

Step A must be done first. Step F is best done last. The others can be done in whatever order you find most productive. Some editors find it better to clean up all the details first and then look at the big picture; others prefer to address the big-picture issues first and then going back to fix the details.

* **Step A: Read the text**  
  Read it all the way through without editing. The goal is to get an idea of what the text is about, what it involves, where it’s going and so on.
* **Step B: Fine-toothed comb**  
  Fix the typos, fix the punctuation, fix usage and grammar mistakes, make sure everything follows style.
* **Step C: Big picture**  
  Make sure the structure of the text makes sense. Is the information in the right order? Does it flow from one idea to the next easily and smoothly? Is everything clearly explained? Are there unanswered questions? Is any information missing?
* **Step D: Fact-checking**  
  Check everything. Verify names and titles. Check dates and locations. Do the math. Check summaries of reports, data or research against the original information. Check all sources.
* **Step E: Revise**  
  “Revise” is a broad term that covers several tasks such as removing redundancies, trimming wordy text, possibly trimming for length and making sure that none of the other editing has introduced gaps in the story or errors. The revision stage might come after the fact-checking stage; once the writer has answered any open questions and filled in any gaps in the story, some paragraphs might need updating.
* **Step F: Display type**  
  Many editors also write display type — headlines, headers, photo captions, summaries. It’s best to do this once the text is ready for publication, and no more significant changes are anticipated