

Informational Interview with Emily Jobe: A Freelance Editor

Emily Jobe always enjoyed reading stories. She had a knack for finding small details and plot holes that would nag at her long after she finished a book. She always wanted to be the one to help make these stories better, so she decided she wanted to pursue a career in editing.

In college, Emily chose to earn a degree in English with a minor in Professional Writing. While working toward her degree at Kennesaw State University, Emily participated in internships that would give her experiences that she would carry with her throughout her career.

One of these internships was working as a student editor for Kennesaw State University's undergraduate research journal. There, she helped to edit and proofread manuscripts, communicate with authors, and also publish a few editions of the journal. She even set up the journal's social media platforms on sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter and created a guidebook to assist future interns like herself. She continues to work with the journal today, whether that be through editorial work or helping to find new interns. She credits her experience interning with the journal and the staff that helped her along the way with making her the editor she is today.

"I would not be the editor I am now if it wasn't for their help."

One particularly rewarding experience Emily received in college was interning with the nonprofit organization Advocates for Children Georgia. This organization helps at risk teens and young mothers transition into college or other programs that will help them improve their situation.

During this internship, Emily helped organize programs to raise money and assisted with the organization's writing of grant applications.

While interning for Advocates for Children Georgia, Emily gained valuable skills in communicating with others, which she says helps immensely in her career as an editor and one which she believes is one of the most important skills a person could have.

After graduating, Emily knew she wanted to be an editor of fiction, so she began working at a self publishing company. Although this wasn't exactly the work she dreamed of, working for the company gave her a greater understanding of other parts of the publishing process such as design and marketing which has been essential to her editorial work. Her work at the publishing company consisted of copy editing, developmental editing, and proofreading manuscripts from a number of genres ranging from children's books to memoirs.

Like so many of us, Covid-19 took her life in a new direction and Emily decided to achieve her ultimate goal of becoming an editor of fiction and she became a freelance editor, which is the occupation she holds today. Her duties in freelance work are pretty much the same as they were when she worked for the publishing company, only she has the ability to choose what she works on based on what genre she feels most comfortable working in. These genres include poetry and short story collections, children's books, and fiction novels.

As a freelance editor, Emily has found that time management and a willingness to learn is key. She often has to juggle multiple projects at a time and she also has to keep up with not only her own deadlines, but the deadlines of others such as her client's, the designers, and other members of the publishing team. It is also key that she keep up with the changes in the editorial world such as changes to the English language and changes to things such as the Oxford Dictionary and the Chicago Style Manual. These can include changes ranging from the definition and use of a word to the way commas are used.

"As an editor, you'll always be learning something new."

To future editors and those preparing to work in the editing field, Emily recommends participating in at least three internships with at least one being in the world of editing. She also recommends interning or working in other fields because any avenue of work can help you as an editor, you just have to know how to make it work for you.

Even though she says it can be difficult to tell people their work needs improvements or to explain to them why a part of their beloved manuscript needs to be changed, Emily says the most rewarding part of her job is being one of the people that helps an author shape their book into the polished piece people will enjoy for years to come.