

LINE EDITING

CHECKLISTS

*Fix the little things BEFORE an editor
finds them!*



QUESTIONS FOR LINE EDITING

Question
Are there sentences where you use the same word more than once? Can this word be replaced by a similar one?
Do you have paragraphs of long sentences with no breaks for conversation or action?
Do your characters repeat the same action too much? Ex: repeatedly grins, smirks, or chuckles.
Do you have unnecessarily long descriptions of places, characters, or objects? Do your readers actually need to know this much information?
For detailed descriptions, would your readers know or understand the information? Ex: Readers might not recognize the name of an exotic flower and can't imagine it.
Do you say why your character does something or do they perform the action and react? Bad Ex: Mia ate the cookie because she was hungry. Correction: Mia grabbed the cookie from the glass jar and stuffed it into her mouth, grumbling, "You should've ordered pizza sooner."

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Do you have enough details accompanying the dialogue? Is it clear who the characters are speaking to?

If using an omniscient POV, is it clear that the character is narrating and not the author explaining things?

Are your facts correct? Double check words and facts that you aren't sure about to avoid incorrect usage of terms or presenting false information.

Are your sentences sharp and concise? Do you convey your point within 1-2 sentences or are you dragging out an explanation in long and unnecessary paragraphs?

Are fight scenes realistic? Ask yourself if a person can actually move the way that you described your character moving. If possible, try to act it out with friends (please be safe with this)

COMMON REQUESTS FROM EDITORS

Requests and Comments

Remove rhetorical questions

Remove unnecessary speech tags (i.e. when the speaker is obvious)

Remove redundant lines and cliches

Avoid repetition of words, actions, and sentence structure

Avoid run-on sentences. Break them up into small, medium, and long (but not too long) sentences.

Eliminate filler words such as “uh” or “um”. They’re usually used to fill empty spaces in communication.

Avoid using passive voice. For more information, go to:
<https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/writing/seven-sins-of-writing/1>

ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES

When describing a character's appearance or action, be careful when using adverbs and adjectives. These descriptors can change a sentence to "telling" the information versus "showing". Telling tends to distract readers and can lessen the impact of your writing!

Telling Example:

There was a knock at the door and Maria felt fear rush through her.

Showing Example:

The handle rattles and a snarl echoes outside. Maria's chest tightens and her heart beats faster, skipping with each pound against the door.

Below is a checklist for adverbs and adjectives that typically cause "telling". Go through your manuscript and revise sentences with these words.

*Note: "Telling" words aren't always bad and are sometimes necessary. Before removing one, ask yourself if keeping it hurts or harms the sentence.

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

REVISION CHECKLIST

Task	Revision	Completed
1	Replace "-ly" adjectives	
2	Revise "There is" and "There was" (ex: There is panic building vs. Panic builds)	
3	Revise "in (emotion)" to describe emotion rather than tell	
4	Revise "with (feeling)" to describe the feeling rather than tell	
5	Replace "the sound of, the smell of, the feel of" with actual sensations	

“TELLING” CHECKLIST

Check that words Are “Showing”, Not “Telling”

Word	Times Used	Revised Word Count
knew		
realized		
felt		
thought		
when		
as		
before		
were		
just		
try		
wonder		
say		
said		

Word	Times Used	Revised Word Count
ask		
shout		
whisper		
grumble		
growl		
call		
yell		
scream		
cry		
reply		
replied		
add		
explain		

(YOUR OWN!)

[illegible][illegible]

(YOUR OWN!)

[illegible][illegible]

FINAL LINE EDITING TIPS

Tips

Read and edit your manuscript in different formats to prevent yourself from skimming information.

Take breaks in between edits to avoid missing mistakes. This could range from a week to a month but let your mind rest!

Use Microsoft Word or other AI to read your book out loud. Are there any breaks in the AI voice due to unnecessary spaces or incorrect punctuation? Are names pronounced correctly? Do the sentences flow well?

Color coordinate sections according to scene/interaction type.
Example: background info is green, fight scenes are blue, romance is pink, and comedy is yellow. You can then review your chapters as a whole and get a sense of what might be lacking.

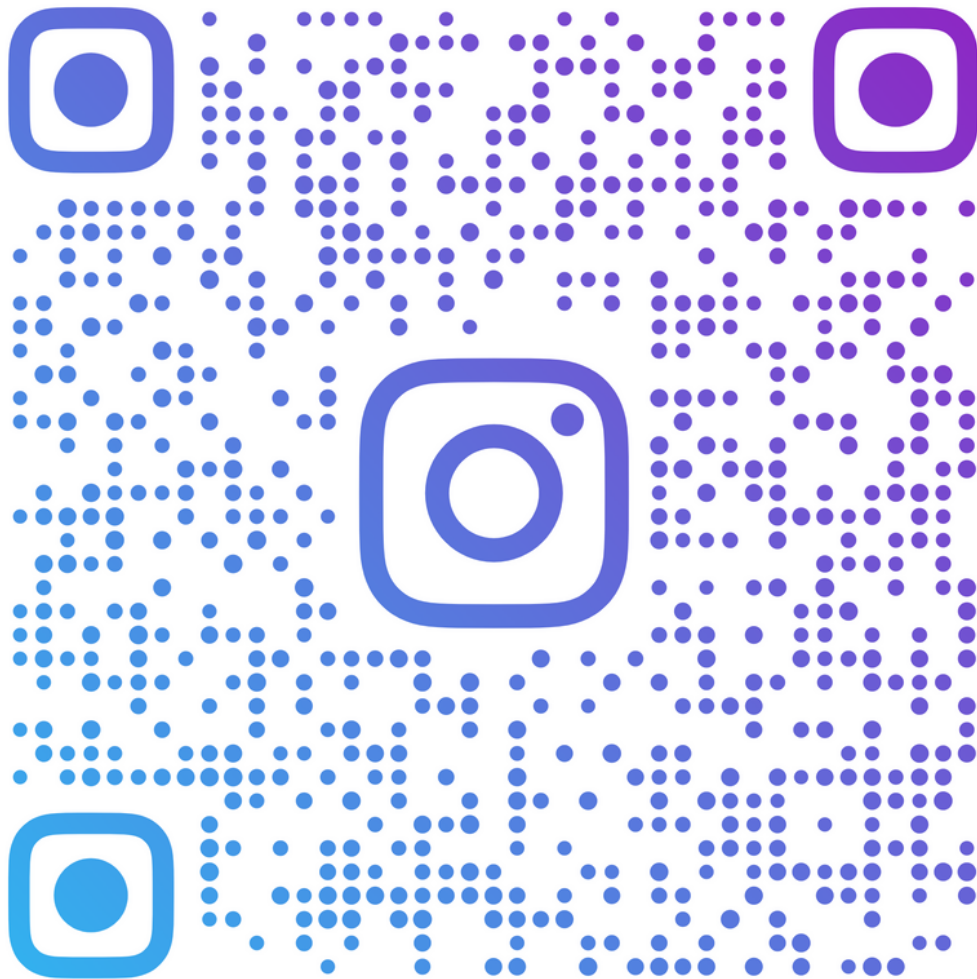
CHAPTER CHECKLIST

Chapter	Adjectives and Adverbs	“Telling” Words	Repetitive Words
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

CHAPTER CHECKLIST

Chapter	Adjectives and Adverbs	“Telling” Words	Repetitive Words
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			

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WRITING GUIDES, CHECK OUT
MY PAGE!**



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