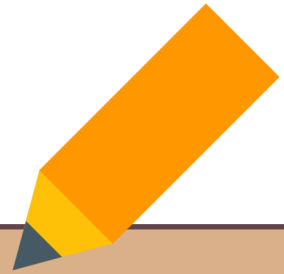


Self-editing Checklist

You've slaved over your manuscript and now you're ready for another pair of eyes to look at it.

You need an editor. Even editors need editors because when you've spent as much time with a document as you have with your manuscript—your baby—you've lost all objectivity. Your eye sees what it wants to see, not what is actually on the page.

Before you send your project off to an editor, here are some things you can check for yourself. You'll save your editor time and yourself the embarrassment of overlooking some simple formatting, grammar, and usage items.



Format to standard publishing guide-

- ☐ Margins – 1" margins top, bottom and sides
- ☐ Times New Roman, 12 point (or comparable font)
- ☐ Paragraphs indented ½ inch. Set this in the paragraph menu; special: first line .5
- ☐ Double spaced
- ☐ Only one space after end punctuation
- ☐ Smart ("curly") quotes; not "straight" quotes

Spelling and Punctuation

- ☐ Do run spell check, but don't rely on it. It will not catch homonyms or incorrect usage.
- ☐ Does every sentence begin with a capital letter and end with a closing punctuation mark—a period, question mark, or exclamation point?
- ☐ Ellipses should be a series of three periods with a space before and after—unless the style guide indicates otherwise.
- ☐ Use exclamation marks sparingly.
- ☐ Dialogue begins and ends with double quotation marks. End punctuation goes inside the quotation mark.
- ☐ Use single quotation marks for quotes inside another quote.

Sentence Structure

- ☐ Does each sentence convey a complete thought?
- ☐ Are the sentences varied in length and structure?
- ☐ Are there any dangling, misplaced, or unclear modifiers?
- ☐ Check for wordiness. Eliminate qualifiers like *very*, *really*, *little*, *somewhat*.

Grammar and Usage

- ☐ Check that subjects and verbs agree with one another
- ☐ Do pronouns have clear and correct antecedents?
- ☐ Check for shifts in tense.

Style

- ☐ Whenever possible, replace “to be” verbs with stronger, active verbs
- ☐ Write in the active voice as much as possible.
- ☐ Avoid jargon and clichés.
- ☐ Check for repetition and redundancy

The first draft reveals the art; revision reveals the artist.

~Michael Lee