

Self-Editing Checklist

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Know your Crutch Words

Do you rely on words like “very” or “really”? Do you use ‘definitely’ or some other word too frequently? Use CTL-F to search and destroy. In Word, you can use Home>Editing>Find.

Check Verb Tense

Present tense (I **walk** to the store and **buy** groceries) and past tense (I **walked** to the store and **bought** groceries) are the most common tenses used in fiction. Whatever your choice, be consistent.

Beware of Long Sentences

Search for conjunctions like ‘and’ or ‘but’ in compound, complex, or compound/complex sentences. Each sentence should describe no more than one or two actions.

Eliminate Repeated Words

Use Thesaurus.com or some other source to find synonyms. Avoid using the same word more than once per page. Check sentence beginnings for repetition, too.

Use the Editor in Word

If you use Word, the editor is in the Home section of the Toolbar at the top. It will find many errors, but it isn’t always correct and may misinterpret your text.

Find a Good Human Editor

(Shameless self-promotion) Everybody needs an editor to find plot holes or continuity issues.

Nothing substitutes for a skilled editor with a human brain! But That’s Why You’re Here,

Isn’t It?