

The Power Revision Checklist

1. Show, don't tell. Use telling details and vivid imagery.
2. Write with precise nouns and verbs, to eliminate the need for an overabundance of modifiers.
 - a. Eliminate countless "-ly" words and other adverbs by using specific power verbs.
 - b. Eliminate excessive adjectives that add nothing to the noun.
3. Avoid the passive voice. Write in the active voice. Be direct, aggressive, positive, and clear. Use the passive voice only when necessary to convey a particular mood or attitude.
4. Limit the use of uncommon words— inextinguishable, obfuscate, expunge, etc., which tend to be showy. Instead use simple, common, direct language.
5. Avoid weak (indefinite) words— almost, about, appears, approximately, probably, nearly, virtually, seems, etc. Avoid all "-ish" words— greenish, palish, roughish, and on. Be precise. Your reader wants clear, definite, precise images, not nebulous, vague abstractions.
6. Avoid office or business language— "At this point in time." "At this juncture." "Upon notice of this situation." Replace with simple, direct language such as now, when, then, etc.
7. Avoid common clichés— white as snow, quiet as a mouse, sweat like a dog, slept like a baby.
8. Avoid endless synonyms for "said." Effective writers know "said" is invisible and craft the dialogue to express the emotions.
9. Avoid having characters speak with a sneer, grin, laugh, chuckle, growl, etc.
10. Avoid excessive dialect in dialogue. Use just enough to get the point across— don't try to invent a whole new manner of spelling to mimic an accent.
11. Avoid entering the story from behind the narrative with funny comments, or statements like: "If she only knew what was waiting for her at home," or "little did she know."
12. Avoid exclamation points! A well placed exclamation point adds emphasis! Continual use of exclamation points makes them generic! And renders them void of impact! Okay!!
13. Avoid three dots in a row (. . .) to indicate a pause or interruption in dialogue. Use the dash— instead.
14. Keep sentences and paragraphs short. This makes for easier and more direct reading.