

(Practically) Painless Editing for a Stellar Submission

Lori Hatcher

1. Clichés – worn out or overused words or phrases

Solution: rework, reverse, or recreate a hackneyed phrase

2. Repeated words or phrases.

Examine your work for “pet” or “favorite words.”

Helpful tools: Word Frequency Counter: http://www.writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp,

ProWritingAid.com

3. Too Many Adverbs

Show, not tell. Replace adverbs like quickly, very, and incredibly with more visual descriptions and strong verbs.

Incorrect: “Incredibly, the runner ran very quickly.”

Correct: “The runner was a speeding bullet. Her feet *pounded* the ground and *propelled* her forward as she *sped* ahead of the others.”

4. Improperly quoted or cited Bible verses.

Always cut and paste from Bible software. Never attempt to quote from memory.

Include the full book name, reference, and translation. If you use the same translation throughout, you need only site the translation once.

Place the period or other punctuation after the closing parenthesis containing the reference.

Example: “Here is your king” (John 19:14).

“Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” (John 19:15).

5. Faulty parallelism

When writing a list, every item should start with the same type of verb or noun, adjective or adverb format. Faulty parallelism can occur in several ways.

- a. When you write a list of things and mix up verb forms (to run, jumping, played), a

Incorrect: Henry likes to run, to jump, and playing outside.

Correct: Henry likes to run, to jump, and to play outside.

- b. When you mix up adjectives or adverb forms

Incorrect: Grandpa walked carefully, in a slow way, and halted a lot.

Correct: Grandpa walked carefully, slowly and haltingly.

6. Passive Voice

In grammar, voice is about the relationship of the subject to its verb. Every verb has voice; it is either active or passive. In the active voice, the subject of a verb acts. In passive voice, the subject is acted upon. For example:

ACTIVE: Daffy Duck ran for Governor of Idaho.

PASSIVE: Daffy Duck was elected Governor of Idaho.

Daffy Duck is the subject of both sentences. In the first example, Daffy Duck ran. The subject in this sentence (Daffy) acts. He does the running. This is the active voice.

In the second example, Daffy Duck doesn't act at all. He is acted upon. He was elected. This is passive voice.

Two Questions to Help You Recognize a Passive Voice Sentence

- a. "Is the object in the subject position?"
- b. "Can I add 'by so-and-so' to the end?"

7. Awkward "his/her" and "he/she" gender constructions

Awkward: The researcher must provide evidence for his or her arguments.

How to Correct:

- a. Take out gender references: *The researcher's argument must be based on evidence.*
- b. Change to plural: *Researchers must provide evidence for their arguments.*
- c. Rephrase the sentence: *Arguments made by researchers must be backed up by evidence.*
- d. Use the singular *they*: *The researcher must provide evidence for their arguments.*

In 2015 the Singular They was named "Word of the Year" by American Dialect Society (a group of 200 linguists). Even the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (2017) now allows for its use.

8. Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers aka The Phrase with the Missing Subject

Make sure to attach descriptive words and phrases to the things they're describing, especially when a descriptive phrase begins the sentence.

Incorrect: Oozing slowly across the floor, Marvin watched the salad dressing.

Correct: Marvin watched the salad dressing ooze slowly across the floor.

9. Improperly cited references, quotes, etc.

Use credible sources (not Wikipedia or Goodreads). Go to the source of the quote.

Use caution and discretion when quoting living people.

Endnotes are the most common way to do this in non-fiction books.

Document your sources and obtain permissions before you submit so you don't slow down the editing process.

10. No contact information in the header.

Name, address, phone number, email, word count, title of article, issue/theme

(Practically) Painless Editing for a Stellar Submission Exercise

Instructions: Using the skills you learned in the workshop, edit the following paragraph. You'll find at least one example of each of the errors discussed.

The consensus of the hordes of writers attending the Carolina Christian Writers conference were that the event was a smashing success. Edie Melson' workshop on social media was really good and was attended by everyone leaving no one in Lori Hatcher's editing practicum.

"No one really likes me," Lori cried. "Edie's the only presenter anyone really comes to hear. I read a statistic somewhere that said 50 percent of writers hate editing. But the Bible says, 'Study grammar to show yourself approved by God.'" (Hatch. 6:66). Flinging her workshop notes in the air, they fluttered to the ground as Lori wailed like she'd lost her best friend.

"I asked every writer if he or she was planning to attend," she said. "He or she told me he or she would, were promising to come, and like grammar workshops." She paused dramatically, inhaled violently, and shamefacedly hung her head.

"I'm not surprised, really," she said. "They probably wouldn't have learned much anyway. I wish I'd gone to Edie's class, too."