

**THE
ULTIMATE
EDITING LIST**



**BY
CHRYS FEY**

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INTRODUCTION:

Hi! I'm Chrys Fey, and I am a writer. This PDF is a post on my blog, [Write with Fey](#). I wrote it because I love to help writers. It doesn't matter if a writer is new to the craft and thirsty for knowledge, or a veteran looking for ways to improve their craft; I want to help them all! Where does this wish come from? From when I was young and desperate for advice on writing, editing, and everything between. I would have loved to have the information I share on my blog back then, but I had to learn it all the hard way. And that was through years of trial and error as well as research. I created my blog to teach other writers what I've learned in the hope that they can grow as writers.

I fully believe that writers should help, inspire, and encourage other writers. And I don't think we should harbor our secrets and knowledge for ourselves. We should share it! That's why I turned this popular post on my blog into a PDF. I want writers to be able to download these tips and keep it on their computer for frequent reference.

If you find the information in this PDF useful, direct other writers you know to it so they can download it too! LET'S PASS ON THE KNOWLEDGE! 😊

Through years of writing, editing, and learning I have created a master list of words/phrases that I eliminate from my writing. I use the “Find” tool in Microsoft Word to help me with this task.

I have shared posts in the past with select words that every writer should try to cut such as: [Eliminate Redundancies](#) and [Words to Cut out of Your Writing](#), but I am combining both lists plus including dozens more here.

Redundant/incorrect phrases to fix:

- He thought to himself = He thought
- She made her way = She went
- Low/soft whisper = Whisper
- Checked/check out = Checked/check
- Reason(s) why = Reason(s)
- Right here = Here
- Meet with = Meet
- Final outcome = Outcome
- Added bonus = Bonus
- Total blackout = Blackout
- Bald-headed = Bald
- Visibly Upset = Upset
- Try out = Try
- Each and every = Each
- As many as = Up to
- Turned back = Turned

- Turned around = Turned
- Return back = Return
- Continued on = Continued

Take out words such as "up" and "down."

Why? Because the direction/action is already stated.

- Stand/stood up = Stand/stood
- Sit/sat down = Sit/sat
- Lifted/picked up = Lifted/picked
- Knelt/stooped down = Knelt/stooped
- Dropped down = dropped
- Descended down = Descended
- Woke/wake up = Woke/wake
- Rise up = Rise
- Rest up = Rest
- Fix up = Fix

Here is a list of words to cut because they clutter sentences:

- That
- Just
- Only
- Really

- Very
- Both

Example: She swore that it would never happen again.

Better: She swore it would never happen again.

Example: Jamie and Matt both wanted ice cream

Better: Jamie and Matt wanted ice cream.

NOTE: While I try to eliminate as many of these as I can, I still use “just” and “only” every now and then, such as in dialogue.

Cut these words to make clear, assertive statements:

- Almost
- Slightly
- Seemed
- Perhaps
- Maybe
- Simply
- Somehow
- Kind of
- Sort of
- A little

- Absolutely
- Basically
- Actually
- Instead
- Usually
- Sit/sat down = Sit/sat
- Now

Example: The cut hurt slightly.

Better: The cut hurt.

Example: Now stop it!

Better: Stop it!

Phrases to eliminate to make your writing more specific:

- There was/were
- There is/are
- It was
- That had been

Example: "It was a dark and stormy night."

Better: The night was dark and stormy.

Tell your readers exactly what “it,” “that,” and “there” refers to so your meaning is clear.

Correct phrase meanings/uses:

- Site is a place
- Sight is vision
- Affect (verb) means to influence someone/thing (weather conditions)
- Effect (noun) is a result of something (side effects of medication)
- Could careless = Couldn't careless
- Shouldn't of = Shouldn't have (same for "wouldn't of" and "couldn't of")
- six year old girl = six-year-old girl
- By who = By whom
- Only had = Had only
- Try and = Try to
- All of = All
- Off of = Off

Eliminate passive voice:

- Was
- Were
- Had/have been
- Being

- Will be

Passive voice is when the subject of a sentence is acted upon. Active Voice is when the subject of a sentence is the doer of the action.

Passive: Ben was attacked by a swarm of bees.

Active: A swarm of bees attacked Ben.

NOTE: It's not totally wrong to use passive voice. For example: "My car was stolen!" is a correct sentence if your character doesn't know who stole their car.

Eliminate Telling:

- He/she felt
- He/she saw/watched
- He/she heard
- He/she thought
- He/she wondered
- He/she/I felt

Example: She watched the bird hop from branch to branch.

Better: The bird hopped from branch to branch.

Example: He saw her blush and bite her lip.

Better: She blushed and bit her lip.

Eliminate how many sentences begin with these words back-to-back:

- He/she (third person)
- I (first person)
- Then
- The

Variety is the spice of...writing. ;)

Clichés I look for to rewrite or delete:

- Stopped in his/her tracks
- Yell at the top of his/her lungs
- At his/her fingertips
- Sigh of relief
- Blood boil
- Glaring sun
- Cold as ice
- Hot as hell
- Scared to death
- Eyes were glazing over
- Bared her soul
- In the blink of an eye

- All hell broke loose
- Time flies
- Deer caught in headlights
- Pale as a ghost

Basically if you heard it before, don't use it!

Final Message:

I am constantly learning and adding more words/phrases to my list, and you can too. After all, writing is a never-ending learning process.

ABOUT ME:



Chrys Fey is the author of Hurricane Crimes, Book One in the Disaster Crimes series, as well as these releases from The Wild Rose Press: 30 Seconds, Ghost of Death, and Witch of Death. She is an administrator for the Insecure Writer's Support Group.

When Fey was six years old, she realized she wanted to be a writer by watching her mother pursue publication. At the age of twelve, she started writing her first novel, which flourished into a series she later rewrote at seventeen.

Fey lives in Florida and is always on the lookout for hurricanes. She has four adopted cats who keep her entertained with their antics, and three nephews who keep her entertained with *their* antics. You can connect with her on Facebook, Twitter, and through her blog, Write with Fey. She loves to get to know her readers!

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My Books:

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