

The
Ultimate
Editing
List

Chrys Fey

Thank you for downloading *The Ultimate Editing List!*

You can find other free PDF downloads for writers on my [website](#): Blogging 101, How to Create a Newsletter, and 100 Marketing Tips.

INTRODUCTION:

Hi! I'm Chrys Fey, and I am a writer. This PDF was originally TWO posts 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 his/her 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 in-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! 😊

The Ultimate Editing List

First, I want to share my top five pet peeves as an editor. Or, more precisely, five errors I'd like more writers to be aware of before submitting to an agent/editor/publisher.

1. Stay in the Same Tense

I've seen many stories that start in past or present tense then after a few pages or even a couple of chapters shift to another tense, without warning. The change doesn't happen because of a time jump from past to present. Rather, the timeline is the same, but the writer makes this mistake without realizing it. Sometimes, this shifting can go on throughout the entire manuscript. This is an easy mistake. Admittedly, I had done it with my first attempts. A good beta reader can point this out, but it's important for writers to be able to recognize this themselves, with practice.

2. Stick with One Name for a Character

In the narrative, if you refer to a character by their first name, don't later change the name you use to their last name. Or vice versa. Establish the name you want your character to be known by in the beginning and stick with it. Dialogue is another story, however. A character's name can change in dialogue depending on their nicknames and titles.

3. Join Complete Sentences

Make sure when you join two sentences with a comma and conjunction (and, or, but) that the sentence following the comma is complete with a subject.

Example: She couldn't wait to go on vacation, but she had a deadline to meet first.

(This is correct, because there is a subject following the comma and the conjunction. If you remove "she" from the second half of the sentence, it would become a fragment.)

4. Pay Attention to Gerund Phrases

Gerund phrases begin with a verb that ends in "ing." These phrases can be at the beginning of a sentence or at the end of the sentence following a comma. The problem is, some of the sentences might not make sense together.

Example: Smiling, she tilted her head.

This is correct, because you can smile and tilt your head at the same time.

Example: Running upstairs, she flopped onto her bed.

This is not correct, because you can't run upstairs and flop onto your bed at the same time, not even if your bed happens to be in the stair way. You'd have to stop one act to do the other.

You can use the Find tool to search for "ing" to double-check these phrases. If you find an incorrect phrase, a little revision is all that's needed to make it work.

5. Comma Splices

Comma splices are very common. I know that I have comma splices in my earliest works, but they are incorrect. A comma splice is when two independent clauses (sentences) are joined by a comma.

Example: Mom ordered pizza, Dad went to pick it up. (Comma Splice)

Example: Mom ordered pizza, and Dad went to pick it up. (Correct)

Most of the time, adding a conjunction fixes this problem. Or you can replace the comma with a semi-colon or period.

With the top five errors I come across as an editor out of the way, I now present my ultimate editing list, which I hope will help you to tighten your writing.

Redundant/Incorrect Phrases to Fix:

- He thought to himself = He thought
- Stand/stood up = Stand/stood
- Sit/sat down = Sit/sat
- Turned back = Turned
- Turned around = Turned
- Return back = Return
- Rise up = Rise
- Descended down = Descended
- Low/soft whisper = Whisper
- Woke/wake up = Woke/wake
- Checked/check out = Checked/check
- Rest up = Rest
- Fix up = Fix
- Reason why = Reason
- 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

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.

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
- 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 Meanings/Uses:

- Site is a place
- Sight is vision
- Affect (verb) means to influence someone/thing (weather conditions affect)
- Effect (noun) is a result of something (side effects of medication)
- Could care less = Couldn't care less
- Shouldn't of = Shouldn't have
- Six year old girl = six-year-old girl (hyphenated when used before a noun)
- By who = By whom (whom – him/her)

- 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.

Example: Ben was attacked by a swarm of bees.

Active Voice is when the subject of a sentence is the doer of the action.

Example: A swarm of bees attacked Ben.

However, it's not totally wrong to use passive voice.

Example: My car was stolen!

This a correct sentence if your character doesn't know who stole their car.

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 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 headlines
- Pale as a ghost

When you finish your first draft, go through this list slowly to eliminate these words and phrases. And, remember, we all do them.

EDITING TECHNIQUES:

Every writer has his or her own technique to self-editing and there is no wrong way to go about it. All I can do is share how I edit my books to help you develop your own technique.

Step 1: Give it a rest!

After you spend months or years (in most cases) writing a book, it is always a good idea to put it down for a while. Give yourself some space from the characters you've been writing about. Give your brain a vacation! Celebrate the fact that you finished your book while your body rejuvenates. During this "vacation" you can work on another story, but whatever you do, don't touch a single printed manuscript page, or open the file for your book, until time passes! This time period can range from a week, a month, or even a year; whatever you feel is best for you. Just don't jump into editing immediately after finishing the piece, because you need to let your work stew.

Step 2: Cut it out!

Once I am ready to begin editing, the first thing I always do is make sure there is no passive voice or clichés in my writing. My trick to check for this is to use Microsoft Word's nifty "Find" tool that will allow you to search an entire document for a word or phrase. For instance: if I enter "was" into the

tool, I can go through the whole document to make sure every time I used the word “was.” Or I can search for “Sigh of relief,” so I can either remove the cliché or rewrite it.

Some of these words are: that, just, like, really, very, only

Step 3: Read It

Read your manuscript from beginning to end, keeping an eye out for slipping tenses (the moment when you accidentally use “is” instead of “was” for past tense), passive voice, head hopping, and other glaring grammar mistakes. Also read every sentence carefully, rewriting them, deleting them, or rearranging them as necessary.

Step 4: Read It Again

Step 5: Get Two or Three Beta Readers

Let beta readers look at your book one at a time, and then implement their suggestions and other changes as you go.

Step 6: Read It Once More

Having to read your manuscript over and over again can be tough, so here are five editing techniques that can help you to shake things up:

Step 7: Print Out Your Manuscript

Having a tangible form of your book that you can hold and edit by hand is always useful. Buy some red pens and highlighters, punch holes into your manuscript pages, and put them in a binder for accessibility. Read each page, each line. Cut out words, sentences, and whatever else needs to go.

Add words and paragraphs of description. Make notes on the side to fix scenes or add more emotion. When you're done, transport the changes to your computer document.

TIP: Reading through the full story after these changes are made is wise.

Step 8: Read Backward

Start with the final paragraph, read it in its entirety, and work your way up, paragraph by paragraph. This technique helps you to focus on the sentences rather than the plot. It's also a great way for you to focus on the flow of the sentences.

Step 9: Change the Font Size and Color

Changing the way something looks gives your brain a rest and a way to spot new things. I like to make the font size 16 or 18 and change the color to dark blue, green, or purple.

Step 10: Download Your Document to Your Kindle or Tablet

This can be easily done by emailing the document to yourself, accessing your email on your device, and opening the document to be viewed in your library. Or you can use your Kindle email. This is usually my final form of editing when I feel I've edited my book as much as I can but still want to make sure it's ready for someone else to view it. I like this technique because I get to see and read my story as a reader would. I can spot inconsistencies, typos, and places where I may need to add more emotion.

Step 11: Have Word Read It

Above the toolbar in Word, you'll see the floppy disk save icon. Close to it is a little drop-down arrow for "Customize Quick Access Tool Bar." Click on

it and then click on "More Commands." In the drop down for "Choose Commands From," select "All Commands." Then scroll down, select "speak," click "add" and then "ok." Now an icon with a dialogue box has been added to the top of the toolbar, beside that drop-down arrow. Highlight the text you want read and listen to Word read it to you. It can be a bit slow, but you can catch errors with way; I've caught errors in my books during the audiobook process while listening to chapters my narrator created, so I do believe this works.

The thing that all writers quickly learn is that editing is never over until your book is published. Don't feel daunted by that prospect though! Take it one step at a time and only when you are ready.

Be patience, stay confident, and one day your manuscript will shine.

Please sign up for my **FREE** monthly newsletter, [Chrys' Chronicles](#). Newsletters will be sent monthly to share book news, author updates, and occasional prizes/giveaways.

~*~

You can download a **FREE Thank You Gift** immediately after confirming subscription. (optional)

~*~

*All info submitted in this form will be kept private and will only be used to deliver these newsletters. You can also unsubscribe at any time.



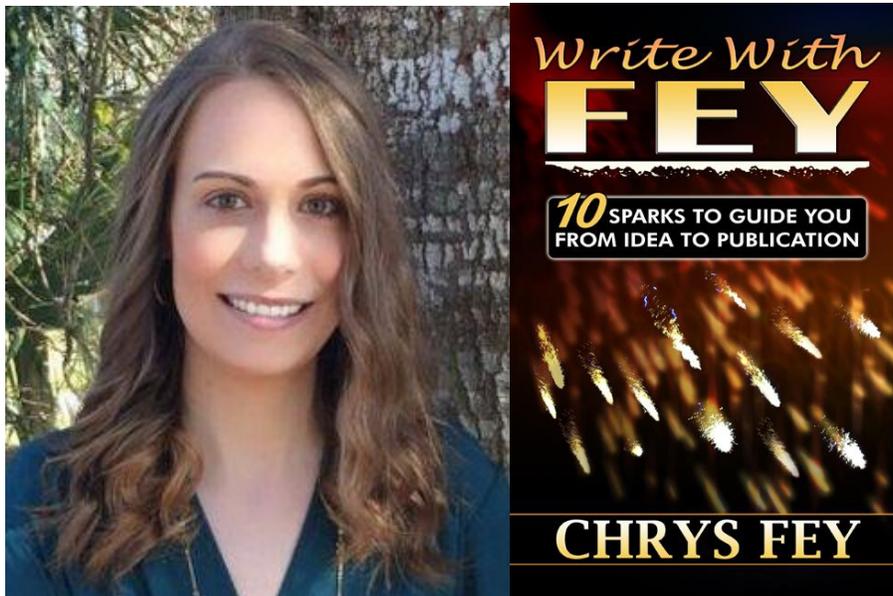
To sign up for Chrys' Chronicles, go to the [sign up form](#).

A word about the author...

Chrys Fey is the author of the *Disaster Crimes* series, a unique concept blending romance, crimes, and disasters. *Write with Fey: 10 Sparks to Guide You from Idea to Publication* is her non-fiction guide for writers. She's partnered with the Insecure Writer's Support Group and runs their Goodreads book club. She's also an editor for Dancing Lemur Press.

Fey realized she wanted to write by watching her mother pursue publication. At the age of twelve, she started 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 cats and three nephews; both keep her entertained with their antics.



Find Chrys:

[Website](#) / [Blog](#) / [Newsletter](#) / [BookBub](#) / [YouTube](#)

[Goodreads](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#)