The Writers After Dark
Editing Checklist

WritersAfterDark.net

STYLE	
1. Remove most adverbs & unnecessary descriptions. *"I closed the door loudly with force."* v. *"I slammed the door."* ☐	**2. Avoid the passive voice** (watch out for was/were, am, is, are). *I was running.* v. *"I ran."* ☐
3. Show, don't tell. *"She was hungry." v. "Her stomach rumbled."* ☐	**4. Remove "that" from sentences.** The message is often clearer and is still grammatically correct. ☐
5. Use "who" not "that" when referring to people. ☐	**6. Hyphenate modifiers.** ☐
7. Eliminate redundancies. ☐	**8. Avoid clichés (like the plague).** ☐
9. Keep dialogue tags simple. "Said" is not only effective but also considered invisible. Supplement it with *action.* ☐	**10. Split long sentences in two.** ☐
11. Watch out for "very", "really", "just", etc. ☐	**12. Use contractions.** ☐
13. Avoid uncommon words. ☐	**14. Watch for names in dialogues.** Don't use names unless necessary to keep authentic to real life conversations. ☐
15. Descriptions. Keep them short, sweet, and to the point. ☐	**16. Inconsistencies in tense, POV, tone, and voice.** ☐
17. Inconsistencies in name, titles, and capitalizations. ☐	**18. Inconsistencies in characters and settings descriptions.** ☐
19. Check for spelling & commonly misused words. (Your/you're, they're/their/there, effect/affect) ☐	**20. Check for extra punctuation & comma placements.** ☐
21. Maximize descriptions with sensory details. Include smells, sounds, visuals, tastes, & touch/textures. ☐	**22. Read your work aloud.** ☐
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PLOT

1. Look for weak opening & weak ending.	☐	2. Avoid info dumps. ☐
3. Watch for pacing is it too fast or too slow?	☐	4. Unresolved plot issues/unanswered questions. ☐
5. Plot holes/contradictions.	☐	6. Chronological order/timeline consistency. ☐
7. Do each element & plot threads go somewhere while fitting into the main storyline?	☐	8. Each story thread needs its own beginning, middle and end. ☐
9. Look out for lack of character, story, and world development.	☐	10. Unconvincing behaviors/lack of proper character motivation. ☐
11. Check for accuracy or unclear details.	☐	12. Make sure each character is important to the plot & serves a purpose. ☐
13. Are all characters quirks consistent?	☐	14. Check ARCs for all characters, scenes, and underlying & main storylines. ☐
15. Look out for all characters conflicts, reactions, and change.	☐	16. Does each scene move the story forward? ☐
17. Does each scene contain dialogue, action, descriptions, and setting?	☐	18. For each scene, ask yourself what would happen if they were omitted? Tighten from there. ☐
19. Double-check everything.	☐	20. Triple-check everything. ☐
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