

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF EDITING

- ❑ **Let your creative juices flow!**
 - **Draft your work quickly.** Turn off your internal editor and let your creative juices flow. Don't worry about anything other than content.
 - **Rework** until you are generally satisfied with the content.
 - Does the story line or content **glorify God** in some way?

- ❑ **Edit for Flow and Word Count:**
 - Does the story or article **flow well**?
 - Does it **make sense** in the order it's in?
 - Have I **answered all the questions** I raised?
 - Does it **make sense**? Is it believable?
 - Am I **satisfied**? Am I excited about it? Will it sell?
 - How close am I to the required word **count**. (If you are more than 200 words off on a 1500 word assignment, go back and rework until you are at least this close).

- ❑ **Sentences:**
 - Does each sentence contain at least a **noun or pronoun** (which may be understood) and a **verb**?
 - Does each sentence communicate a **complete thought**?
 - Does each sentence begin with a **capital letter** and end with a **punctuation mark**?

- ❑ **Paragraphs:**
 - Does each paragraph contain only **one main idea**?
 - Does that main idea have a feeling of **beginning and ending**?
 - Does the paragraph have a **topic sentence** that announces what it is about?
 - Does the paragraph have one or more **middle sentences** that carry the action or information forward?
 - Does the paragraph have an **ending sentence** that sums up the information?
 - Did you **indent** the first line about five spaces or skip two spaces between paragraphs?

- ❑ **Nouns:**
 - Does each sentence use the **strongest, most specific nouns** possible?
 - Is each noun as **colorful and descriptive** as possible?

- ❑ **Verbs:**
 - Have I used **active verbs rather than passive** verbs wherever possible?
 - Have I used **vivid action verbs** to describe and move the story?
 - Have I **replaced weak adjectives and adverbs** with strong verbs wherever possible?
 - Have I used **creative alternatives to "said,"** without going overboard?
 - Have I kept my manuscript in the **same tense** unless there is a good reason for changing the tense?
 - If I have changed tense, are my **transitions clear and understandable**?
 - Have I used the **proper form of verb**, especially irregular verbs?

- ❑ **Adjectives and Adverbs:**
 - Have I made sure that I've used the **strongest possible nouns and verbs** before resorting to adjectives and adverbs?
 - Have I used the **most vivid, most specific adjective or adverb** possible?
 - Have I used only **one adjective per noun or one adverb per verb** wherever possible?
 - Does each adjective or adverb give **new, essential information**?
 - Does each adjective or adverb **serve a necessary purpose**?
 - Does the sentence **flow easily when read aloud**?

- ❑ **Leads and Hooks:**
 - Have I used the **best lead possible**, regardless of where I found it in the article or story?
 - Does my lead **grab or hook my reader** (make them want to continue reading)?
 - Is the style of my lead **consistent with my purpose** in writing this piece?
 - Does my lead **deliver** what the lead promises?

- ❑ **Characterization:**
 - Have I described my subject(s) in **vivid terms** that will help the reader get to know him or her (them)?
 - Have I used **sensory words** to describe my subject?
 - Have I used **action words in combination with descriptive terms** to make my subject come alive?
 - Do my characters or subjects **seem human**?
 - **Have I been kind? Fair?**

- ❑ **Dialogue:**
 - Does my **dialogue sound real**, neither too casual nor too stilted?
 - If I've used an **accent or dialect**, have I remained true to it throughout the piece?
 - When quoting people for an article, have I **shown them in their best light**, regardless of which side of the issue they are on?
 - Have I used **creative alternatives for "said,"** without sounding trite or overly dramatic?

- ❑ **Transitions:**
 - Do my thoughts flow in a **logical order**?
 - Have I used **transition words and phrases** effectively to keep the reader with me?
 - Have I made **flashbacks, dreams, and other non-sequiturs flow smoothly**?

- ❑ **Ending Well:**
 - Have I selected the **most effective style** of ending for my article?
 - Does my ending **deliver** what the lead promised?
 - Have I tied up all the **loose ends**?

- ❑ **The Title:**
 - Does my title **accurately reflect what follows** without giving away the plot or main point of the article?
 - Does my title **hook the reader** to read the article?
 - Have I chosen a title that **keeps my audience in mind**?

- ❑ **The Mechanics:**
 - Have I **double-checked every quotation**, including Scripture, for accuracy?
 - Have I used the **Bible translation** preferred by the publisher?
 - Have I **properly cited** any work I've quoted or relied upon heavily?
 - Have I **checked the spelling of every word**, even those the spellchecker won't catch?
 - Have I **read my piece aloud** to check on flow and those easily missed errors?
 - Have I checked for **bloopers like misplaced modifiers and dangling participles**?
 - Have I checked for my most **common grammar errors**?
 - Have I checked the rules of **capitalization** as they apply to my piece?

- Have I checked the rules of **punctuation** as they apply to my piece?
 - Have I verified my **word count** and included it at the top of my manuscript.
 - Have I followed **standard manuscript format** and the **publisher's specific guidelines** for submission?
- ☐ **The Final Check:**
- **Have I told the truth?**
 - **Could I proudly hand this to Jesus, saying, "This is what I did with the talent you gave me."**
 - **Would He smile and reply, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23)**