

Author's List to Self-Editing

HELLO, I'M CHRISTINA

CREATIVE, COMMUNITY-MINDED
COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL WITH
10+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN CONTENT
DEVELOPMENT, EDITING, AND PROMOTION.



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Show, Don't Tell



Lydia was angry. She stomped her foot on the stairs.

“I want to go to Brighton,” she said angrily.

“It’s not fair if you go without me!” Kitty said sadly.

Show, Don't Tell

Lydia ~~was angry~~ stomped her foot on the stairs.

“I want to go to Brighton,” she said ~~angrily~~.

“It’s not fair if you go without me!” Kitty said ~~sadly~~.

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Point of View



First Person:

“My sister made not the slightest objection, and the pianoforte was opened; but after a few notes, I was sorry to hear her exhibit and could feel the heat rise to my cheeks.”


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Third Person Limited:

“He was pleased his sister made not the slightest objection to play, and the pianoforte was opened. After a few notes, Darcy could feel the heat rise to his cheeks.”



Third Person Omniscient:

“His sister made not the slightest objection, excited to exhibit her newest music, and the pianoforte was opened. After a few notes, Darcy’s cheeks pinked in embarrassment.”



AVOID OVER-DESCRIBING ACTION

“He sighed and ran his fingers through his hair as he began to wish to know more of her. Darcy turned his head toward her, then stepped in her direction, taking a cleansing breath, hoping to converse with her himself, and began to attend to her conversation with others.”



In Jane's Own Words....

He began to wish to know more of her; and, as a step towards conversing with her himself, attended to her conversation with others.—*Chapter VI, Pride & Prejudice*

Are You Using Too Many “-ly” Words?

“Darcy walked slowly away to another part of the room. She subtly but jealously watched him speak with her guests, making her have scarcely enough patience to help anybody to coffee, and then was enraged privately at her own silliness!”

Darcy had walked away to another part of the room. She followed him with her eyes, envied everyone to whom he spoke, had scarcely patience enough to help anybody to coffee, and then was enraged against herself for being so silly!

–Chapter LIV, Pride & Prejudice



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Split Overlong Sentences

A few days after this visit, Mr. Bingley called again, but without Mr. Darcy, explaining that his friend had left him that morning for London but was to return home in ten days' time.

A few days after this visit, Mr. Bingley called again, and alone. His friend had left him that morning for London, but was to return home in ten days' time. –Chapter LV, Pride & Prejudice



REFINE YOUR VERBS

Instead of...

“And then, she looked up at me. My eyes went wide as my anger went away with a look.”

Try...

“And then, she raised her eyes to mine. I blinked, stunned that with one look, my anger had subsided.”



IDENTIFY YOUR CRUTCH WORDS

Smile
Smiled
Smiling



Instead, try:

- shake with laughter
- clap hands
- crinkle eyes/nose
- smirked
- simpered
- beamed
- grinned
- mouth curved into a smile
- corners of her mouth turned up/quirked up
- corner of mouth twitched
- she gave a half-smile
- she gave lopsided grin
- forced a smile
- she brightened

REDUNDANCIES



“The silence at dinner was in stark contrast to the noisiness and volume of Longbourn.”

“Darcy picked up the book only to mutter under his breath.”

“She nodded her head in agreement.”





Avoid REDUNDANCY

“Mrs. Bennet sat down on the settee.”

“Miss Bennet stood up when Bingley arrived.”

REDUCE YOUR PREPOSITONS

“The barouche of Lady
Catherine”

vs.

“Lady Catherine’s barouche”

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Cut “Start To”



Instead of...

*“Elizabeth started to walk
down the hill.”*

Try...

*Elizabeth walked down
the hill.*

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Be Mindful of “That”

Is “That” Necessary?

“Darcy believes that Wickham has designs on Elizabeth.”

vs.

“Darcy believes Wickham has designs on Elizabeth.”



CAPITALIZATION



Colonel Fitzwilliam

*“Pray let me hear what you have to accuse him of,” cried **Colonel** Fitzwilliam.*

*When coffee was over, the **colonel** reminded Elizabeth of having promised to play to him.*

*“Your cousin, **Colonel**, will give you a very pretty notion of me.”*

Effective Punctuation: Em-Dash

“I have seen them both—”

~~Jane interrupted.~~ “Then it is as I
always hoped. They are married!”

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He said,
She said.

DIALOGUE TAGS



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ELIMINATE “THERE IS” & “THERE ARE”

Instead of...

“There are many gentlemen who want to dance with her.”

Try...

“Many gentlemen want to dance with her.”

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pro Tip:

AVOID SIMILAR NAMES


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The Extraneous

Really
VERY

***The late hour made it very necessary for the party to
consider what really needed to be done.***



There must be a better word than

THING



GNIHT

Compelling First Page

- Drop the reader into an interesting moment. Start with an action or tension-filled scene to engage the reader immediately.
- Show the protagonist's emotions. Allow readers to feel the protagonist's emotions right away, which can be a powerful way to hook them.
- Create contrast. Use unexpected, funny, or unsettling elements.
- Avoid excessive backstory. Readers don't need a detailed introduction; just plant curiosity seeds.
- Introduce the character in an exciting way. Make the character grab the reader's attention.

Pro Tip:

Read your work aloud.

Read it aloud again.

