

Short Story Revision Checklist

The main purpose of the revision process is to strengthen your writing by identifying things you can **ADD** and things you can **DELETE** from your story. Here is a checklist that will help:

- Does the exposition at the beginning of the story (in the first two or three paragraphs) include a clear description of the main character (physical description, personality, etc.) and a clear description of the setting (location/time of the story)? If not, **add** it.
- Is the conflict (major problem or dilemma) for the main character clear and does it occur on the first page? If not **add** it.
- Is the rising action, which is the entire middle of the story, suspenseful and engaging? If not, **add or delete** sentences to make it more suspenseful.
- Does everything lead to a climax in which the main character solves the main conflict/problem or in which his life is changed forever? This last turning point should occur towards the end of the story and it is the most intense moment in the story? **Add** it if you don't have it.
- After the climax, do you have two or three paragraphs that wrap up the story? This is called the falling action and resolution. If you don't have them, **add** them. Don't end the story on the climax.
- Are there moments in which you can **add** descriptive details or words that will help the reader see what is going in? Use descriptive adjectives and powerful action verbs to describe moments in detail. Remember, the point is to show us what happens, not to tell us what happens.
- Are there any confusing moments that you can clarify by **adding** or **deleting** sentences?
- Does your story use a consistent POV and verb tenses (present or past, not both)? If not, **add/delete**.
- Are there any higher-level or stronger vocabulary words that you can **add** to the story?
- Can you **add** more literary elements that will make the story stronger: dialogue, similes/metaphors, personification, imagery, irony, allusion, etc.
- Is the mood (atmosphere of the story) and tone (author's attitude in the story) clear? In *Stargirl*, the mood starts off upbeat and playful, then becomes dark and sad, then upbeat again; the tone of the author is nostalgic, reflective, and hopeful. Clarify your mood and tone by **adding** words/sentences.

Short Story Editing Checklist

The main purpose of the editing process is to proofread and correct errors in grammar and formatting. Here is a checklist that will help:

Capitalization

- Each sentence begins with a capital letter
- Proper Nouns (names of people, places, and things) are capitalized
- First word in a line of dialogue is capitalized

Spelling

- Check for spelling using spell-check, but do not rely only on spell-check
- Check for homonyms (too/two/to, threw/through, whose/who's, there/their/they're, etc.)

Punctuation

- Each sentence ends with an appropriate punctuation mark (. ! ?)
- Use commas after introductory clauses and transition words (Unfortunately, Finally, However,)
- Use commas before conjunctions (and, but, or)
- Use commas in a series (list) of items
- Punctuate dialogue correctly (Stargirl said, "What am I doing wrong?")

Apostrophes

- Contractions: Place the apostrophe in the correct spot (can't, don't, etc.) and avoid the two most common contraction errors (it's vs. its, let's vs. lets)
- Plurals: Use apostrophes only in rare cases such as: two A's and two B's
- Possessives: Place the apostrophe in the correct spot to show possession (the student's grades = one student, the students' grades = more than one student, Jack and Jill's house = belongs to both)

Numbers

- Spell out numbers under 10 (zero through nine) and use numeric symbols for 10 and up

Sentence Structure

- Each sentence contains a subject and a predicate (a noun and a verb)
- Long sentences include appropriate conjunctions and punctuation to avoid being comma splices or run-on sentences (when in doubt, split the sentence into two shorter complete sentences)