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# SELF-EDITING CHECKLIST

Check off each item before you hit publish for a near-perfect piece

- Give it a Break** - Don't edit right away. Leave it for a couple hours, days, or weeks before jumping back in.
- Edit in a different room** - Find a new environment to edit your article or manuscript.
- Run spell check** - As a preliminary edit, run your word processor's spelling and grammar check.
- Read aloud** - Reading aloud can help catch minor errors and hiccups in sentence flow.
- Avoid throat clearing** - Get to the point, especially in the introduction. If it feels like you are wasting the reader's time, cut it.
- Keep paragraphs short** - Big blocks of text intimidate readers. Break for a new paragraph each time you change focus or subject.
- Delete Heavily** - Cut any and all superfluous words/phrases. It's almost impossible to cut too much.
- Remove or change favorite words** - Your favorite words are probably overused. Cut them or change them.
- Give the reader credit.** - Don't repeat the things. Say it once and move on. Your readers aren't stupid.
- Avoid hedging** - Be confident in your opinions and your logic. Don't say "I think" or "I believe" - hurts your authority.
- Cut adverbs and adjectives** - Overuse of adverbs and adjectives make your sentences hard to follow. Use them sparingly.
- Avoid clichés** - Clichés make your writing unoriginal. Use them sparingly. Look for unnecessary clichés and change them.
- Check for redundant repetition** - Saying the same thing in different ways? Choose the best and delete the rest.
- Look for unanswered questions** - Perhaps you asked a question that you forgot to answer, or you were unclear about a certain topic. If there are questions that you think a reader may ask, answer them.
- Avoid passive voice** - Try to always write in active voice. It's easier to read.
- Check tenses** - Check that you're maintaining the same tense throughout. You'll likely catch this when reading aloud.
- Search for problematic punctuation** - Check all commas, hyphens, dashes, semicolons, and parentheses. Leave no punctuation unverified.
- Use serial commas** - Also known as the oxford comma. Use two commas to separate three things. When in doubt, use it.
- Remove double spaces from the beginning of sentences** - This is an outdated practice. Don't put two spaces after a period.
- Run your piece through an editing app** - Sites like Grammarly or Hemingway Editor are designed to catch errors and improve grammar from a technical standpoint. Don't blindly accept all changes, it strips out.
- Have a friend or peer edit your piece as well** - A second set of eyes reviewing your writing will catch things you couldn't.

