**From Rough to Ready: Developmental, Middle and Line Editing**

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www.Karenalbrightlin.com

karenalin@comcast.net

**Character check list:**

What’s terrific about your character?

Write three ways each quality could be shown.

What could seem negative to reader?

Can you twist that negative trait to utilize it in a positive way?

Detail detail detail. We need to feel we ARE that character.

**Plot checklist:**

Who is your audience?

What’s your purpose?

What’s your plan?

What’s your premise?

Premise/Theme/Tone/Style/Voice?

Genre word count?

Conventions/Tropes?

Create a log line

**Check for:**

**Big Picture**

compelling plot / subplots

irresistible conflict

focus

Tense (past/present…)

Point of View

Setting

Good guy bad guy dynamic (adhesive?)

Beginning (need a prologue?)

Middle - Too long and slow

Middle - some not integral to story

Character arcs?

Major confrontations or complications

End

**Middle Editing**

- Scene quality and necessity and polish

- Goal/obstacle/conflict

--beginning middle end - pacing

- Characterization quality/consistency

- Quality of plot threads/themes

- Tightening prose/dialogue/action

- Circle beginning to end

- Tense & POV issues

Motif vs. Symbol

To show or to tell?

Choreography

Reversals

Setting as character

Dialogue/exposition/narrative/action

Using all the senses

Suspense

* Believability
* Cause and effect
* Some small thing wrong

**Cleanup**

Punctuation

Spelling

Correct word usage

Overused words

Active/passive

Puffery

Adjectives/adverbs

backloading

Tighten

Confusing?

When to kill your babies

Qualifiers and attributions

Backstory

Specifics of dialogue (smaller picture)

Gender/status/diversity

Paragraphs/sentence length/

Common mistakes/confusions

Style manuals

Manuscript conventions

**Resources**

**Excellent Books:**

*The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White

*Writing Dialogue* by Tom Chiarella

*The Writer’s Journey* by Christopher Vogler

*Story* by Robert McKee

*Scene and Structure* by Jack Bickham

*How to Write a Damn Good Novel* by James Frey

*Self-Editing for Fiction Writers* by Renni Browne and Dave King

**Helpful Websites**

LouiseHarnbyProofreader.com/podcast.html (editing and how to find a good editor)

NathanBransford.com/blog (writing and publishing)

WritersHelpingWriters.net (writing/plotting/business)

DiversityStyleGuide.com (editing related to diversity)

GetItWriteOnline.com (line editing)

HemingwayApp.com (Line editing)

https://blog.reedsy.com/plot-generator/

ProWritingAid.com (editing – not free)

<http://grammartips.homestead.com/inside.html> (punctuation/editing)

<http://www.say-it-in-english.com/Lesson18.html> (punctuation, esp colons and semi-colons)

<https://worldenglishblog.com/english-grammar-much-or-many/> (a lot of, much, many)

<https://www.thesaurus.com/e/grammar/does-punctuation-go-inside-or-outside-quotation-marks/>

**check these:**

KillZoneBlog.com (suspense/craft)

<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Tropes> About tropes (a section on characters and plot devices)

**Capitalize**

All major words.

Not articles (a, an, the), prepositions (e.g., on, in, of, at), and coordinating conjunctions (and, or, but, and nor; also for, yet, and so when used as conjunctions).

Always lowercase the word to.

“Is” is a verb, **it must be capitalized in all titles**. For example, if your title is, “Where Is My Ego,” the verb in the title is “is.” It gets capitalized.

**Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are capitalized in titles of books, articles, and songs**. Also capitalize the first word and the last word of a title, regardless of what part of speech they are. **(style guides vary a bit – so look it up to be sure)**

**It can take an entire book to win over readers, but just one page can lose them.**