

# No. 2 Pen Editing Checklist



Below you will find a list of common mistakes all writers make. Use this checklist to effectively self-edit your writing. We've provided extra space so you can add to this list too. We recommend you use the "Find" function within your word processor to locate particular errors that you might not catch with the naked eye.

- 1** Remove unnecessary words such including *that, very, just, so, and actually*.
- 2** Avoid the passive voice. Rewrite sentences that include *am, is, was, were, be, being, and been* so that the sentence reads in the active voice.
- 3** Don't end sentences with a preposition. For example, don't end sentences with these words: *in, for, at, with, by, and from*.
- 4** Is the content in past, present, or future tense? Do a scan to make sure you use the same tense from start to finish.
- 5** Are you writing in first, second, or third person? Do a scan to make sure you use a consistent voice throughout.
- 6** Is your headline, subject line, or "re: line" as captivating as it can be?
- 7** Do all of the headlines and subheads have consistent capitalization? i.e., all caps, only initial caps
- 8** Have you used one space after each sentence or two spaces? Double check for consistency.
- 9** Do you have any paragraphs that are longer than six lines? See if you can shorten the paragraph in any way. Do the same for sentences that are longer than three lines.

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**10** Run spell check, but also check for commonly misspelled words that your spell check might not pick up. Here's a quick list:

- ✓ To/ Too/ Two
- ✓ Than/ Then
- ✓ Trail/ Trial
- ✓ Were/ Where/ We're
- ✓ It's/ Its
- ✓ Lose/ Loose
- ✓ Complement/ Compliment
- ✓ Filed/ Field
- ✓ Their/ There/ They're
- ✓ Compliant/ Complaint

**11** Look for adjectives. Can any of those descriptions be replaced with a strong verb? i.e., German-style glass for beer *versus* pint

**12** Does the end of the piece include a call to action? i.e., Thank you for your time and please call me to find out more.

**13** If you include a URL, click on it to make sure it works.

**14** What words do you commonly misspell?

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

**15** Eliminate words you overuse. Include strong adjectives, catch phrases, and industry lingo sparingly. List those words that you know you use too much in your writing here:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

# No. 2 Pen Editing Checklist



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