

Creative Writing Proofreading Checklist (Fiction Manuscript)



Getting Set Up	
Save the Original , then create a Clean/Track Changes copy of the document (depending on your preferred workflow)	<input type="radio"/>
Review your client's style guide and/or brief ; confirm the extent of edits required	<input type="radio"/>
Consistency: Create a separate document to track story details, including character names, place names, and uses of any nonstandard or coined terms	<input type="radio"/>
Without editing the document, read a sample passage to become familiar with the client's voice and writing style	<input type="radio"/>
Set the proofing language	<input type="radio"/>
Check for double spaces (use the Find function)	<input type="radio"/>

Things To Look Out For	
Consistency:	
Uses of any nonstandard or coined terms	<input type="radio"/>
Spelling and capitalization of character names, place names, and other terminology	<input type="radio"/>
Logic in relation to dates, timelines, or passages of time	<input type="radio"/>
Narrative point of view or tense	<input type="radio"/>
How dialogue is introduced, punctuated, and formatted	<input type="radio"/>
Biased or inappropriate language (unless used in context for a clear purpose)	<input type="radio"/>
Note (don't change) seemingly excessive wordiness or repetition that detracts from the narrative flow	<input type="radio"/>
Note (don't change) seemingly overly complex language that detracts from the clarity	<input type="radio"/>
Note (don't change) any patterns of dialogue for each character (e.g., accent, slang, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>
Standard errors:	
Comma usage (e.g., comma splices, use of serial/Oxford commas)	<input type="radio"/>
Use of hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes, according to style guide and/or dialect	<input type="radio"/>
All other punctuation use (e.g., colons, semicolons, apostrophes, ellipses, parentheses)	<input type="radio"/>
Sentence fragments and misplaced modifiers	<input type="radio"/>
Verb agreement and parallelism	<input type="radio"/>
How numbers are written (i.e., as numerals or words)	<input type="radio"/>
Dialect-specific spelling, grammar, and punctuation issues	<input type="radio"/>
Other typos and spelling mistakes, especially ones that will not appear as errors (e.g., from/form)	<input type="radio"/>

Things To Check Back On	
Review noted excessive wordiness or repetition (check : does it seem intentional?), and change, comment, or leave as needed	<input type="radio"/>
Review noted overly complex language (check : is it done with purpose?), and change, comment, or leave as needed	<input type="radio"/>
Review noted patterns of dialogue for each character (e.g., accent, slang, etc.), and change, comment, or leave as needed	<input type="radio"/>
Chapter heading and subheading capitalization, size, and alignment	<input type="radio"/>
Front and end matter (if included in manuscript and covered by the client's brief)	<input type="radio"/>
Consistency of scene or chapter breaks	<input type="radio"/>

Review Your Comments. Comments Should Be...	
Used on changes or issues that require the client's attention or action only	<input type="radio"/>
Written in full, grammatically correct sentences , with no errors	<input type="radio"/>
Written using the same dialect as the rest of the document, including spelling and punctuation	<input type="radio"/>
Clear, direct, and helpful	<input type="radio"/>

Final Checks	
If applicable, check for typographical issues such as orphans, widows, incorrect word divisions, stacks, and rivers	<input type="radio"/>
Review the client's brief or style guide to ensure all requirements are met	<input type="radio"/>
Check again for double spaces (use the Find function)	<input type="radio"/>
Review your edits (especially larger ones that may alter the meaning of the original text)	<input type="radio"/>
Use a spellchecker to pick up any missed or introduced errors	<input type="radio"/>
Create the second version of the document (Track Changes or Clean), and ensure appropriate file name stems are used for all copies	<input type="radio"/>
If necessary, provide any general comments or feedback that you think would be helpful to your client	<input type="radio"/>