

Cleaning It Up

All month long, we've told you to focus on getting your words on paper. "Don't worry if it's not perfect," we've repeated. "Write as much as possible," we've reminded. Now we take it all back! Well, not really, but here's the deal: You've worked really hard on this novel, and while it doesn't have to be perfect, you also don't want it to be full of typos. Typos and grammar mistakes really distract readers' attention away from your brilliant story. And who knows what you may do with this novel in future? Maybe you'll want to submit it to a contest. Maybe you'll want to try to get it published. If so, you're going to have to do the dreaded deed anyway: proofread.

Below are a few areas where writing can get messy. Read the description of each writing woe then grab your very best red pen, imagine it's a scrub-brush, and clean up the messy sentences

Tricksters

First, check your spelling. But don't think you can count on your computer's spell check. Spell check won't pick up on tricky words that sound alike, such as *they're*, *their*, and *there*. You've got to use your own brain to find those mistakes!

The excitement was sew grate that Heidi couldn't bear it. They're was know way to describe the intents anticipation.

From Beginning to End

Yes, we're going to remind you. Use correct capitalization and punctuation, including commas, semicolons, quotation marks, parentheses, dashes and end marks. Your reader will get lost if you don't follow the basic rules.

the crowded stadium went silent her older brother matt grabbed the bat stepping up to the base he looked so grown-up in his los angeles uniform?

Make Your Mark!

^ insert

ƒ delete

∩ switch

◉ period

^ comma

∩ quotation marks

¶ start new paragraph

Pick and Stick

It is important to stay with one verb tense. There are times when you may have to switch (dialogue, flashbacks) but for the most part, pick a tense and stick to it.

The summer evening was filled with cheers and suddenly, the crack of a bat. Heidi closes her eyes for a minute and tries to imagine the ball heading way, way out of the stadium.

We Agree

Make sure all your subjects and verbs agree.

The people in the seats in front of her started to jump up and down. Matt had hit a homerun!

In Good Form

Make sure to choose the correct form of every pronoun.

Her was feeling as giddy as a child on they first day of school.

Keep It Active

Make sure every sentence has a clear subject that the reader can easily visualize. Avoid using feelings or ideas as subjects; use characters instead. This is called using the “active voice.”

The pride was overwhelming Heidi as it swept over her and her mother sitting next to her. The excitement felt by Matt was intense and in slow motion as he ran.

Mix It Up!

Have you ever heard the phrase “variety is the spice of life”? It’s true for sentences, too. Keep your writing interesting by using different sentence lengths and types.

The crowd cheered wildly. Heidi felt it. It felt like a heart beat. It felt like it was inside her.

Now take a look at the beginning of a novel below. It's got promise, but it's also got some major problems. Wield thy mighty red pen!

James Frederick Monroe, why are you late?

Jim looked directly down at the floor. How could him answer that question without being sentenced to a year of house arrest. His mother had bald him out last week just for forgetting to take out the trash garbage. This was way worst than that. Jim knew it isn't his fault that he is late. but the reason was to risky to confess. Just then a lie presented itself to he. "It all began with Tommy" Jim said after takeing a slow, deep breathe.

Now it's really time to unleash that Inner Editor of yours. Apply this checklist to your own novel!



- Every sentence and proper noun begins with a capital letter.
- Every sentence has the correct end mark.
- I use other punctuation marks such as commas, semicolons, and quotation marks correctly.
- I use commas, dashes, or parentheses to separate ideas within a sentence when necessary
- I use a variety of sentences types and lengths.
- I use a consistent verb tense.
- All my subjects and verbs agree.
- I use the correct form of every pronoun.
- All my sentences are active.
- I have checked my spelling.
- I have *really* checked my spelling and looked for tricky words!

After you check off all of the following, and you feel confident about your manuscript, go to the "Resources" section on the NaNoWriMo YWP site (<http://ywp.nanowrimo.org>) for opportunities to publish your book, submit to contests, and continue your brilliant writing career!