

2024

REVISION CHECKLIST

by
Heena R. Pardeshi

REVISION CHECKLIST



BY HEENA R. PARDESHI

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Revision Checklist for Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction Writers by Heena R. Pardeshi. As a developmental editor with over 8 years of experience, I have been helping authors refine their manuscripts, even bestsellers. I've crafted this checklist to guide you through a thorough and efficient revision process.

Revising your manuscript can often feel overwhelming—knowing where to begin and when to stop is a challenge. This checklist is designed to streamline your revision process, ensuring that each element of your story is polished, ready to captivate readers and satisfy publishers.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- Download and print this checklist to keep it handy as you review your manuscript. A physical copy can be especially useful for marking off completed tasks and jotting down notes directly next to checklist items.
- Tackle your revisions one section at a time. This checklist is segmented into categories covering different aspects of your manuscript, from character development to narrative voice. Focus on one category at a time to avoid feeling swamped.



REVISION CHECKLIST



BY HEENA R. PARDESHI

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- Use this checklist at several stages throughout your writing process. Initially, apply it after your first draft is complete to identify major areas of improvement. Revisit it after making substantial changes to ensure all new content maintains a high standard.
- Before considering your manuscript complete, go through the checklist one last time to ensure nothing has been overlooked. This final pass is crucial for catching any remaining issues that could detract from the readability or professionalism of your work.
- By following these instructions and using the Revision Checklist diligently, you will enhance your manuscript's clarity, engagement, and overall quality. This not only increases your chances of success with publishers but also deeply enriches your readers' experience.



REVISION CHECKLIST



BY HEENA R. PARDESHI

1. BIG PICTURE REVIEW

- Thematic Clarity:** Confirm that the themes are clear and consistent throughout the manuscript.
- Character Development:** Ensure all main characters show growth and changes are believable.
- Plot Structure:** Check the narrative arc for proper pacing, tension, and climax. Ensure subplots are resolved.
- Setting:** Ensure the setting enhances the story and is described consistently.

2. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER ANALYSIS

- Purpose:** Ensure each chapter has a clear purpose and advances the plot or develops a character.
- Scene Structure:** Evaluate each scene for its role and effectiveness. Check if the scene moves the story forward or deepens the understanding of the characters.
- Hooks and Transitions:** Each chapter should end in a way that encourages reading on. Check transitions for smoothness and logic.



REVISION CHECKLIST



BY HEENA R. PARDESHI

1. BIG PICTURE REVIEW

- Thematic Clarity:** Confirm that the themes are clear and consistent throughout the manuscript.
- Character Development:** Ensure all main characters show growth and changes are believable.
- Plot Structure:** Check the narrative arc for proper pacing, tension, and climax. Ensure subplots are resolved.
- Setting:** Ensure the setting enhances the story and is described consistently.

2. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER ANALYSIS

- Purpose:** Ensure each chapter has a clear purpose and advances the plot or develops a character.
- Scene Structure:** Evaluate each scene for its role and effectiveness. Check if the scene moves the story forward or deepens the understanding of the characters.
- Hooks and Transitions:** Each chapter should end in a way that encourages reading on. Check transitions for smoothness and logic.



REVISION CHECKLIST



3. CHARACTER VOICE AND DIALOGUE

- Distinct Voices:** Ensure each character has a unique voice and that their dialogue matches their personality and background.
- Dialogue vs. Narrative:** Balance dialogue and narrative. Make sure dialogue is not carrying too much exposition.
- Relevance:** Trim or revise dialogue that doesn't serve the character development or plot progression.

4. POINT OF VIEW AND NARRATIVE VOICE

- Consistency:** Maintain a consistent point of view. Check for any inadvertent head-hopping.
- Effectiveness:** Ensure the chosen narrative voice is effective for the story. Consider if a different POV might strengthen the impact.

5. PACING AND TENSION

- Variation:** Check for pacing—ensure a good mix of fast-paced scenes with slower, more introspective passages.
- Build-Up:** Ensure there is a proper build-up to key moments. Avoid sudden resolutions to conflicts.



REVISION CHECKLIST



6. SHOW, DON'T TELL

- Descriptive Writing:** Look for instances of "telling" rather than "showing." Revise to let readers experience the story through actions, senses, and feelings.
- Emotional Impact:** Check that the emotional stakes are clear and compelling. Emotional reactions should be shown and not just mentioned.
- Sensory Details:**
 - Assess whether you're effectively using the five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) to create vivid scenes. Instead of simply stating that a setting is "noisy," describe the clang of pots, the murmur of conversation, and the sizzle of food cooking, which allows the reader to be there in the moment.
 - Choose details that not only set the scene but also reflect the mood or theme of the scene. For example, describing a room with flickering candlelight and long shadows can instantly evoke a sense of mystery or foreboding.
- Action and Reaction:**
 - Ensure that character reactions are shown through their actions and expressions rather than explained via narration. For example, instead of saying "John was nervous," you could show John's hands trembling or him avoiding eye contact.
 - Visibly link character decisions and reactions to earlier events or information shown in the narrative. This demonstrates not just what characters are doing, but why they are doing it, based on what the reader has witnessed directly in the story.



REVISION CHECKLIST



7. LANGUAGE AND STYLE

- Clarity and Precision:** Eliminate ambiguous or confusing phrases. Opt for simplicity unless complexity adds value.
- Repetition and Redundancy:** Remove repetitive phrases or redundant descriptions.
- Sentence Variety:** Use a mix of short and long sentences to maintain rhythm and reader interest.

8. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

- Grammar and Syntax:** Clean up grammatical errors and awkward constructions.
- Formatting:** Ensure the manuscript follows standard formatting guidelines suitable for submission or publication.

9. FEEDBACK INCORPORATION

- Beta Readers/Editor Notes:** Review feedback from beta readers or your editor. Decide what feedback aligns with your vision and revise accordingly.



REVISION CHECKLIST



10. FINAL POLISH

- Read Aloud:** Read the manuscript aloud to catch errors and listen to the rhythm and flow.
- Rest and Review:** After completing revisions, set the manuscript aside for a period. Return with fresh eyes to do a final read-through before submission or publication.

The End

