Self-Editing Checklist

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The Self-Editing Process

- ☐ Read your work out loud.
- ☐ Ask a friend to read it for you. A new perspective can offer insight and catch mistakes you've missed.
- ☐ Revise the big things first. Do content edits before grammar and spelling edits.
- ☐ Use "said" in dialogue tags.
- ☐ Avoid head hopping and switching points of view unless at a scene or chapter break.

Sentence Structure

- ☐ Fix run-on sentences, fragments, and comma splices.
- ☐ Eliminate dangling, unclear, or awkward modifiers.
- ☐ Tighten sentences and eliminate unnecessary words.

Grammar and Usage

- ☐ Check subject and verb agreement.
- ☐ Make sure pronouns have clear referents.
- ☐ Eliminate shifts in tense.
- ☐ Use the Oxford, or serial, comma.
- ☐ Correct errors in hyphenation, especially when two words are used together as an adjective to describe a noun.
- ☐ Use "which" and "that" correctly.

Style

- ☐ Replace passive voice with strong, active verbs.
- ☐ Eliminate clichés, jargon, and slang (unless appropriate for your story).
- ☐ Eliminate echoes (repeated words and phrases).
- ☐ Use strong descriptions with specific nouns and clear adjectives.
- ☐ Include sensory details.