



Module 6 Exercise – One Final Look

In this exercise, the goal is to determine if you are indeed finished with your revision. To find out, ask yourself the following questions:

The easiest way to tell if you're done is to look at the type of changes you are still making.

If you're making minor changes

If all you've doing is tweaking a word here and a comma there – style changes not substance – then you're probably done.

If you're making story changes

If you're still tweaking the story, the revisions are not done.

If you're making text changes

If you're still getting the text right, revising sentences, or moving text around, the revisions could be done.

If you're making word count changes

If you still need to adjust the word count (up or down), the revisions are not done.

If you're making “scared it's not good enough” changes

If you're tweaking out of fear, you're probably done revising. This is a normal fear, and self-doubt about a new project happens to pretty much everyone.





If you're making "it's not quite right" changes

If everything feels like it's done, but there's something that still bugs you, it could go either way.

It could be because you are tired of the manuscript or it's because you are bored with it as you have read it so many times.

Review it like a reader

In this exercise, the goal is to treat your novel the same as the toughest critics you'll ever have – your readers.

When you are finished, complete the exercise below and be as honest as possible.

Did the first line intrigue me?

Did the first paragraph hook me?

Did the first page make me want to read more?





Did the first scene grab me?

Was there a mystery or story questions I wanted to see answered?

Was there a suggestion or anticipation that something was about to go wrong?

Did every scene make me want to read the next scene?

Was there a reason to keep reading on every page?





Did the chapters feel like they were going somewhere?

Did the middle connect the opening goal and/or the core conflict goal?

Did the stakes keep escalating and drawing me through the story?

Were the mysteries and story questions interesting?

Was I consistently learning new details about the story, world, plot, or characters?





Was the voice consistent and enjoyable throughout?

Were the characters consistent throughout?

Was the final battle worth waiting for?

Was the resolution satisfying?

Would I tell my friends about this book (be honest)?





If you answered 'no' to any of these questions, then that's a red flag you still need a little more work in that particular area.

To check the general pacing and flow of the novel, answer the following questions:

Did my mind ever start to wander?

Did I notice any unnecessary scenes?

Did I skim any scene?

Was I in a hurry to get through any scenes?





Did I stumble over any of the text?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then that's a red flag the manuscript could still use some trimming or editing.

Let's take an objective look at the individual story pieces more than the novel as a whole and answer the following questions:

Look at the characters:

Did I like the point-of-view character(s) and find them interesting and/or compelling?

Did the characters and their actions seem real?

Did the characters feel balanced in their views, attitudes, and opinions?





Did the characters behave in a credible fashion?

Look at the plot:

Did the plot make sense?

Were the character's goals clear?

Did those goals advance the story?

Were the goals believable?





Were the stakes high or compelling enough to keep me interested and worried?

Did the stakes seem genuine (not manufactured for the sake of drama)?

Did the overall structure hold together?

Was the plot predictable or did it surprise me? (did it read as a fresh story or the same as other novels in its genre)?





Look at the Point of View:

Did the narrative style fit the genre and book style?

Did I feel connected to the point-of-view character(s)?

Were there any points of view that felt unnecessary?

Look at the description and setting:

Was I ever bored by too much backstory, exposition, or description?

Did the world feel read and fleshed out?





Was I ever uncertain about what something looked like?

Look at the dialogue:

Were the dialogue tags clear?

Were the character voices different?

Were there any talking heads in white rooms?

Look at the pacing:

Was the pacing good?





Was I engaged in the story?

Did I need a break at any time in the story?

