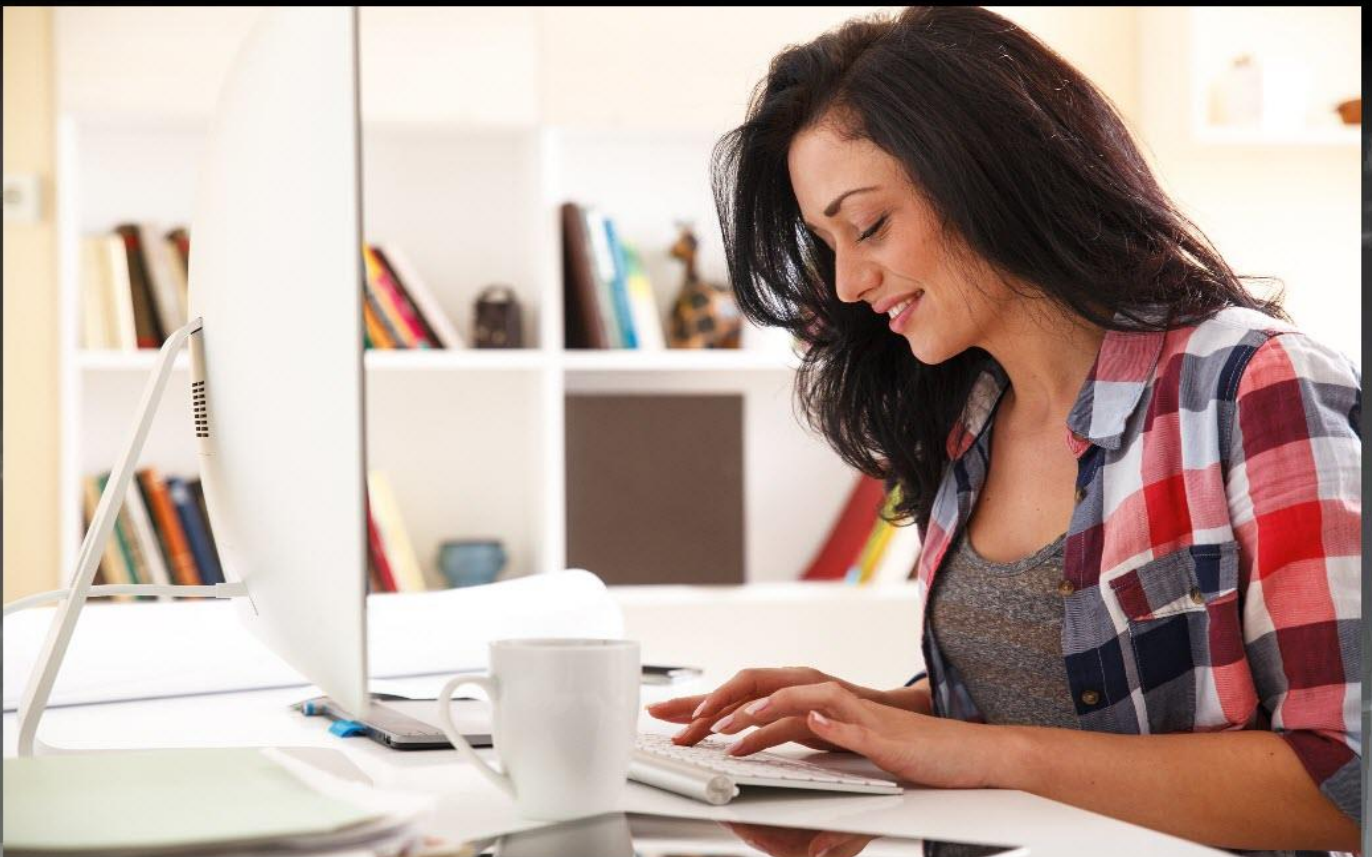


THE SECRET FORMULA TO PUBLISHING

A BEST-SELLING NOVEL





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The Secret Formula

Great story + ? = Success



Want to discover the secret formula to writing a best-selling novel?

We're talking to you, fiction writers. All of you.

- First time authors with a dream of publishing.
- Established career authors who work tirelessly to hit daily words and finish your next book.
- Authors drowning in the depths of Amazon rankings.
- Best-selling authors who are constantly trying new promos to stay on the charts.
- Self-published authors.
- Traditionally published authors.

No matter where you are in your writing career, **you want to write a book that sells.**

And there is a formula that will enhance your chance of success.

Great Story = Success

Sorry. This formula doesn't cut it. This is what we wish were true.

This formula is the ultimate ideal.

If you write the very best book you can, full of believable characters, a shocking plot twist, the blackest of black moments, and an ending that fulfills readers expectations, then it's going to fly off the shelves as the world recognizes it for the gem it is.



Novice writers believe all it takes to succeed is a great story. Not only is this idea not true, but it's terrible as well.

It dashes hopes. It puts the onus to sell on factors outside of your control. It's why there are so many people who write one novel, get discouraged by sales and lose confidence.

Think about it.

Your one book is competing against hundreds of thousands of others, and with the rise of self-publishing, that number continues to grow. There's no such thing as the best books rising to the top all on their own.

There's no such thing as the best books rising to the top all on their own.

Great Story + Support Team = Success

Who's on your support team?

- Your editor (either from a publishing house or a freelancer)?
- Your agent?
- Your beta readers?
- Your critique partner?

Successful authors know they need help polishing their work. Whether your team is working to get your self-published manuscript ready for publication, or helping you create the sort of book editors and agents want to see come through their slush pile, you've caught on to the idea that you can't do this alone.



Novice writers often overlook this approach, but let's be clear:

Literary agents receive 15 to 30 submissions per day and reject 99%!

If you're seeking representation, or looking to get picked up by the publisher of your dreams, you need to make sure you're delivering a manuscript that screams quality.

When your novel crosses the desk of a publishing professional, they're not going to read to the end. They're going to read a few pages, and draw a quick conclusion on if you're an amateur. On a level playing field of two unknown authors, the polished book will win out over one requiring more work.

On a level playing field of two unknown authors, the polished book will win out over one requiring more work.

The number of novels available is steadily multiplying while consumer spending is staying the same. Savvy readers are judging which books to buy based on reading the samples. Traditionally published authors and self-published authors are competing for the same buyers, and the stronger the team behind you, the better your chance for rising in the charts.

However, this formula is also weak, mainly because it places the control of your success in the hands of others.

And while other people will want to help you, **there is no one more invested in your success than you.**



A Better Formula for Success

Great story + YOU = Success

It's up to YOU to make your novel a success. Specifically, it's up to you to use the right tools to give your book every opportunity to rise to the top.

What are these tools?

- Your support team
- A marketing plan
- An online presence
- A business plan
- Measurable goals
- Easy-to-use and intuitive software
- Anything you find that can give you a competitive edge

When we say YOU, we mean a shift in thinking.

We mean you need to take ownership of your novel. Stop believing that it's up to others to edit your book, market your book, and sell your book.

No one has a vested interest in your success as much as you do.

So ask yourself. What are you doing to make your novel successful?



How many of these questions can you answer yes to?

- Do you do a rigorous self-edit or pay an editor to do it for you?
- Have you surrounded yourself with beta readers that know your genre and aren't afraid to give real feedback?
- Do you have an author page on Amazon? Goodreads?
- Do you have a website?
- A Facebook page? Active social media accounts?
- A marketing plan utilizing sales and email promotion?
- Have you offered advanced reader copies in exchange for honest reviews?
- Are you constantly evolving and paying attention to what's trending in your genre and writing books that readers want to read?
- Are you thinking of things we've left off this list and feeling happy that you're doing even more than this?

The more YES answers, the better your chances of success. And if you're doing all of this, you know it's hard work that comes with a cost, both financial and time-wise.

A lot of this requires marketing and social media knowledge, and there are plenty of experts to help you with that side of it.

But what about the editing part? More specifically, the self-editing element?

There's not much point putting time and effort into publishing and promoting your novel if it doesn't start off as polished as possible. Reviews are a powerful marketing tool, and reviewers will not hesitate to give a one-star rating to a wonderful story that's poorly edited.

You owe it to yourself to take control of the editing process. We're not saying *not* to hire an editor. We're saying that **it's time to implement a self-editing strategy that actually works!**



Let's talk about self-editing and success

You've heard it time and time again. You only have one chance to make a good first impression. And your novel needs to impress a lot of people if it's going to succeed. The truth is, it takes more than a great story to impress.

Readers—everyone from the savviest reviewers and editors to less technical, but fully invested buyers and beta readers—will notice awkwardness in your story. They might not recognize an abundance of repetitive words or too much passive voice, but they will know that there's something about your novel that keeps them from feeling truly engaged.

The craft of writing is hard work. Maybe you've taken writing courses to figure out the nuts and bolts of fiction. Or perhaps you're learning as you go, writing what feels natural and hoping to fine tune during the editing process.

One thing is certain. Whether you're a plotter or a pantser, getting to the end is a herculean task.

Readers will know that there's something about your novel that keeps them from feeling truly engaged.

The last thing you want to do after typing THE END is jump back into it and start self-editing.

Maybe you print out a copy and give it to someone to read. Or let it sit unread for a few weeks so you can come back to it with fresh eyes. Both great ideas, but there's still so much work to do.



Let's face it. You need to focus on your writing.

Dialogue. Voice. Description. Tone. The words you use to tell your story make the difference between a good read and an amazing, unputdownable story.

Verbs. Nouns. Adverbs. Adjectives. The words you choose, how often you use them, if you use them correctly, these are the things that you need to dig into when fine tuning your novel.

The choices you make in the editing process should tighten your writing, improve the flow of your story, and fine-tune your creative voice.

Editing isn't just about finding grammar mistakes and misspelled words. It's about tweaking sentences from ones that tell to those that show. It's about balancing sentence structure and length to create a compelling narrative.

The choices you make in the editing process should tighten your writing, improve the flow of your story, and fine-tune your creative voice.

"But self-editing is impossible!"

That's what you're thinking, right? After all, you've likely tried. You've discovered that when you spend months, maybe years, reworking the same manuscript, you can't see clearly.



That's why you so often turn to friends in the early stages, hoping they'll find the flaws that you can't. If you're a bit more seasoned, you rely on your editor. But while editors and beta readers play a great role in moving your novel along the road to publishing, they're going to do a far better job for you if they start with the best manuscript you can deliver.

And this is where the **YOU in the formula for success comes into play**. Because you're the one who chooses what tools go in your toolbox.

Most writers have the following :

- Word processing software that identifies spelling and grammar errors
- A dictionary
- Reference materials

More advanced writers might take advantage of specialized software; programs like advanced grammar checkers and more intuitive word processing programs designed specifically for novels and longer creative works.

And that's where we can help.

We've created a tool specifically for you, the fiction writer, that's designed to make you a better self-editor.

While editors and beta readers play a great role in moving your novel along the road to publishing, they're going to do a far better job for you if they start with the best manuscript you can deliver.



Great story + YOU + AutoCrit = Success

Ten years ago AutoCrit set out to find what makes a novel successful. We talked to everyone involved in the publishing process. We grilled editors for insights. Shadowed authors to observe their struggles. Queried agents to find out what were the elements of a strong book.

And every time, editing rose to the top.

We charted sentence length, passive voice vs. active voice, pacing, and word choice. You name it; we documented it.

For example, did you know, on average, you will find 136 adverbs in every 10,000 words of a published work of fiction? When you dig into specific genres, the number changes.

- Romance (132)
- Young adult (123)
- Science fiction / fantasy (144)

It's insights like this that allow AutoCrit to help you polish your manuscript.

Then we set out to create a program that searched out the weakest, most difficult to find aspects of editing.

AutoCrit gives you the power to self-edit with confidence, putting the control of your voice and narrative firmly in your hands.

The next section of this book, [The Self-editing Reference Guide](#), provides details, examples, and insights from all the research.



AutoCrit is easy to use and simple to understand. It's fine-tuned to allow you to dig as deep as you want.

You've heard it before. The first rule of writing is show, don't tell. But sometimes it's hard to take a step back and determine where you're falling short. No worries. We've studied the indicators of show vs. tell, and can help you pinpoint weak areas with just one click of your mouse.

The entire strong writing section of AutoCrit is designed to easily show you where you're using passive voice, clichés, and filler words, allowing you to decide what is part of your voice, and what you can tighten to refine your manuscript.

The screenshot shows the AutoCrit web application interface. The top navigation bar includes tabs for Home, Pacing & Momentum, Dialogue, Strong Writing, Word Choice, Repetition, and Compare to Fiction. Below this, there are buttons for Initial Pronoun and Names, Sentence Starters, Generic Descriptions, Homonyms, and Personal Words and Phrases. The main text area displays a paragraph from a manuscript with several words highlighted in red: 'Gregor', 'he', 'it's', 'Don't', 'He', 'His', 'she', and 'it'. A red arrow points from the text area to the sidebar. The sidebar on the right shows the 'Initial Pronoun and Names' analysis results. It includes a table with the following data:

| Word | Count | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| he | 38 | 100% |
| gregor | 25 | 66% |
| his | 14 | 37% |
| i | 12 | 32% |
| she | 11 | 29% |
| it | 11 | 29% |

A red arrow points from the sidebar to the text area.

Edit Directly Within Your Highlighted Manuscript

Analysis Sidebar Displays results



One of the things we take pride in is not only showing you results, but explaining how to interpret our analysis.

It's like a refresher course in the fundamentals of writing.

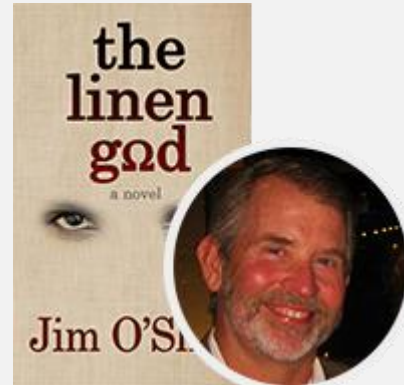
After all, you know that adverbs and dialogue tags don't mix, but can you remember why? Not a problem.

If AutoCrit suggests you might want to edit something, we're also going to let you know why. So you can determine if it's the right change for you.

The purpose of AutoCrit isn't for you to blindly accept every suggestion.

You need dialogue tags. Sometimes repetition is necessary. And often, there's no other way to say what you mean without using a cliché.

What AutoCrit does is show you potential areas of weakness, giving you the power to decide what stays and what goes.



"AutoCrit eliminates "lazy eye," as I like to call it—the tendency to look right past obvious issues in the manuscript. It's the crit partner I've never had!"

Jim O'Shea, Author



AutoCrit is a tool—perhaps the most powerful one you’ll use—designed to polish your work. It makes self-editing not just possible, but manageable.

AutoCrit shows things that even the best editor won’t find. We won’t get into the technical side of things, but if you’re familiar with Amazon and rankings, then you know the power of algorithms. Only in our case, we have algorithms that work for you.

Authors who try AutoCrit for the first time are quick to share their first impressions with us.

Quite often, a new user begins by running an overall summary of their novel. There they find graphs that study sentence length and comparisons to other novels in their genre.

And they feel a sense of accomplishment when they find obvious strong points to their novels.

That empowers them to dig deeper and work to polish other aspects of their manuscript. Sometimes we worry that they’ll never stop editing!

(Promise us that you will know when enough is enough and publish your novel.)



“AutoCrit forces me to dive in and rethink every paragraph, what I am saying and how I am saying it. I didn’t know where to begin or what to look for. With AutoCrit, I can now focus—one paragraph at a time—with pointed direction. AutoCrit is making me a better writer!”

Fred Raynaud , Author



Success isn't always guaranteed in this business. Even the best books sometimes get lost. That's why it's so important that you do everything in your power to give your novel an optimal chance at success.

From the first time you have a glimmer of an idea for your book, to your most recent marketing campaign to promote it, you are in control. Isn't it time to take control of the editing process as well?

The Best Formula For Success

Great story + You + AutoCrit = Success

[Sign up today to start polishing your manuscript to greatness!](#)

Don't stop reading yet!

In the following pages you'll find our Self-editing Reference Guide, covering everything from how to make your writing stronger to choosing the right words to bring your ideas to life.



Self-editing Reference Guide





Self-editing Reference Guide

Time and time again, AutoCrit users have asked us to bring together all the editing tips and tricks we offer in the AutoCrit application in an easy-to-use reference manual.

The next 80 pages are full of handy editing tips from helping you learn more about showing vs. telling to explaining why adverbs in dialogue weaken your writing (and how you can fix it!)



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PACING & MOMENTUM

Pacing and momentum are crucial components of fiction writing.

After all, you'll want to keep your readers "hooked" throughout your story.

Whether you're just getting started in writing or looking to break into fiction writing, you'll need to know how to pace a novel.

Balance fast- and slow-paced sections to keep your readers turning those pages.

This section will describe how to identify and improve your novels pacing and momentum and cover the following topics:

- [Pacing](#)
- [Sentence Variation](#)



Pacing

Have you ever watched a movie with non-stop action from start to finish, so you felt like you never had a second to catch your breath or learn about the characters? Or have you ever read a story where the author droned on about the character's thoughts, feelings, family history, and childhood, until you thought: Please, let something—anything—happen!

If so, you've encountered a problem with pacing.

Pacing refers to the momentum of a story. As writers, there are times when we want the reader frantically turning pages because there's so much high-energy action. And there are times when we want to slow down the story, to let the reader sink into the pages like a warm bath.



Pacing (continued)

Here are a few of my favorite strategies.

Introspection and backstory are better “sprinkled” than “dumped”

Be careful if you have too many paragraphs or pages of highlighted text in the Pacing Report. Backstory should be woven throughout the manuscript, rather than taking up long chunks of space in the book.

Match your pacing to your story.

Action scenes should have few slow-paced paragraphs. Reflective scenes can have more slow-paced sections.

Use more dialogue in fast-paced scenes and more narrative in slower scenes.

The quick-moving nature of dialogue can speed up a scene. Likewise, narrative can slow down a scene. Play with both techniques to control the momentum of your story.

Play with your sentence lengths.

Shorter sentences speed up a paragraph, while lengthy sentences slow down the momentum. For more insight on sentence-length variation, check out the section on Sentence Variation.



Pacing (continued)

The exception to the rule

Every chapter should have a balance between fast- and slow-paced sections—with one exception: The first chapter.

The first chapter should move quickly with only the sparest bit of backstory. A line or two to give the reader context is okay; even a short paragraph here and there might be okay. But for the most part, you want to save slow-paced sections for later in the manuscript.

Why? Because the first chapter is the most critical. It's the chapter that determines whether your reader will keep reading, whether an agent will offer you a contract, and whether a publisher will consider your book for print. (No pressure, right?) The first chapter represents the entire book. It tells the reader about much more than just the characters and situation—it shows them how you write and what they can expect in terms of storytelling.

If you bog that first chapter down with backstory, description, and excessive narrative, it sends the message that the whole book will be a cumbersome read. So keep that first chapter moving, and save the slow-paced sections for chapter two and beyond.



Pacing (continued)

How do I identify slow paced paragraphs in my manuscript?

Read your manuscript. This answer may be simple, but the implementation is not. It is difficult for most authors to remove themselves from the mindset of being the author. All too often, authors fall into the trap of believing that everything they put down on paper is necessary and invaluable to the story.

This is where a tool like AutoCrit comes in handy. Paragraphs highlighted in AutoCrit indicate the slow paced paragraphs in your story.

The screenshot shows the AutoCrit web interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, Pacing & Momentum, Dialogue, Strong Writing, Word Choice, Repetition, and Compare to Fiction. Below this, there's a sub-navigation bar with 'Sentence Variation' and 'Pacing' (which is selected). The main text area displays a manuscript excerpt. A paragraph is highlighted in red, indicating it is slow paced. The right sidebar shows the 'Pacing' analysis results, including a list of slow paced paragraphs.

Home Pacing & Momentum Dialogue Strong Writing Word Choice Repetition Compare to Fiction

Sentence Variation Pacing

Save Revision Load Revision Print Email Export Clear All Text Upload Jump to Chapter ▼

"Okay."

Placed beside an opium pipe was a small shoe, a shoe for a bound foot. Since being in China, Sadie had seen a few elderly women hobbling on canes with their deformed feet enclosed in simple black cotton shoes. But this was the first time she had ever seen a shoe from old China. The hand-sewn, embroidered silk shoe was three, maybe four, inches long. It had a one-inch heel and a toe that curved upwards. So this was a shoe that would cover a foot small enough to nestle in the

bowl of a teacup, she thought.

"I have to have this," she said to Xia.

Xia frowned. "Foot binding is a great shame for China."

Analyze by Chapters

Email | Print

Pacing

[How do I interpret this analysis?](#)

Select All | Deselect All

- ☒ PACING
 - ☒ It wasn't the f...
 - ☒ Heng spoke with...



Pacing (continued)

The bottom line

A good story has a mix of fast-paced and slow-paced sections. This variety helps us create tension in our stories, develop our characters, include descriptions, drive stories forward, and above all, maintain our reader's interest.

Pacing is one of the most important elements in a story. Balance fast- and slow-paced sections to keep your readers turning those pages.



Sentence Variation

Variety is the spice of life—and the same thing can be said about writing. Vibrant, interesting prose depends not just on the words you use, but also on the lengths of your sentences.

Varying the lengths of your sentences is a great way to keep your writing interesting. Too many sentences of the same length can become boring to the reader.

Take a look at these two paragraphs:

Ella was asleep on the couch. Simon watched her for a moment. He did not want to wake her. She looked so peaceful lying there. But it was getting late. They had to get going. He touched her shoulder and cheek. She sighed but did not stir.

If it sounds dull, that's because it is. The sentences are similar in length, which quickly becomes flat and boring. It also feels a tad juvenile, like this was written for children. And readers don't want to be talked down to.

Check out my humble revision:

Ella was asleep on the couch. Watching her, Simon felt reluctant to wake her. She looked so peaceful lying there. But it was getting late, and they really had to get going. He touched her shoulder, then her cheek. She sighed but did not stir.

See how much livelier that is? The words are almost identical in each paragraph, but the simple act of varying the sentence lengths instantly makes the prose more interesting and readable.



Sentence Variation (continued)

Now that you see how important it is to mix up your sentence lengths, here's a great little trick: Try to match the lengths of your sentences to the emotion or action in your scene.

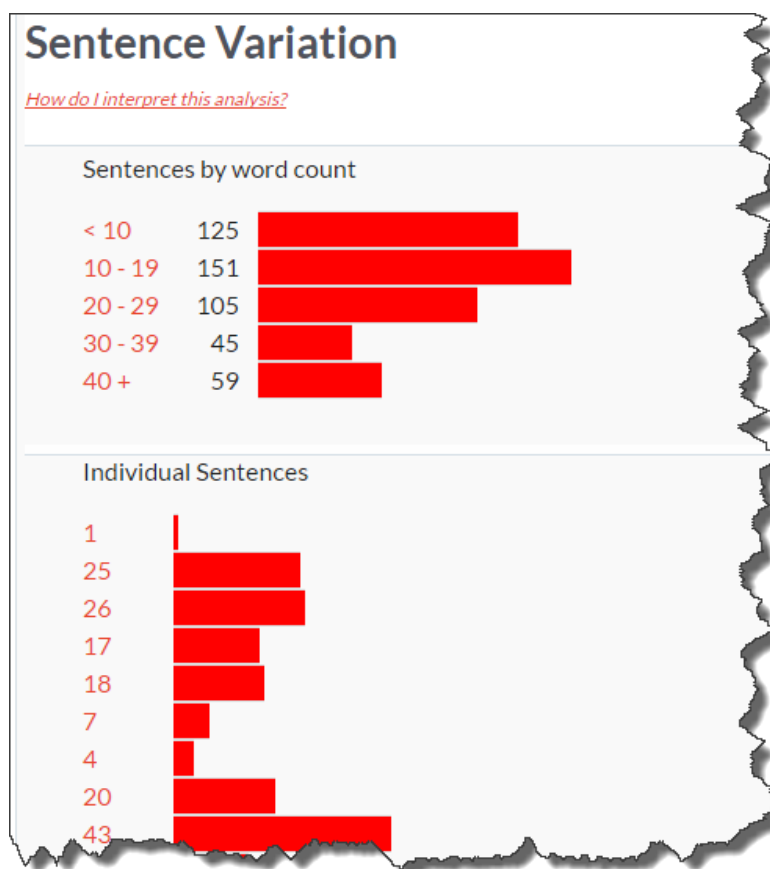
If you've got an action-packed scene with high drama, your sentences should be shorter and snappier—shorter sentences raise the tension, which is what you want in an action sequence. Likewise, if your scene is melancholic or descriptive, lean toward a mix of longer sentences to help reflect the contemplative nature of the scene.



Sentence Variation (continued)

How to look for sentence variation in your manuscript

You can check for sentence variation on your own—or you can get help from AutoCrit.



AutoCrit provides statistics on the length of each sentence as well as the frequency of sentence length found in your manuscript. With a quick glance, you can instantly see whether your sentences vary nicely in length, or if you have too many sentences of similar length close together. You can also have the system highlight all sentences within a range of lengths so you can see where you have clusters of short and long sentences.



Sentence Variation (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

Varying the length of your sentences is one way to add variety to your prose. Another way is to mix up the how you start your sentences.

Sometimes we fall into the same patterns as we write, always starting with the same construction or word choice. Three of the most common sentence-starter pitfalls include too frequently starting with pronouns (He, She, It); too often starting with conjunctions (But, And, For, So, Yet, Because); and starting too many times with an –ING verb (Running down the hall, ...).

You can check for these on your own—or you can get help from AutoCrit:

- The [Initial Pronoun Analysis](#) helps you see how often you start sentences in your manuscript with either a pronoun (She, He, It) or a character name.
- The [Sentence Starters Analysis](#) helps you find sentences that begin with initial conjunctions and -ING verbs.

The bottom line

The simple act of varying your sentence lengths will have a huge impact on the vibrancy and readability of your writing. So mix it up!



DIALOGUE

Dialogue is one of the challenging areas of writing. Strong dialogue can be one of the most memorable parts of your manuscript. It can bring your story and your characters to life. It will keep your readers hooked and your story moving.

When an agent or editor receives your manuscript, he or she will frequently turn to a passage of dialogue first because this is the fastest way to tell how well you write. More amateur mistakes occur in dialogue passages than anywhere else in a manuscript.

This section will go through the basic elements of dialogue and provide strategies to improve your writing and cover the following topics:

- [Dialogue Tags](#)
- [Adverbs in Dialogue](#)



Dialogue Tags

Dialogue tags are the phrases in your manuscript that identify a speaker within written dialogue.

Dialogue tags have magical powers. Why are they magical? Well, because they disappear. Readers read right over them. And that's what you want them to do. Dialogue tags exist for only one purpose: to identify for the reader who is speaking in your manuscript. That's it. You want the focus on the dialogue itself. You don't want readers to get distracted by the tag.

This is one of the most common mistakes new writers make. They think words like asked or said are boring or repetitive, so they try to use more interesting alternatives.

Trust me: The dialogue tag is not the place to get fancy. Dialogue tags should melt into the background. Said and asked are all you need. Resist the urge to use queried instead of asked, or exclaimed instead of said. All those flourishes will do is tell an agent or publisher you're a newbie.

Now that we're squared away on that front, let's talk about how often you should use dialogue tags.

The answer: sparingly. Remember, the only purpose of these tags is to identify who is speaking. So only use them as often as you need to, and no more. Even a quiet little word like said will become annoying if you use it too much.



Dialogue Tags (continued)

Take a look at this example:

“Where are we going?” John asked.
“To the park,” Aunt Ginny said. “Do you want to play on the slides?”
“Not really,” John said. “It’s too hot.”
“It’ll be cooler under the trees,” Ginny said.
“I’d rather go to the pool,” John said.

See how quickly those saids add up? Since most of them aren’t needed, let’s see what this looks like when we eliminate the extras:

“Where are we going?” John asked.
“To the park,” Aunt Ginny said. “Do you want to play on the slides?”
“Not really. It’s too hot.”
“It’ll be cooler under the trees.”
“I’d rather go to the pool.”

Much better—it’s leaner, clearer, and puts the focus where it belongs: on the dialogue, not the tags.



Dialogue Tags (continued)

The exception to the rule

It's okay to deviate occasionally from asked or said. Good alternatives could include exclaimed, replied, or countered—as long as their use is justified, such as when you're trying to show the volume of a speaker's voice:

“What do you think they're going to do to us?” Jennifer whispered.

“I can't take it anymore!” John screamed.

A word of caution: If you mix it up, avoid using a dialogue tag to show an action that can't actually be accomplished in real life. For instance:

“I want to go home,” Lily sighed.

A character cannot speak and sigh at the same time; this dialogue should be revised to:

“I want to go home,” Lily said, sighing.



Dialogue Tags (continued)

How to look for dialogue tags in your manuscript

AutoCrit helps you identify the kinds of dialogue tags you're using in your manuscript and how often you're using them. It helps you determine whether you need to cut excessive or unnecessary tags and more clearly see what kinds of words you're using in your tags.

The screenshot shows the AutoCrit web interface. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Dialogue Tags' (selected), 'Dialogue Tag Frequency', and 'Adverbs In Dialogue'. Below the tabs is a navigation bar with links: 'Save Revision', 'Load Revision', 'Print', 'Email', 'Export', 'Clear All Text', 'Upload', and a 'Jump to Chapter' dropdown. The main text area on the left contains a manuscript excerpt with several dialogue tags highlighted in red boxes: 'said', 'begged', 'asked', 'answered', and 'said'. On the right, a sidebar titled 'Dialogue Tag Frequency' is open. It includes a 'Hide Sidebar' button and a link to 'How do I interpret this analysis?'. The sidebar contains a table of dialogue tags and their frequencies, with red bar charts next to each count.

| Select All Deselect All | | |
|---|----|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIALOGUE TAGS | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> said | 26 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> asked | 12 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> replied | 3 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> responded | 2 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continued | 2 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> answered | 1 | <div></div> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> turned | 1 | <div></div> |



Dialogue Tags (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit shows that you use lots of dialogue tags other than said or asked, chances are you may be committing another faux-pas: attaching adverbs to your dialogue tags. For example:

"I've had enough," Simon said angrily.

Dialogue tags are not the place to convey emotion—the dialogue itself should do that. If you think you need an adverb to convey emotion, your scene needs to be written so the character's dialogue and actions more clearly express that emotion. It's the difference between showing and telling.

Telling:

"I've had enough," Simon said angrily.

This simply tells us that Simon is angry, but his emotion isn't demonstrated through his actions or the dialogue itself.

Showing:

Simon shoved back his chair and slammed his fist on the table. "I've had enough," he said, clenching his jaw. "This discussion is over."

Here, Simon's dialogue and actions more clearly shows his emotions.

You may find it helpful to check out the [Adverbs](#) and [Showing Vs Telling](#) analysis when editing your dialogue tags.



Dialogue Tags (continued)

The bottom line

Use dialogue tags only as needed—and when you do, keep it simple. Asked and said are all you need.



Adverbs in Dialogue

A major pitfall of amateur writers is the use of adverbs in dialogue tags. Adverbs are those –ly words that modify verbs.

For example:

quickly asked.

said angrily.

wistfully said.

happily replied.

In fiction, adverbs tend to weaken your writing. So the general rule in fiction is to eliminate as many adverbs as possible, and replace them with stronger, more specific words.



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

How to look for adverbs in your manuscript

AutoCrit will quickly highlight adverbs and report how often you're using them.

Dialogue Tags Adverbs In Dialogue

'I hate you!' she shouted **angrily**, nostrils flaring.

'I can't believe it,' Clarissa said **fiercely**, gathering a child into her lap. 'You haven't changed.'

'Nor have you.'

'Come on!'

She hadn't, not really. She'd put on weight, but her figure could stand it. You couldn't stay Beata Beatrix forever.

'Now then, what can I do for you?' she asked when the tea was poured.

She'd heard about Muffin. She was up to date with all the news, including Ridley's new project and Costello's break with his father. 'What makes you think I'd want to take over?' she asked.

'It would be a job for you, help you along.'



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

So what do you do with adverbs found by AutoCrit? With dialogue, it's not as simple as just replacing the adverb. An adverb in a dialogue tag means you probably have to rewrite the dialogue itself.

Here's why:

Writers often rely on adverbs in a dialogue tag to convey emotion and tone. But that should happen in the dialogue itself, not in the dialogue tag.

For example:

"I've had enough," Simon said angrily.

This simply tells us that Simon is angry. But that emotion isn't demonstrated through his actions or the dialogue itself.

Remember what we said earlier about dialogue tags: Readers read right over them. Their only purpose is to tell the reader who is speaking.

So if you want the reader to feel Simon's anger, you have to show them—through the dialogue itself.



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

Here's how you might do it:

"You disgust me. This conversation is over," Simon said.

Here, Simon's words are angry, so you don't need to rely on the adverb angrily to convey that. The dialogue is stronger and the emotion is clear.

You could also include some brief actions or descriptions to eliminate the adverb and convey the character's emotion. For example:

Simon shoved back his chair and slammed his fist on the table. "I've had enough," he said, clenching his jaw. "This discussion is over."

The actions and description here help show how Simon feels, so we can easily eliminate the word angrily from that dialogue tag.

Here's what you don't want to do, however:

"I've had enough," Simon said, angry.

This replaces the adverb, but we still have the same basic problem: telling instead of showing. So don't be fooled into thinking you're all set just because you don't have an -ly word there.



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

Adverbs often become crutches, even for accomplished writers. But they're lazy writing and a huge red flag for agents and editors.

Here's how to test yourself: Read your dialogue out loud without any dialogue tags.

If the lines of dialogue by themselves do not convey the emotion you're trying to express, that means you're relying on adverbs and your dialogue needs to be rewritten.



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

Exception to the rule

Of course, every rule has an exception, and here's the one for adverbs in dialogue tags. If the tone or emotion of the dialogue could be confusing or unclear to the reader, you might use an adverb in a dialogue tag. This strategy is most often used when the character speaks sarcastically or ironically, jokes, or struggles to be polite.

For example, consider this dialogue:

"Maybe I should come upstairs for awhile," he said.

"No, thank you," she said.

Let's say your protagonist is at the end of an awful first date. Her date suggests he come upstairs with her, and she replies with: "No, thank you."

That "No, thank you" doesn't tell us much, does it? We'd have to assume she's politely declining. But what if the same line of dialogue were rewritten as the example below?

"No, thank you," she said emphatically.

Now we see there's force behind her words and she's making sure he doesn't come upstairs.

The adverb makes her tone clearer even though her words are exactly the same.



Adverbs in Dialogue (continued)

The bottom line

You want to use adverbs as sparingly as possible. In general, it's better to use stronger, more specific words and descriptions.



STRONG WRITING

We all want to strengthen our writing and eliminate common fiction style errors. This section will help you identify areas of your writing that indicate faux pas and weak writing and cover the following topics:

- [Passive Voice Indicators](#)
- [Showing vs. Telling](#)
- [Clichés](#)
- [Redundancies](#)
- [Unnecessary Filler Words](#)
- [Adverbs](#)



Passive Voice Indicators

Passive voice. Just hearing that term conjures images of ninth-grade English class with all its confusing grammar rules. Never fear: AutoCrit is here to help you figure out what passive voice really means, why it's (usually) bad, and how to avoid it in your manuscript.

In the English language, there are two ways to construct a sentence: **active voice** and **passive voice**.

Active voice

In active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action. For example:

John stole the priceless vase.

John is the subject, and it's clear he's the one stealing the vase.

Another example:

The cat sat on the mat.

It's clear who is doing the action (the cat).



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

Passive voice

In passive voice, the object of the action is made into the subject of the sentence, so it can become confusing who does the action. For example:

The priceless vase was stolen by John.

Or:

The mat was sat on by the cat.

Think of that little ditty from the 60s:

“I Heard it Through the Grapevine.”

In passive voice, it would be:

“It was Heard Through the Grapevine.”

Ack! Nobody can dance to that.



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

Passive voice is a clunky structure—especially because the part about who or what does the action often gets dropped entirely in passive voice.

For example:

The priceless vase was stolen.

Or:

The mat was sat on.

See how it can get confusing for the reader?

Passive voice often creeps in when we're being lazy about who or what is performing the action. But readers know it's lazy, as do publishers and agents. So take the time to turn your passive sentence into an active one.



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

How to turn passive voice into active voice?

Simple: Just ask yourself who's doing the action, and make sure that's clear in the sentence.

True, identifying passive voice can be tricky. Technically, passive voice is not grammatically incorrect, so your typical word-processing software doesn't always flag it or catch all instances of it.

That's where AutoCrit comes in. One way we identify passive voice in your manuscript is to look for some of the classic indicators, such as forms of the verb to be— like had/has and was/were.

Adverbs **Passive Voice** Showing vs. Telling Clichés Redundancies Unnecessary Filler Words

He **was** gone for six weeks. Muffin **was** not, at first, concerned. Although on the whole he disliked travelling, Ridley often took impromptu trips. He **had** patrons as far away as Tangiers and California whose doors **were** always open to him. In his absence, Muffin carried on much as normal, making arrangements, and forging his signature on the paperwork. But she needed the artist himself for an exhibition **she'd** organised in Dublin, the town where he **was** born. Ridley **was** not so famous that he could afford be reclusive. He came back - just in time for the opening - claiming **he'd** forgotten all about it.



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

For instance:

The vase was stolen.

Or:

The mat was sat on.

Still, not every use of the verb to be automatically means you're using passive voice—so make sure you review each sentence AutoCrit flags to check for passive voice and consider if it should be changed.

What is meant by the term 'indicator'?

AutoCrit finds words that can and often do indicate passive voice - but can also simply indicate a passive (weak) verb. You decide whether a change is necessary.



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

The exception to the rule

Passive voice gets a bad rap, but it can occasionally work in fiction—if you do it right. Say, for instance, that you want to emphasize the object of the sentence instead of the subject. Passive voice is the answer!

For instance, say you want to put the focus on the priceless vase and make the reader curious about who stole it. Then passive voice is perfect:

The priceless vase was stolen.

Another example of passive voice:

Fifty signatures were needed to get the stop sign installed.

This puts the focus where it belongs--on the signatures rather than on the stop sign, which is less important in this case.

Another way to use passive voice is to show when someone is trying to dodge responsibility:

“Mistakes were made,” Senator Collins said in his speech to the angry voters.

Clearly, the guy is trying to dodge the blame—a move perfectly underscored through the use of passive voice.



Passive Voice Indicators (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

Passive voice indicates a lack of specificity and clarity, which also occurs when writers show instead of tell and use generic descriptions—so if AutoCrit flags passive voice, check your descriptions.

Generic descriptions are fuzzy, ambiguous words—words like nice, good, uncomfortable, or pretty. Sometimes known as abstract words, such descriptions make it difficult for the reader to truly “see” the scene. Abstract words merely tell, when every writer knows the goal is to show.

Check out the [Generic Descriptions](#) and [Showing Versus Telling](#) analysis for help spotting and improving those lazy words and descriptions.

The bottom line

In fiction, passive voice is frowned upon because it can be clunky, confusing or unclear to the reader. And good fiction relies on crisp, clear writing – so stay active whenever possible.



Showing vs. Telling

It's the first rule of writing, and for good reason.

In a nutshell, showing is about using description and action to help the reader experience the story. Telling is when the author summarizes or uses exposition to simply tell the reader what is happening. For example:

Telling:

John was sad to see his girlfriend leave.

Showing:

John wiped tears down his face as he watched his girlfriend board the plane.

Here's a longer example:

Telling:

The house was creepy.

Showing:

Only a single dim candle lit the room. The house smelled like dust and rotting wood, and something faintly metallic that made John think of blood. Stuffed animals were mounted around the room: a wild-eyed buck, a grizzly frozen in fury, a screech owl with sharp yellow talons.



Showing vs. Telling (continued)

In both examples, showing makes the writing vivid and more descriptive. Showing also helps readers experience the story by allowing them to interpret the descriptions of places, actions, and scenes.

Telling, on the other hand, is flat and boring and limits the experience for the reader. It also tells editors and agents you're an amateur. After all, if the very first rule of writing is show, don't tell, then telling says you don't know the first thing about writing.

So how do you turn a tell into a show? Here are four great strategies:

1. Use strong verbs: Don't use walk if you can say gallop, skip, saunter, stroll or amble.
2. Use specific nouns and clear adjectives in descriptions that paint a picture for the reader. Don't just tell us Grandma baked a pie; say a cinnamon-apple pie with a golden crust rested on the windowsill above the sink.
3. Include sensory details—describe how something sees, smells, sounds, tastes, and feels
4. Use dialogue: “‘Don't you walk out of here!’ Mom yelled’ is better than Mom was angry.



Showing vs. Telling (continued)

The exception to the rule

Contrary to popular belief, there are times when telling may be better than showing—namely, when describing how a character thinks or feels, otherwise known as internal narrative.

Internal narrative is the private monologue that makes readers feel as though we're inside a character's head, privy to thoughts and feelings the character doesn't necessarily express out loud or through his actions. Internal narrative is essential because it helps us understand exactly what makes a character tick—his fears, his motivations, his secret dreams. Getting to walk around in a character's head for a while is one of the best parts about reading, and you're depriving your reader of that pleasure if you don't have clear, detailed internal narrative.

Telling is sometimes a better strategy than showing when it comes to writing internal narrative. Here's why: Showing relies on a character's actions.

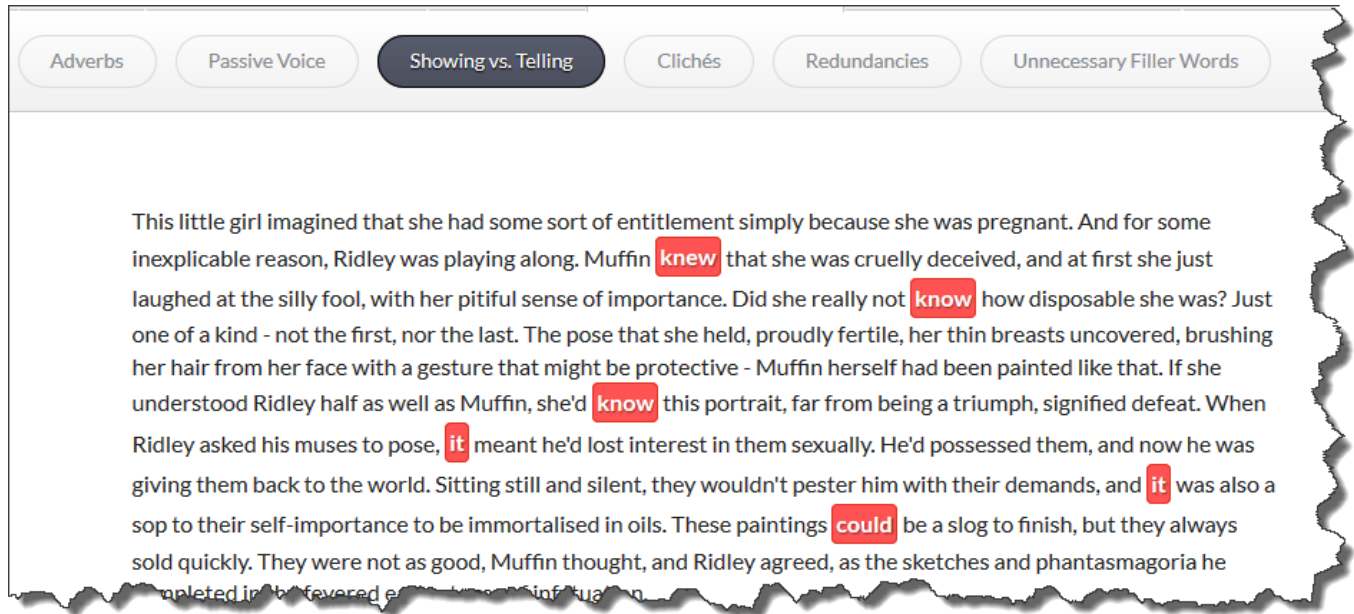
“He shoved back his chair and slammed his fist against the table.”

This might show us that a character is angry, but we have no idea what he's actually thinking. Maybe he's not really angry, but scared. Or maybe he's secretly thrilled but is pretending to be outraged. We don't know unless you tell us.

Yes, in nine cases out of ten, it's infinitely preferable to show John is angry by describing the way his fist hit the table or how hard he slammed the door on his way out of the room. But sometimes, you just need to tell it like it is.



Showing vs. Telling (continued)



Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit finds that you tend to tell instead of show, you may be guilty of several similar writer gaffes, such as using too many [adverbs](#), relying on [generic descriptions](#), or writing weak [dialogue](#).

All three of these writing styles are forms of telling that will put your reader to sleep. Never fear: AutoCrit can help you spot those pitfalls too, so you can keep your prose—and your reader—energized.

The bottom line

Showing versus telling is the essence of good storytelling. In 99 percent of cases, it's better to show.



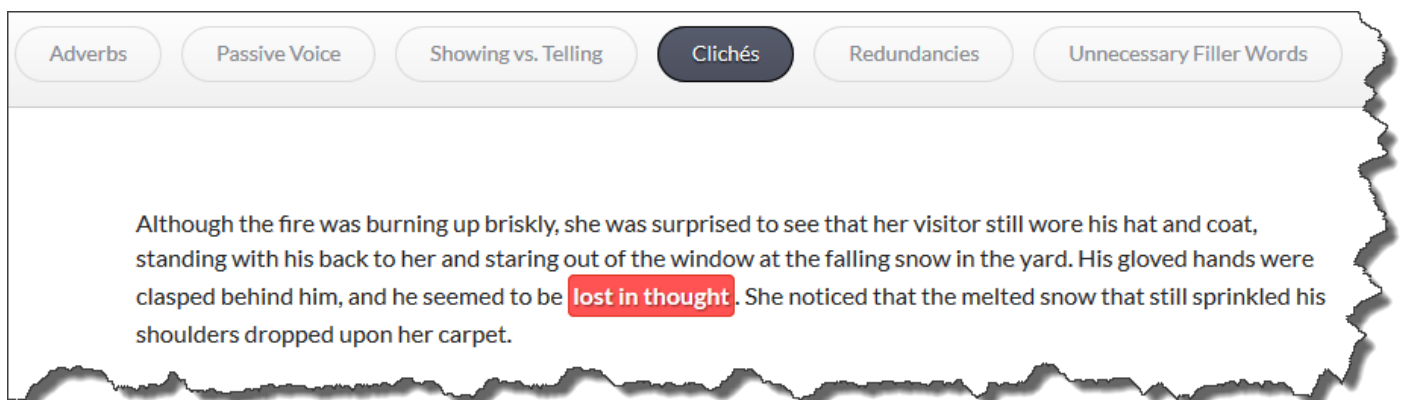
Clichés

- He wanted all hands on deck...
- She had an axe to grind...
- It was tough to make ends meet...
- His hands were tied...
- The game was a nail biter...

If these phrases sound familiar, it's because they are. They're clichés--phrases that have become so overused they're considered stale and unoriginal.

There are thousands of clichés out there, so it's no wonder they sometimes creep into our writing during the drafting stage. But they can make your prose feel boring, unimaginative—or worse, amateurish. Now that you're editing, it's time to rephrase those little buggers so your writing stays fresh.

Thankfully, AutoCrit can help you spot them—but the tricky part is coming up with something more original.





Clichés (continued)

Here are a couple of my favorite strategies

Let your characters be your guide.

Replace a cliché with a phrase unique to your character. For instance, say you have a character who is a chef; instead of saying she's as "nervous as a cat on a hot tin roof," say she's as "nervous as the day she threw her first dinner party."

Use settings or situations as inspiration.

Align your phrases with the scene itself. For example, say you have a character who is about to play quarterback in the big game; instead of writing, "Simon's heart was racing," say "Simon's heart thundered in time with the drum corps marching its way across the field."

Be specific.

Clichés are often generalizations, so a quick way to revise them is simply to be more specific. For instance, instead of writing, "Penelope woke in the middle of the night," say "Penelope woke at 3 a.m."



Clichés (continued)

The exception to the rule

While most clichés should be rephrased, you don't have to eliminate every last one. An occasional cliché is okay, especially if it works in context—for example, you may have a character who uses clichés in dialogue:

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” my grandfather said, holding out my piggybank and smiling as I deposited my allowance.

You may also have a phrase that looks like a cliché but is perfectly legitimate.

Consider these two examples:

The pair worked side by side for years.

John laid the napkins side by side.

The phrase “side by side” is a cliché—but in these examples, that phrase is used in two different ways. The first example is definitely a cliché. “Side by side” is an overused phrase that should be revised: “The pair shared the same cubicle for five years.” The second example, however, simply shows a factual description of John’s actions. Changing the description to “next to each other” or something similar wouldn't necessarily improve the sentence. So that one can stay.

While most clichés should be avoided like the plague (ha, see what I did there?)—make sure you review each potential cliché before revising.



Clichés (continued)

The bottom line

Strong writing is crisp and distinct. Clichés are cheesy and amateurish. And you're better than that.



Redundancies

Redundancies are words that can be eliminated from your text because they repeat what has already been expressed or conveyed elsewhere in the sentence.

For example:

He reversed the car back into the driveway.

can be simplified to:

He reversed the car into the driveway.

Or:

He threw his keys onto the table.

could become:

He threw his keys on the table.

Or:

The roof outside was covered in snow.

could be:

The roof was covered in snow.

Eliminating redundancies helps make your prose leaner and cleaner, which improves readability.

.



Redundancies (continued)

Adverbs Passive Voice Showing vs. Telling Clichés **Redundancies** Unnecessary Filler Words

All of them entered a limbo during this time. Few of the children had nine to five jobs, so it was relatively simple to work out a rota that became such a **regular routine** they almost forgot it was going to end. They took scented soaps and orchids - the sort of feminine luxuries she never used to bother with before. Lucia read to her; she was good at reading aloud. And she spoke in a kind of monologue about Tatiana's reviews or the boat Sinbad was building, the kind of thing she knew gave Muffin pleasure. Lucia's position was the least flexible - none of the others had clock-watching jobs - but she managed to get down there as often as she could, finishing her marking and writing reports on the train.

The exception to the rule

While most redundancies should be rephrased, you don't have to eliminate every last one. An occasional redundancy is okay, especially if it works in context—for example, you may have a character who uses them in dialogue.

The bottom line

Strong writing is crisp and distinct. Redundancies are amateurish and weigh down your sentences.



Unnecessary Filler Words

As writers, we know every word has to earn its place on the page. That means tightening each sentence until it's lean, clear and free of fluff. So those pesky little filler words have got to go.

Filler words are words that creep into our writing during the drafting stage, such as that, just, even, seem, very or really. We use these words all the time when we talk, so of course they slip into our writing. The problem is that they can become a habit, popping up three or four times a page.

For the reader, that little filler word quickly becomes the written equivalent of someone who uses like repeatedly in conversation: "Like, it was raining, and the train was late, like, again..." In other words, super annoying. Take a look:

Even though the moon was shining and the sky was clear, Kaitlin couldn't help but feel unnerved as she walked to her car. She quickened her pace and even pulled her keys from her bag and clutched them in her hand. She tried to calm her nerves. If she screamed, would anyone even hear her?

The first even was innocent enough, but by the end of the paragraph, the evens become rather noticeable. And two out of three here are unnecessary; they can be eliminated with no change at all to the story.



Unnecessary Filler Words (continued)

Even though the moon was shining and the sky was clear, Kaitlin couldn't help but feel unnerved as she walked to her car. She quickened her pace, pulling her keys from her bag and clutching them in her hand. She tried to calm her nerves. If she screamed, would anyone hear her?

Much better. Fortunately, the AutoCrit Editor will help you identify your fillers, so you can cut, cut, cut.

Adverbs Passive Voice Showing vs. Telling Clichés Redundancies Unnecessary Filler Words

This little girl imagined **that** she had some sort of entitlement simply because she was pregnant. And for some inexplicable reason, Ridley was playing along. Muffin knew **that** she was cruelly deceived, and at first she **just** laughed at the silly fool, with her pitiful sense of importance. Did she really not know how disposable she was? **Just** one of a kind - not the first, nor the last. The pose **that** she held, proudly fertile, her thin breasts uncovered, brushing her hair from her face with a gesture **that** might be protective - Muffin herself had been painted like **that**. If she understood Ridley half as well as Muffin, she'd know this portrait, far from being a triumph, signified defeat. When Ridley asked his muses to pose, it meant he'd lost interest in them sexually. He'd possessed them, and now he was giving them back to the world. Sitting still and silent, they wouldn't pester him with their demands, and it was also a sop to their self-importance to be immortalised in oils. These paintings could be a slog to finish, but they always sold quickly. They were not as good, Muffin thought, and Ridley agreed, as the sketches and phantasmagoria he completed in the fevered early stages of infatuation.



Unnecessary Filler Words (continued)

The exception to the rule

Not all filler words need to go. If you have one that serves a purpose—like in the first sentence of our example above—then by all means, keep it. The goal is to eliminate the unnecessary words and cut or change anything that might become distracting to the reader.

The bottom line

Filler words are almost always fluff. Cut unnecessary words to keep your sentences tight and your readers happy.



Adverbs

Adverbs are those –ly words, like quickly or angrily, that we tend to rely on in early drafts. But now that you’re in the editing process, most of them need to go.

Why remove adverbs?

Adverbs rely on weak verbs and adjectives, which make your writing boring.

How do I remove them?

It’s an easy fix: The adverb and the weak verb or adjective almost always can be replaced with a single powerful verb.

For example, instead of . . .

He walked quickly

. . . it’s more descriptive to say:

He ran, galloped, jogged, bolted, or raced.

Think about it . . .

He raced through the parking lot

. . . is much livelier than:

He walked quickly through the parking lot.

Or . . .

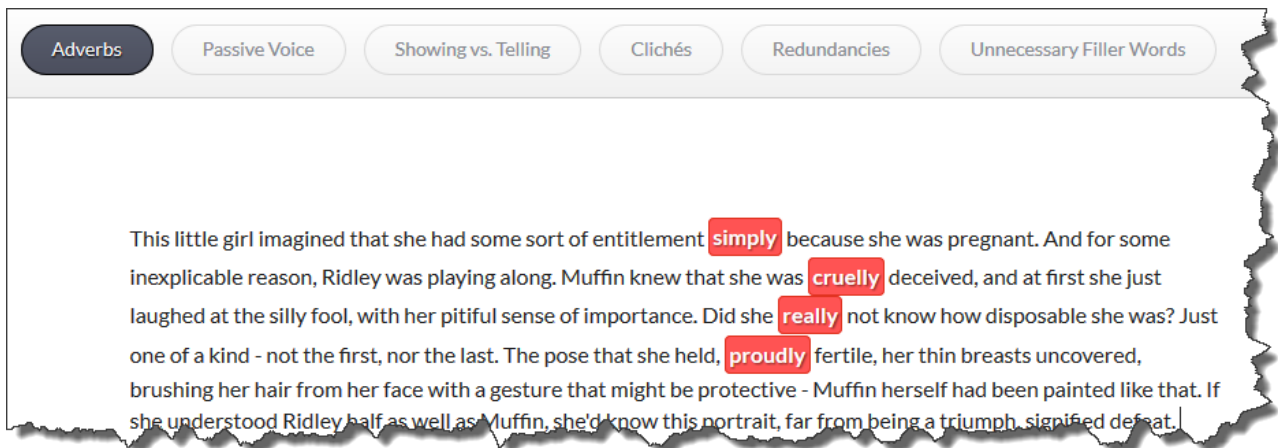
She looked very pretty

. . . is not nearly as strong as:

She looked stunning.



Adverbs (continued)



Adverbs in dialogue

Another sign of an inexperienced writer is the use of adverbs in dialogue tags. Dialogue tags are statements that identify who is speaking, such as he said or she whispered.

For instance:

“Don’t you walk away from me!” he shouted angrily.

Get rid of those adverbs--you don’t need them! For starters, the writer already shows the reader the character is angry; after all, his words are angry, and the dialogue tag says he’s shouting.

If you feel like you need to include an adverb to convey how somebody is speaking, that’s a sign you probably need to revise the dialogue itself.



Adverbs (continued)

Another reason to search and destroy

Most agents and editors loathe adverbs. A manuscript littered with adverbs indicates the writer either didn't know to come up with a more powerful verb (and is therefore inexperienced) or the writer knew but didn't bother. And that's definitely not the impression you want to make.

It's worth combing through your manuscript to eliminate as many adverbs as possible.

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit shows that you rely on adverbs, you may need to take another look at all your verbs. Strong, sexy verbs shouldn't be used just to replace weak verbs or adjectives and adverbs, but also to replace any boring or run-of-the-mill verb or adjective.

For example, you could find a dozen better verbs than “sat.”

Instead of . . .

Jane sat on the couch.

. . . you could say:

Jane sank into the couch.

Or:

Jane slumped onto the couch

Or:

Jane flopped on the couch

Or:

Jane perched on the couch.

Every one of those verbs is more specific and descriptive than sat. So look for ways to spice up your verbs. Your readers will thank you.



Adverbs (continued)

The exception to the rule

Not every adverb has to be destroyed. Even wildly successful authors (see, I just used one right there!) have been known to use the occasional adverb. So don't feel like you have to eliminate every last one from your manuscript.

How will you know when you've got too many? Take a look at the AutoCrit Overused Words Report for a comparison of the number of adverbs found in your writing with those found in published fiction.

Most agents and editors loathe adverbs. A manuscript littered with adverbs indicates the writer either didn't know to come up with a more powerful verb (and is therefore inexperienced) or the writer knew but didn't bother. And that's definitely not the impression you want to make.

It's worth combing through your manuscript to eliminate as many adverbs as possible.

The bottom line

Why use two weak words when one strong verb or adjective will do the trick? Get rid of those adverbs and your prose will magically become tighter, leaner, and more dynamic.



WORD CHOICE

With over a million words available in the English language alone, you have decisions to make.

Yet it can be a challenge to find words that capture your meaning and convey it to your readers without losing them.

This section will help you navigate through common pitfalls you may encounter when choosing your words and cover the following topics:

- [Initial Pronouns and Names](#)
- [Sentence Starters](#)
 - [Initial Conjunctions](#)
 - [Initial ING Words](#)
- [Generic Descriptions](#)



Initial Pronoun and Names

How often you start sentences in your manuscript with either a pronoun (she, he, it) or a name?

Imagine if every sentence in a novel started the same way:

Joe heard footsteps coming up the stairs. Joe froze. Joe looked around, trying to find a place to hide. Joe heard the footsteps reach the landing and head down the hall toward his room. Joe felt panicked.

How boring would that be?

In the drafting stage, it's easy to fall into the same patterns—especially when it comes to starting a sentence with a pronoun (he, she, it, they, and so on) or a character name. And that quickly becomes stale and boring. Good writing has variety, a mix of sentence structures that keep prose lively and interesting.

Now that you're in the editing stage, it's time to mix it up. Here's what our example would look like if we revised some of the sentence structures so we weren't always starting with Joe's name:

Joe heard footsteps coming up the stairs. He froze, then looked around for a place to hide. The footsteps reached the landing and headed down the hall toward his room. Panic flooded his stomach.

Instantly, we've made the writing stronger and more interesting, just by mixing up the sentence structure.



Initial Pronoun and Names (continued)

Here's another example.

Boring:

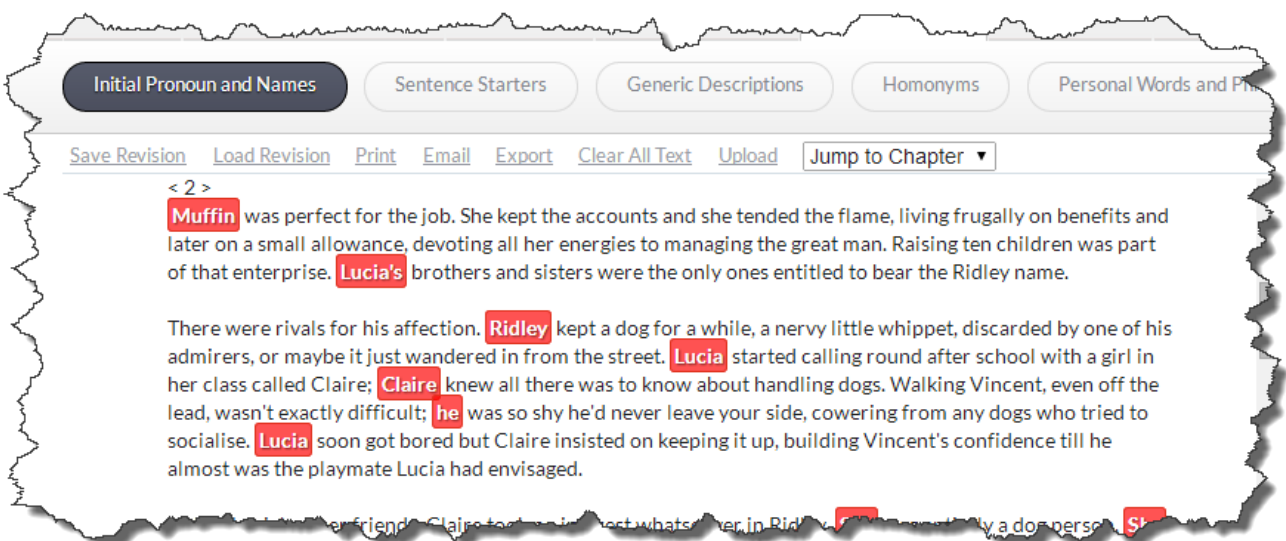
John walked to the store. He bought a carton of milk and a frozen pizza. He saw Mary in the checkout line.

Better:

John walked to the store to buy a carton of milk and a frozen pizza. The checkouts were crowded, but he spotted his friend Mary in the last line and wheeled his cart over to talk to her.

A funny thing happened when I revised that paragraph: Changing the sentence structure forced me to add more detail. That, plus the variation in the sentence constructions, makes the paragraph much more interesting to read.

And that's what it's all about—keeping our writing lively and our readers interested.





Initial Pronoun and Names (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit shows that you have a tendency to start your sentences with an initial pronoun or name, you may need to take a closer look at your sentence structures throughout your manuscript.

You can check this on your own—or you can get help from AutoCrit. The [Sentence Variation Analysis](#) visually represents the length of each sentence in your manuscript. It's a quick and easy way to “see” the variation and rhythm of your prose.

The bottom line

Pronouns and character names are important—but they don't always belong at the beginning of a sentence. Mix up your sentence structures to keep your writing fresh.



Sentence Starters

As writers, we want to mix up our sentence structures—it makes our writing livelier and more interesting than if every sentence starts the same way. But we have to watch out for two common pitfalls with sentence construction: starting sentences with an initial conjunction or an initial –ING verb.

Initial conjunctions are when you start your sentences with a conjunction, such as And, But, Or, For, So, Yet, or Because. While modern language rules say it's perfectly acceptable to start with an initial conjunction, doing it too frequently can quickly become annoying to the reader. AutoCrit helps you determine how often you're using those initial conjunctions.

Initial –ING verbs are sentences that start with an –ING, such as “Lifting the spoon to my lips, I thought about the day ahead.” Using this structure too often can be distracting to the reader, and many writers use it incorrectly.

Initial Pronoun and Names **Sentence Starters** Generic Descriptions Homonyms Personal Word List

[Save Revision](#) [Load Revision](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Export](#) [Clear All Text](#) [Upload](#) [Jump to Chapter](#) ▼

But of course she would never ask Muffin. **And** she couldn't face speaking to Ridley that night. He'd probably have company - or else he'd be roaming round town on a Saturday night. **Drinking** in the pubs where he was best known. In any case she knew she'd never get a straight answer from Ridley. You don't own children, he'd say. They aren't anybody's. **And** maybe that was true.

She told the cab driver to make straight for Muffin's house - the driver who'd been waiting outside



Sentence Starters (continued)

Initial conjunctions in your manuscript

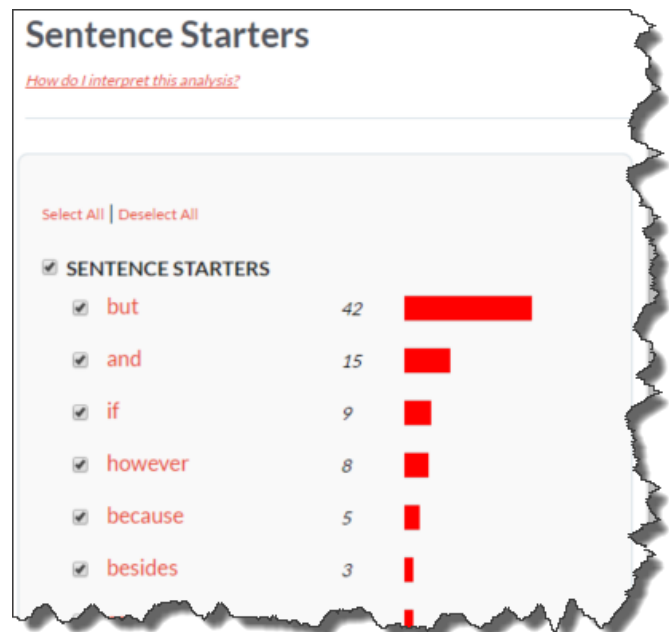
Here's a tip that might surprise you: It's grammatically acceptable to start your sentence with a conjunction—you know, words like but, so, yet, or, nor, for, and because.

That's right: Your junior-year English teacher was wrong.

Starting with a conjunction is technically correct. The old rules of not starting with a conjunction are outdated, and modern language finds this approach perfectly acceptable.

However, it can get annoying if you do it too frequently, so it's still something to do sparingly.

And that's why the AutoCrit helps you see how often you're doing it. If too many sentences start with a conjunction, your prose will quickly grate on your reader like nails on a chalkboard.





Sentence Starters (continued)

For example:

But Sammy wasn't about to rush home. So what if he was late? And so what if Jennifer was angry? Because the truth was, he was a little sick of Jennifer. So tired of her nagging. He didn't want to hear about her annoying boss. Or listen to that cheesy pop music she loved. Or spend his nights watching bad reality TV because she just had to find out who got voted off the island.

Grrrr. See how fast it gets annoying?

The thing about starting with a conjunction is that in most cases, the conjunction adds nothing. It can easily be dropped to make the prose tighter:

Sammy wasn't going to rush. So what if he was late and Jennifer was angry?
The truth was, he was a little sick of Jennifer and tired of her nagging.



Sentence Starters (continued)

The exception to the rule

Repeatedly starting with a conjunction can work, as long as you want that sentence or conjunction to stand out. For instance, if you have a neurotic character in your book, consider starting many of her thoughts with ‘but’ and ‘and’ to highlight her perpetual state of anxiety. Here’s what that would look like:

Jane was tempted to skip work and spend the morning at the beach. But what if someone found out? And told her boss? And what if she got sunburned—how would she hide that at work tomorrow? But then, she could wear sunscreen and stay under the umbrella. But what would be the point of going to the beach at all if she couldn’t enjoy the sun? And hadn’t she promised herself she would try to have more fun?

So how many initial conjunctions are too many? Thankfully, the AutoCrit [Overused Words Report](#) is there to help you.

The bottom line

It is perfectly acceptable to start a sentence with a conjunction—once in a while. As with all things in life, just don’t do it so much it becomes annoying.



Sentence Starters (continued)

Initial –ING verbs in your manuscript

Starting a sentence with an –ING verb can be a great way to vary your sentence structure. But it can also be a tricky little pitfall if used too much or used incorrectly.

Pitfall #1: Using it too often

Let's face it: It's boring to start every sentence the same way. So it's a good idea to mix up your sentence structures and occasionally start with an –ING verb: "Walking down the hall, I caught sight of a shadow disappearing around the corner."

But if you use this structure too often, it quickly can become distracting and annoying to the reader:

Walking down the hall, I caught sight of a shadow disappearing around the corner. Jumping in surprise, I wondered what I had seen. Remembering the rumors about a ghost, I hurried forward despite my fear.

The good news is, it's an easy fix:

Walking down the hall, I caught sight of a shadow disappearing around the corner. Startled, I wondered what I had seen. I remembered hearing rumors about a ghost. Despite my fear, I hurried forward.

AutoCrit will show you how often you use this structure. (Aww, thanks, AutoCrit!)



Sentence Starters (continued)

Pitfall #2: Using it incorrectly

The second pitfall is a tad trickier. Grammatically, the initial -ING sentence structure is known as a dependent clause, which means that phrase depends on the rest of the sentence to make sense and express a complete thought.

So when you use an initial -ING, the action you describe in the first part of the sentence must be something that can be done at the same time as the action you describe later in the sentence.

Take a look at our example from above:

Walking down the hall, I caught sight of a shadow disappearing around the corner.

This works because a person could walk down the hall AND see something ahead.

But here's one that doesn't work:

Opening the door, I walked into a spacious ballroom.

It's physically impossible to open a door AND walk into a room at the exact same time. So this needs to be rephrased.



Sentence Starters (continued)

Here's another example of a phrase that doesn't work:

Opening the ketchup bottle, he poured it on the burger.

It's simply not possible, and it tells the reader your writing needs a tad more polish.

See, I told you it was tricky!

As you can imagine, writers often slip up with strategy. But don't let my words of caution stop you from using this structure —when done correctly, it can be quite effective. Just make sure you don't overdo it, and that each instance is used correctly.



Sentence Starters (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit shows that you have a tendency to start your sentences with an initial –ING verb or rely too much on initial conjunctions, you may need to take a closer look at [your sentence structures](#) throughout your manuscript.

Sometimes we fall into the same patterns as we write—always starting with an initial conjunction, or always starting with a dependent clause, or always writing short, choppy sentences.

Good writing has a rhythm, and that rhythm only works if sentences vary in length and style.

The bottom line

Starting with –ING verbs can be an effective way to spice up your sentence structures—but only if they're used correctly and sparingly. Tread lightly.



Generic Descriptions

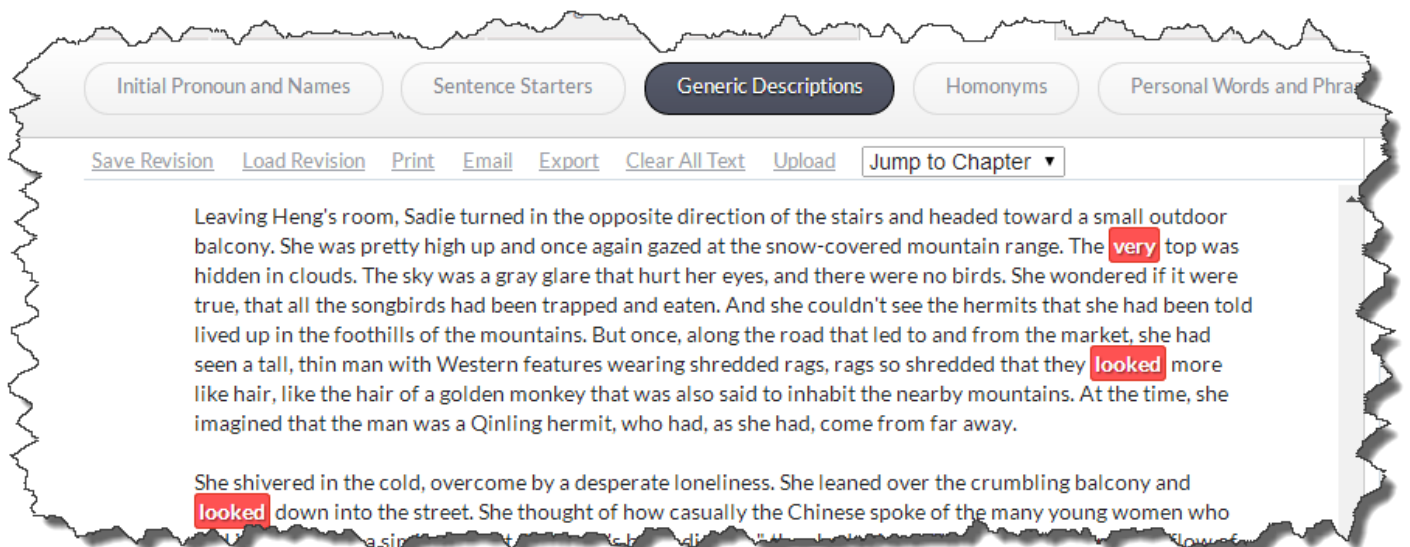
As fiction writers, it's our job to create a vivid, detailed world for our readers. But that won't happen if you have boring, generic descriptions in your manuscript.

Generic descriptions are fuzzy, ambiguous words—words like:

- nice
- good
- uncomfortable
- pretty
- really
- very

Sometimes known as abstract words, such descriptions make it difficult for the reader to truly “see” the scene. Abstract words merely tell, when every writer knows the goal is to show.

AutoCrit can point out these words for you so that you can replace them with specific details.





Generic Descriptions (continued)

For instance, take a look at this generic description and my humble revision:

Nick watched Katie walk across the grass, thinking how pretty she looked.

So boring! That tells us nothing about how Katie actually looks.

Let's try again:

Nick watched Katie walk across the grass, admiring her long, dark hair, her pink cheeks, and the sparkle in her blue eyes.

See how much better that is?

By replacing the generic description with a few specifics, the writing immediately has more pizzazz and the scene becomes clearer for the reader.



Generic Descriptions (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

Now that you're on the hunt to replace generic descriptions, look for ways to include more specifics in all your descriptions, even if you aren't necessarily using a generic term.

For example, take a look at this:

The attic was crowded with old furniture.

Sure, the reader could picture old furniture in a dusty attic—but wouldn't it be better to say something like this?

An old rocking chair stood in the corner, next to an abandoned wooden cradle and an end table with a deep scratch across the surface.

By adding specifics, you can create a richer, more interesting scene for your reader.



Generic Descriptions (continued)

The exception to the rule

There is one place you can use generic descriptions, and that's in dialogue. People rely on generic descriptions all the time when speaking, especially if they're trying to be noncommittal or evasive.

Take a look at this example:

"How was your date?" I asked my daughter, trying not to appear to look like I was dying for details.

"It was nice," she said, not looking up from her iPhone.

"Did you have a good time? Where did you go? Will you see him again?"

"It was fine," she said, shooting me an exasperated look. "He was nice."

See how it works there? Since generic descriptions don't give us clear information, the use of the words "nice" and "fine" here help show that the daughter is trying not to say too much.

The bottom line

As writers, we want to give our readers a distinct, memorable story. So let's get rid of those generic descriptions and give them something to remember.



REPETITION

As writers, we've all been guilty of repetition, whether that means repeating the same word or phrase too close together in our manuscripts, relying on the same gestures and actions too frequently, or starting each sentence the same way.

It's not always easy to spot repetition in our own work (fortunately, you have AutoCrit!). But trust me: The reader will notice.

Sure, sometimes repetition works. But most of the time, it's better to eliminate or change repetitions.

This section will provide strategies for finding and replacing repetitions in your work. It's an easy fix with big impact and cover the following topics:

- [Repeated Words](#)
- [Repeated Phrases](#)



Repeated Words

One of the best ways to keep your writing fresh and engaging is to avoid using the same words too close together. Repetition can make your work seem amateurish or even goofy. Aim to use synonyms and unique descriptions instead, to eliminate unnecessary repetition. This analysis helps you spot areas in your manuscript where you repeat the same words within a few paragraphs.

Take a look at these repetition pitfalls:

He slapped the light on and saw a light-colored duffel bag at the top of the stairs.

Here light is used to indicate both an object (the light) and a shade (a light-colored bag). But to the reader, it still feels like repetition: boring, lazy, and worse—the mark of an amateur.

The good news? It's an easy fix:

He slapped the light on. A yellow duffel bag lay at the top of the stairs.

Just use synonyms or unique descriptions to eliminate repetition.



Repeated Words (continued)

Here's an example of a repetitive filler word:

He just couldn't believe his boss had done it again. But he couldn't just quit. Could he? Then he imagined what it would be like to leave a letter of resignation on his desk and walk out. And just like that, he made up his mind.

Ah, those tricky little filler words. Every writer has one—words like just, really, seems, even, or very. (I'm guilty of even myself; that little bugger loves to creep into my writing).

In almost all cases, these words can easily be eliminated. Conduct a search and destroy and chances are you'll find you rarely need them.

He couldn't believe his boss had done it again. But he couldn't quit. Could he? He thought for a moment, imagining what it would be like to leave a letter of resignation on his desk and walk out. And just like that, he made up his mind.



Repeated Words (continued)

AutoCrit shows you where you use the same word too close together.

g Writin Rep

Repeated Words Repeated Phrases Word Frequency Phrase Frequency

[Save Revision](#) [Load Revision](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Export](#) [Clear All Text](#) [Upload](#) [Jump to Chapter](#) ▼

improbable than the facts.

J.B.

CHAPTER ONE

The Man Who Died

I returned from the City **about** three o'clock on that May afternoon pretty well disgusted with life. I had been three months in the Old Country, and was fed up with it. If anyone had told me a year ago that I would have been feeling like that I should have laughed at him; but there was the fact. The weather made me liverish, the talk of the ordinary Englishman made me sick, I couldn't get enough exercise, and the amusements of London seemed as flat as sodawater that has been standing in the sun. 'Richard Hannay,' I kept telling myself, 'you have got into the wrong ditch, my friend, and you had better climb out.' It made me bite my lips to think of the plans I had been building up those last years in Bulawayo. I had got my pile not one of the big ones, but good enough for me; and I had figured out all kinds of ways of enjoying myself. My father had brought me out from Scotland at the age of six, and I had never been home since; so England was a sort of Arabian Nights to me, and I counted on stopping there for the rest of my days.

But from the first I was disappointed with it. In **about** a week I was tired of seeing sights, and in less than a month I had had enough of restaurants and theatres and race-meetings. I had no real pal to go **about** with, which probably explains things. Plenty of people invited me to their houses, but they didn't seem much interested in me. They would fling me a question or two **about** South Africa, and then get on their own affairs. A lot of Imperialist ladies asked me to tea to meet schoolmasters from New Zealand and editors from Vancouver, and that was the dismalest business of all. Here was I, thirty-seven years old, sound in wind and limb, with enough money to have a good time, yawning my head off all day. I had just **about** settled to clear out and get back to the veld, for I was the best bored man in the United Kingdom.

That afternoon I had been worrying my brokers **about** investments to give my mind something to work on, and on my way home I turned into my club rather a pot-house, which took in Colonial members. I had a long drink, and read the evening papers. They were full of the row in the Near East, and there was an article **about** Karolides, the Greek Premier. I rather fancied the chap. From all accounts he seemed the one big man in the show; and he played a straight game too, which was more than could be said for most of them. I gathered that



Repeated Words (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

If AutoCrit shows you that you tend to rely on repeated words, make sure you look at your whole manuscript for repetition using the Word Frequency Analysis. Unusual and uncommon words may not necessarily appear close together, so they may fall through the cracks of the Repetition Analysis. Five occurrences of an uncommon word might feel like one hundred to the reader.

AutoCrit combs through your manuscript and compiles a list of the top 100 words you've written. The amount of difficult and uncommon words in your writing has a big impact on readability and flow. Reviewing the type and frequency of your words allows you to reduce repetitions and ensure your writing is in sync with your target audience.

Do you really want to use the word rutabaga ten times in your novel. How about barista five times? Does your target audience even know what a barista is? Asking these questions and looking at your choice words is critical to creating a novel that your readers will actually enjoy reading.

The exception to the rule

Repetition in dialogue can be useful in small doses and allow you to flesh out details of your characters. This is a balancing act; it's very easy to overdo it and annoy your reader.



Repeated Words (continued)

The bottom line

Sure, sometimes repetition works. But most of the time, it's better to eliminate or change repeated words and phrases.



Repeated Phrases

Repeated phrases are groups of two, three, or four identical words used too close together, regardless of whether they have the same meaning.

For example:

He stood and began pacing the length of the office. "I don't understand," he said. He began pacing again between his desk and the door. "What do you make of it?"

Repeating the same phrase began pacing will annoy and bore your reader. Look for ways to shake it up—here, you could say marched or walked rather than repeating the same word.

The screenshot shows the AutoCrit web interface with a torn paper border. At the top, there are four tabs: "Repeated Words", "Repeated Phrases" (which is selected and highlighted in dark blue), "Word Frequency", and "Phrase Frequency". Below the tabs is a navigation bar with links: "Save Revision", "Load Revision", "Print", "Email", "Export", "Clear All Text", "Upload", and a "Jump to Chapter" dropdown menu. The main text area contains the following content:

"They think you are a rich foreigner," Xia said, stroking Sadie's ginger hair.

Live **roosters for sale** lined the side of the road. Having had their feet tied, they squawked and flapped about. And there were dead **roosters for sale** too, complete with heads and feet. To Sadie, China seemed like one giant flea market. Looking about as she walked along, she saw a bit of red silk on the curb. An old woman had laid out some household junk on a cloth.

"Xia, let's look at the antiques."

< 5 >

"Okay."

Placed beside an opium pipe was a small shoe, **a shoe** for a bound foot. Since being in China, Sadie had seen a few elderly women hobbling on canes with their deformed feet enclosed in simple black cotton shoes. But this was the first time she had ever seen **a shoe** from old China. The hand-sewn, embroidered silk shoe was three, maybe four, inches long. It had a one-inch heel and a toe that curved upwards. So this was **a shoe** that would cover a foot small enough to nestle in the

... of a teacup," she thought.



Repeated Phrases (continued)

Related areas to look for in your manuscript

AutoCrit looks for repetitions within a range of a few paragraphs. This is great for finding obvious repetitions using common phrases. However, to find those unique and uncommon phrases that may be more dispersed throughout your manuscript, you will need use the Phrase Frequency Analysis.

This problem frequently occurs when describing your characters actions and gestures. Actions and gestures are an important part of any fiction story; they break up dialogue, help show rather than tell, and can demonstrate a character's personality or state of mind.

But gestures and actions can become extremely noticeable to readers if you use the same ones too many times.

For example, in one of my manuscripts, I realized my characters were always nibbling—nibbling on cheese, nibbling at lunch, nibbling on a cookie after dinner. Yikes—it was like I was writing about mice.

Similarly, my writer friends complain that their characters are always nodding, gazing out the window, staring at the ground, or twirling a strand of hair. In our search for actions and gestures, we seem to subconsciously reach for the same actions over and over again.



Repeated Phrases (continued)

It is not always easy to find a new gesture or action—and even harder to recognize when we’re using the same one over and over. Thankfully, that’s where AutoCrit comes in.

To come up with new actions and gestures, think about who your character is. Actions and gestures are as much a part of your character’s personalities as their interests and ideas. Let character's personality guide you. For instance, if your character is an anxious person or conflicted about something, she’s more likely to do things like pace, bite her nails, lie awake at night, or make lists.

Another great strategy is to people watch—take a notebook to the mall or coffee shop for an hour, and take notes on all the actions people do. This will help you find fresher, realistic actions or gestures to use in your work.

The exception to the rule

Sometimes you do need repetition. Let your story and characters guide you. For example, if you were writing about a character with obsessive-compulsive disorder, showing repetition would be a crucial element of characterization.

Or if the murder weapon in your mystery novel is a vial of poison, you’d occasionally want to repeat the phrase vial of poison to subconsciously plant it in the reader’s mind.



Repeated Phrases (continued)

The bottom line

Sure, sometimes repetition works. But most of the time, it's better to eliminate or change repeated phrases.



COMPARE TO FICTION

Have you ever wanted to know how your writing stacks up against other published works of fiction?

This section describes how AutoCrit compares words and sentence constructions from your manuscript to successful published fiction, including mass-market paperbacks and bestsellers.

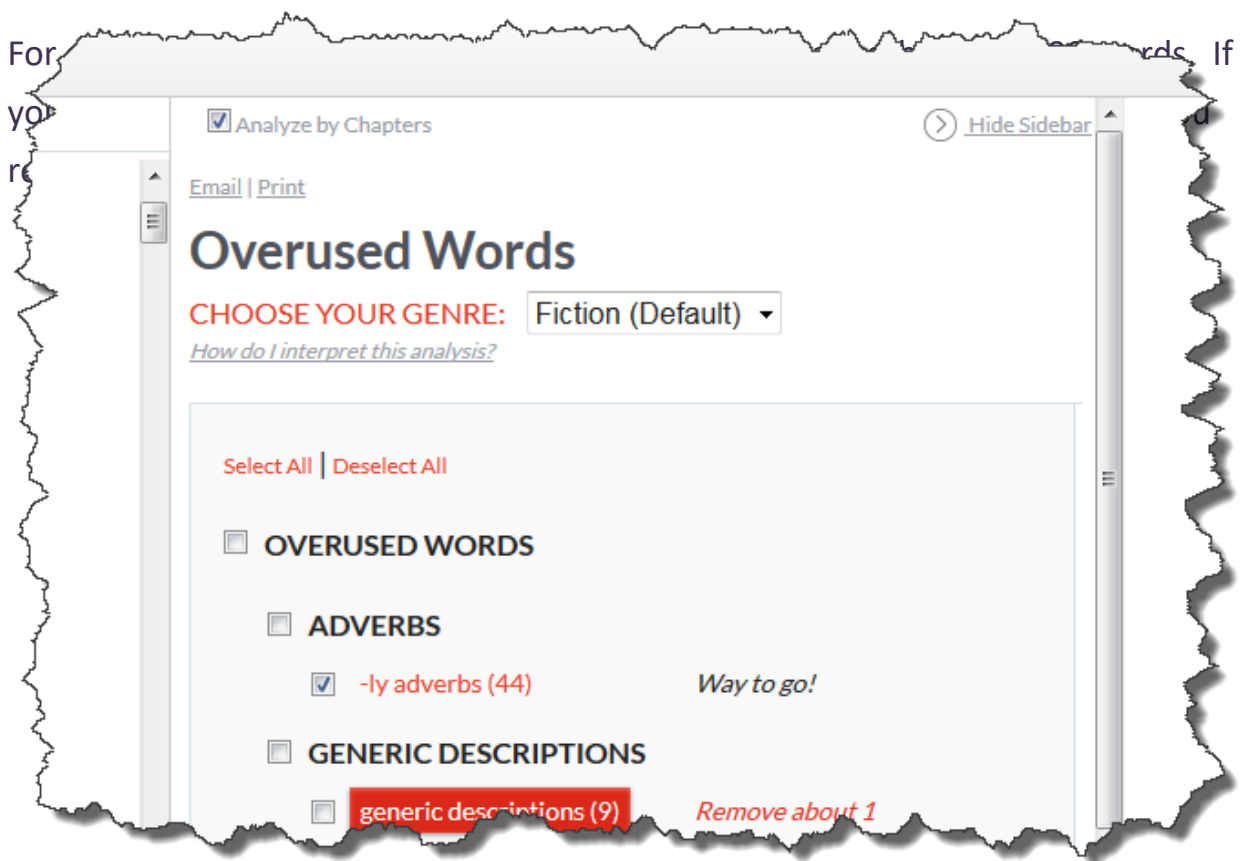


Overused Words

This report helps you spot commonly overused words and sentence constructions that weaken your manuscript, including generic descriptions, passive voice, adverbs, and more.

Here's how it works:

AutoCrit compares your manuscript to samples of successful published fiction, including mass market paperbacks and bestsellers. If the number of overused words in your manuscript exceeds the average found in those published works, we'll highlight the problem in your manuscript for quick analysis and editing.





Overused Words (continued)

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PASSIVE VOICE INDICATORS | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> had (88) | <i>Remove about 28</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have (24) | <i>Good job</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> was / were (95) | <i>Awesome</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHOWING VS TELLING INDICATORS | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> could (9) | <i>Good job</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feel/feeling/felt (9) | <i>Way to go!</i> |

The left column in the analysis sidebar shows you how many times a certain word (or word group) was found in your manuscript.

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PASSIVE VOICE INDICATORS | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> had (88) | <i>Remove about 28</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have (24) | <i>Good job</i> |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> could (9) | <i>Good job</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feel/feeling/felt (9) | <i>Way to go!</i> |

The right column tells you the minimum number of changes you should make to replace that overused word with something stronger. It is important to remember that this is a suggestion only and not a hard number.



Overused Words (continued)

The words AutoCrit looks for fall into several categories. For more information on each of these writing pitfalls, click the category below.

- **Adverbs**: Those –ly words, such as quickly or happily. They rely on a weak adjective or verb (quickly walked); they can almost always be replaced by a single strong adjective or verb (ran, galloped, bolted).
- **Generic Descriptions**: We look for descriptive words that could be replaced with more specific adjectives; words such as nice, good and pretty are generic and tell instead of show.
- **Passive Voice Indicators**: Words such as has/had and was/were are classic indicators of passive voice; this sentence construction can be clunky or confusing for the reader.
- **Sentence Starters**: Sentences that start the same way too frequently, including initial conjunctions (conjunctions such as but, and, or so) and sentences that start with –ING verbs. (Using this structure too often can be distracting to the reader, and many writers use it incorrectly).
- **Showing versus Telling**: Words like was/were, hear/heard, watched/observed/noticed, and went may indicate you're telling the reader instead of showing them.
- **Unnecessary Filler Words**: That, just and other filler words creep into our writing but can be eliminated in almost all cases.



Overused Words (continued)

The Bottom Line

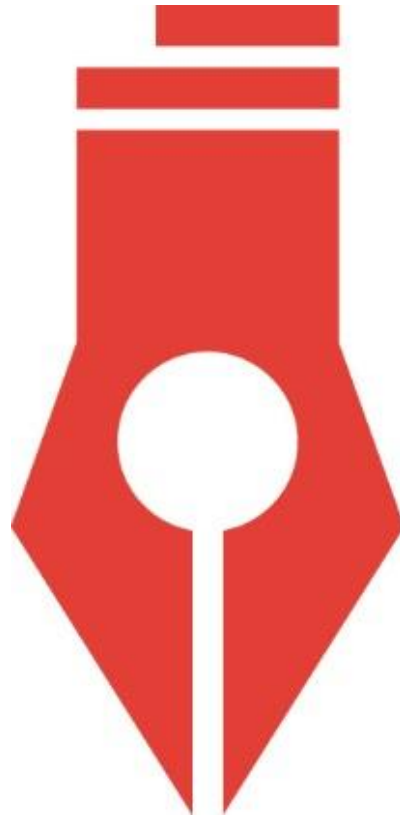
While using any word is fine in moderation, overusing a particular word or sentence structure can sap the energy from your writing. Make sure every word earns its place on the page.

The information in this reference guide is one of the things that makes AutoCrit different from any other editing software you've seen. We don't just generate reports. We help you analyze the results so you can make informed decisions on what's best for your novel.

[Try AutoCrit now!](#)



More About AutoCrit





A Fiction Tool for Fiction Writers

Unlike any other tool available, AutoCrit results are tuned specifically for fiction. Plus, you can customize your analysis for Romance, Sci-Fi, or Young Adult for even more insight on how your book compares to published books in your genre. With a quick glance, see what areas you need to focus on and streamline your editing process.

Save Cash on Editing Fees

AutoCrit customers save an average of \$1,347 per book in editing fees. While a system can never replace a human editor for comments on plot or characters, AutoCrit will instantly show you the specific words, phrases, and sentences to review - even things you and your critique partners have missed - so you can improve the style, remove repetition, and ensure readers LOVE your book.

Feel Confident in Your Work

You have spent months, if not years, writing your book. It's imperative you choose a quality tool to assist you in the editing process. AutoCrit is dedicated to providing you with the most helpful feedback on your manuscript. Don't be fooled by tools that proclaim the benefit of quantity of reports over quality of analysis.



"My writing has become sharper and more concise with so much added flavor since I started using this innovative program. It makes editing so much more enjoyable and will give your manuscript a point of view usually missed by writers. I can't do without AutoCrit."

James MacKrell, Author



AutoCrit walks you, step-by-step, through the editing process!

- Start by uploading your manuscript.
- Select an area you want to focus on. Results are organized into six intuitive categories: Pacing & Momentum, Dialogue, Strong Writing, Word Choice, Repetition, and Compare to Fiction.
- See every adverb, generic description, slow paced paragraph and so much more! Easy navigation tools let you "jump" right through your novel so you can focus on specific words, phrases, or paragraphs in question.
- Make changes to your manuscript right within AutoCrit. Simply run the analysis again for updated results!
- AutoCrit will even compare your manuscript to published fiction in your genre so you can see exactly how your novel stacks up.
- Before you know it, your manuscript will be stronger, cleaner, and easy to read. Your editor, agent, and readers will thank you!

As seen on the BBC:



"For in-depth analysis of your prose, AutoCrit is a great tool that will open your eyes to a lot of literary styles and techniques; even if you are a seasoned writer."

Kate Russell , Reporter, BBC World News



In-depth analysis in areas that matter most

Exactly the analysis you need

AutoCrit studied millions of published books, connected with top editors and agents, and worked with authors just like you to understand what makes a successful book. We regularly update our algorithms and focus on the **QUALITY** of our analysis to give you the best feedback possible.

Highlighting key elements

Agents and editors look at specific areas when first reviewing your manuscript. Poor dialogue, use of adverbs, and relying on clichés are clear indicators of amateur writing.

AutoCrit points out all of these (and so much more) so you can polish your writing and feel confident in your book.

Identifies hard to find pacing and repetition problems

We analyze your manuscript, line by line, and show you exactly where you repeat a word or phrase too close together. We also point out slow paced paragraphs and graphically depict your sentence lengths. Use this information to make sure you don't lose the interest of your reader.

Pacing & Momentum

Sentence Variation

Pacing

Strong Writing

Adverbs

Passive Voice

Showing Vs. Telling

Cliches

Redundancies

Unnecessary Filler Words

Dialogue

Dialogue Tags

Adverbs in Dialogue

Word Choice

Initial Pronoun & Names

Sentence Starters

Personal Words & Phrases

Homonyms

Generic Descriptions

Repetition

Repeated Words

Repeated Phrases

Word Frequency

Phrase Frequency

Compare to Fiction

Overused Words

Combination Report



Easy to use editing interface

Results Summarized

The Analysis Sidebar provides a summary of the relevant words, phrases, or sentences, ordered by frequency. Quickly scan potential improvement areas, then simply click the checkbox to turn on / off highlighting in your document.

"Jump" navigation

Save time by clicking on a word or phrase in the Analysis Sidebar to jump your cursor right to the next instance.

Save & Share Your Analysis

Share your text (with or without highlights) with a beta reader or editor with the click of a button!

The screenshot displays the AutoCrit web interface. The top navigation bar includes tabs for Home, Pacing & Momentum, Dialogue, Strong Writing, Word Choice, Repetition, and Compare to Fiction. Below this, a secondary bar contains buttons for Initial Pronoun and Names, Sentence Starters, Generic Descriptions, Homonyms, and Personal Words and Phrases. The main text area shows a manuscript excerpt with several words highlighted in red: 'Gregor', 'it's', 'Don't', 'Gregor', 'He', 'Gregor', 'Gregor', 'Gregor', 'His', and 'Gregor'. A red arrow points from the text 'Edit Directly Within Your Highlighted Manuscript' to the highlighted text. On the right, the 'Analysis Sidebar' is open, showing the 'Initial Pronoun and Names' section. It lists the following items with their frequencies and checkboxes:

| Item | Frequency | Checkbox |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| he | 38 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| gregor | 25 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| his | 14 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| i | 12 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| she | 11 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| it | 11 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

A red arrow points from the text 'Analysis Sidebar Displays results' to the sidebar. The sidebar also includes a 'Select All / Deselect All' link and a 'How do I interpret this analysis?' link.

Edit Directly Within Your Highlighted Manuscript

Analysis Sidebar Displays results



Feedback on how your manuscript compares

Be confident in how your manuscript stacks up

AutoCrit compares your manuscript to successful published fiction, including mass market paperbacks and bestsellers. If the number of overused words in your manuscript exceeds the average found in those published works, we'll highlight the problem in your manuscript for quick analysis and editing.

Customize your experience

Filter comparison results for your specific genre (All Fiction, Romance, Sci-Fi, Young Adult)

Know what to focus on first

By comparing your word choice with published fiction, you can easily see where you need to focus your editing efforts and when it's "good enough." Don't think you have to remove EVERY highlighted word!

ly adverbs



generic descriptions



look



maybe





Thank you so much for reading *The Secret Formula to Publishing a Best-selling Novel*.

If there's one thing you take away from this book, I hope it's this:

There is a way to polish your novel yourself. Self-editing is possible when you have the right tool, and AutoCrit is that tool!

Join thousands of writers just like you and see first hand how AutoCrit can polish your manuscript, improve your writing, and make you a better editor. Your readers will thank you!

[Sign-up for AutoCrit Now!](#)