

SHORT-STORY CHECKLIST

As you edit your story (or someone else's), be sure to consider every one of the following questions.

STORY STRUCTURE

Specifically consider each of the following, and check each off if you've achieved it.

- _____ Have you introduced the protagonist early?
- _____ Have you introduced the antagonist early?
- _____ Have you identified the protagonist's flaws and motivations?
- _____ Have you identified the antagonist's flaws and motivations?
- _____ Have you established the plot?
- _____ Did the protagonist participate in the resolution of the plot?
- _____ Has your protagonist undergone a fundamental change, either as a result of the resolution or that leads to the resolution?

STORY MECHANICS

And as you read through the story, consider every one of these at all times.

- Does every scene advance the plot or develop the protagonist?
- Does every paragraph advance each scene?
- Does every sentence advance each paragraph?
- Does every word advance each sentence?
- Are you watching out for too many adverbs with dialogue tags? How about adverbs in other narrative?
- Are you overusing fancy dialogue tags?
- Are you overusing dialogue tags in general? Or are you underusing them?
- Are you keeping a consistent POV? (Remember, I don't publish second-person stories; you should write in the first person or third person.)
- Are you writing in the past tense? (Remember, I don't publish present-tense stories.)
- Are you keeping a consistent verb tense?
- Is your dialogue believable, or does it sound contrived? (Remember, reading it aloud is a great way to determine this, although you may wish to save reading aloud for outside class.)
- Does one sentence flow naturally to the next? (If not, do you need to combine sentences?)
- Does one paragraph flow naturally to the next?