

MAIN EDITING SHEET:

- 1) "Dialogue," he said. "Dialogue." He laughed. (Only "said" or synonyms get comma)
- 2) Be sure point of view (POV) is consistent throughout sections or chapters.
- 3) Eliminate extraneous adverbs and adjectives. –LY Adverbs. –ING Adjectives.
- 4) Eliminate passive voice. EXAMPLE:

"The dodgeball hit me." NOT "I was hit by the dodgeball."
- 5) Make sure dialogue is believable. More contractions, less formal.
- 6) Check for roaming body parts, such as "Her head drew up his body."  
<http://romancelivesforever.blogspot.com/2011/12/roaming-body-parts.html?zx=7c8fec708760386>
- 7) Age hyphens or no hyphens: <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/are-you-using-hyphens-correctly>
- 8) Use unique gestures and mannerisms.
  - a. Mouth: smiled, grinned, smirked, sneered, drew into a line, bit lip, puckered,
  - b. Jaw: clenched, tightened
  - c. Laughed: giggled, chuckled
  - d. Eyes: peered, squinted, narrowed, raised brows, widened, gazed, glanced, strained
  - e. Cheeks: flushed, pinched, hollowed
- 9) Get rid of overused words:
  - a. Upon
  - b. Just
  - c. Then
  - d. As
  - e. Had
  - f. Few
  - g. But
  - h. Shot
  - i. Eyes
  - j. Only
  - k. Really
  - l. Exactly
  - m. Rack
  - n. Caused
  - o. Toward
  - p. Myself
- 10) Make sure that conjunctions beginning sentences do NOT have a comma after them (So, For, Yet, But, And, Or, Nor). Should be "But he did..." not "But, he did..."

Use a comma before when you use the FANBOYS (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so*) to join two sentences. The comma signals the reader just like a warning sign on a highway that the direction of the sentence is about to change. Instead of thinking that "and" or "but" are joining two words, the reader should see the comma as a sign that "and" or "but" is going to join a new complete idea that is related to the first idea. (FANBOYS is an acronym. The actual term for the words is *coordinate conjunctions*. When the two sentences are joined with coordinate conjunctions, they are known as *independent clauses*.)

- **Be sure to leave some money in your savings account, for next month the auto insurance is due.** **Note:** If you forget to put the comma before "for," the reader may read "for next month" with the first part of the sentence instead of the second part.
- **Life is full of many surprises, and many of these surprises are wonderful.**
- **Breakfast is an important meal, but what you eat for breakfast is also important.**
- **I am going to travel in California in January, so the next time you will see me will be later in February.**

**Caution:**

- Do not use a comma when you join only two words or two phrases with "and," "but," or "or": **I like bacon and eggs.**
- Do not use a comma when you use "for" as a preposition to join a phrase to the rest of the sentence: **Save some money for a rainy day.**
- Do not use a comma when you use "so" to emphasize another word: **I am so tired.** "So" is also used along with "that" to join words in a sentence. When you use "so that" to join groups of words in a sentence, do not use a comma: **I like to eat breakfast early so that I will have plenty of energy at work.** Sometimes you can eliminate "that," but still do not use a comma: **I like to eat breakfast early so I will have plenty of energy at work.**

11) Commas are used after introductory phrases like "Yes, he did." "Well, he went." (Absolutely, Therefore)

12) No comma before "while", unless it's used to mean "whereas". If it is action happening at the same time, no comma.

13) However:

- a. If you use "however" at the beginning of a sentence without a comma, "however" means "in whatever manner" or "to whatever extent."
  - i. However hard Anne Hathaway tried, she couldn't liven up a robotic James Franco during the Oscars.
- b. If you use "however" at the beginning of a sentence with a comma, "however" means "nevertheless"
  - i. However, I loved all seven of Anne's Oscar dresses (plus the tuxedo).

14) Then: (REF - <http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/conjunctiveadverb.htm>)

Starting a sentence, it gets a comma when it indicate a series of events. EX: I went to the movies. Then, we went to the mall.

When then is being used as a conjunctive adverb it needs a semi-colon before and comma after. Then cannot be used as a coordinating conjunction like FANBOY.

It's also used in if ... then constructions such as, "If you wake late, then you might have to skip breakfast."

Sometimes for "and then" you don't need the "then". It's implied in the context of the sentence. For example. "He says good bye and hangs up."

15) Too:

When using the word too, you only need to use a comma before it for emphasis.

CORRECT: I, too, like bananas.

You can tell by the position of too that emphasis is required in this sentence, so we use the commas to offset it.

CORRECT: Mike wanted to go to the party, too, so he shut down his computer.

INCORRECT: I like bananas, too.

This sentence doesn't need a comma.

16) Which:

*Which* can be restrictive or nonrestrictive in use. When it is restrictive (which you'll see in print less in North America, where many print publishers' styles say it should only be used nonrestrictively), it is handled exactly like *that*. When it is nonrestrictive — when you could take the *which* clause out and the meaning of the sentence would be unaltered — it takes a comma before it.

In other words, it is not the words *which* and *that* that determine whether there is a comma; it is the restrictive or nonrestrictive\* nature of the clauses they begin.

17) Instead: (REF - <http://gmat-grammar.blogspot.com/2006/06/rather-than-vs-instead-of.html>)  
When used as *instead of* in the same form as *rather than* no punctuation is needed.

When used as an adverb conjunction without the "of", treat like then.

18) Remember our in house style is NO space before or after ellipses (...) or m dashes(—)

19) The current MLA format rule is that the commas go inside the quotations marks, not outside.  
Ex.: They "world traveler," "professional vagabond," "dabbling wizard."

20) Mr. and Dr. should be usually abbreviated, unless there's a specific reason not to (instead of spelling out Mister or Doctor completely).

21) Punctuation of Appositives (nouns or pronouns with attached identifier):

If the appositive is **not necessary** to understand the sentence, there should be commas around the appositive. If the appositive is **necessary** to understand the sentence, don't put commas around it.

She picked up on putting the commas inside the quotation marks, which is a sign she's up with the current MLA formats.

See examples: <http://www.grammarly.com/handbook/punctuation/comma/17/punctuation-of-appositives/>

22) Chapter by Chapter. Each should have:

- a. A single point of view
- b. A clear objective for the character
- c. Opposition (conflict) to the objective
- d. A struggle that is felt emotionally by the POV character
- e. An outcome that forces the reader to read on.

\*A weak scene will usually manifest itself by lacking one or more of these elements.

23) Rate each chapter weak or strong. Then, cut the weakest. Revise or cut all the rest.

If revising, find the heart of the chapter. Look at the moments just before and just after the heart of the scene. How can you ratchet up the emotional intensity? Feel it. Feel it with the character.

How can you increase the conflict in the encounter? Close your eyes and relive the scene in the movie theater of your imagination. What actions can the characters take that are just *more*?

24) The telling detail. How do you find them? Follow these four steps.

- a. Identify a highly charged moment in your book.
- b. Make a list of possible actions, gestures or setting descriptions that might further reflect upon the scene to make it even stronger.
- c. Let the geyser loose and list at least 20–25 possibilities, as fast as you can. Remember, the best way to get good ideas is to come up with lots of options and then choose the ones you want to use.
- d. Write a long paragraph incorporating the best details from your list, then edit the text until it's lean and potent. The telling detail works best when it is subtle and does all the work by itself.

25) When possible choose stronger action words over similes/metaphors. Example:

*Raine moved like lightening to catch the little black remote before it hit the ground.*

Great, we know Raine moved fast and caught a remote, but look at what happens if you change just a couple of words:

*Raine sprang forward and caught the little black remote before it hit the ground.*

When my editor pointed this out, I began a campaign to erase the word 'like' from my characters actions. If they did something like something, then they did it. Don't pussyfoot around the action, say it.