Tips for Editing Your Manuscript Before it Meets an Editor's Eyes
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TIP 1
Look for adverbs. Eliminating words that usually end in "ly" will make your writing stronger. You can find these by using the find function in Word. A few adverbs are fine, but replace as many as you can.

Examples:
- **She ran quickly to the phone**. Better: She ran to the phone.
- **He talked loudly at the cashier**. Better: He shouted at the cashier.
- **Children, you should whisper quietly in the library**. Better: Children, you should whisper in the library.

TIP 2
Look for passive voice. This sometimes takes the form of a "be" verb combined with a word that ends in "ing." The "be" verb often changes the order of the sentence so the noun doing the action is after, rather than in front of the verb. It sometimes means the noun doing the action isn't in the sentence, or it isn't clear to the reader.

Examples:
- **Jenny will be attending the party on Saturday.** Better: Jenny will attend the party on Saturday.

- **It was determined by the board of directors that I should have a raise.** Better: The board of directors determined I should have a raise.

  In this example we made the voice more active by putting the group that did the action first and we dropped the "was." Also, we dropped the word "that."

- **We were invited to go on the trip with the club members.** Better: The club members invited us to go on the trip.

- **George says the team will be given a presentation about the project on Thursday.** Better: George says he will give a presentation about the project to the team on Thursday.

TIP 3
Paste several paragraphs into a free program like Autocrit (http://www.autocrit.com/) or something similar to analyze your work. The analysis of a few paragraphs could point out writing habits that you can correct throughout your manuscript. It may also call attention to the overuse of a particular word.

TIP 4
Read paragraphs aloud and listen for variation in sentence length. If they all read the same, sounding like the rhythm of a song or a poem, work on adjusting the length on several.
- Combine some sentences into longer compound ones.
- Cut some sentences in half to make shorter ones.

TIP 5
Look for filler words to eliminate. Examples: really, just, some, that, then. Use the find feature in Word to find them, and consider if they are necessary.

Examples:
- **Jake is really funny.** Better: Jake is hilarious.
- **If I could just find my glasses, then I would be really happy.** Better: I would be ecstatic if I could find my glasses.
- **I think that orange kittens are cute.** Better: I think orange kittens are cute.

TIP 6
Check for awkward sentence order. Read your work aloud and watch for places where you have to pause to read it again, or where you run out of breath. One indicates your sentences structure is awkward. The other indicates your sentences might be too long.

Example of a difficult sentence from a business document:

Believing that a specialized approach and focus for recovering from uninsured individuals is most effective, we use a professional collection agency whose expertise has proven successful in the recovery process.

How many times did you have to read it before it made sense?

TIP 7
Try not to bore your reader with overuse of clichés. The expression may have been clever once, but now, it's overused.

Examples:

- He dropped it like a hot potato.
- She turned redder than a beet.
- Troy sat quiet as a mouse.

TIP 8
Watch for mixed metaphors. Comparing life to a box of chocolates and to a roller coaster in the same section of a chapter is confusing to the reader. Stick to one metaphor or word picture.

TIP 9
Stay with one tense. If you use past tense in the first part of the paragraph, be sure to stay in past tense in the rest of the paragraph.

Example of incorrect mixed tense:

> *The doctor explains the diagnosis to the patients who wanted to know more.*

> CORRECTED: The doctor explained the diagnosis to the patients who wanted to know more. OR The doctor explains the diagnosis to the patients who want to know more.

This next one is not wrong because there is a difference in time frame from how the children feel about something they did in the past:

> *The children love their new tree house, which they built themselves.*

TIP 10
Look over your formatting for these standards:
- Each paragraph is indented .5
- There are no spaces between paragraphs, except for at a section break.
- Each chapter begins on a new page.

TIP 11
Hyphens, En Dashes, Commas, and Parentheses
We are only using en dashes (space/en dash/space), and eliminating all em dashes.
We use hyphens to indicate a range of verses, e.g. John 1:1-3, and little else.
Our general preference is to use commas when possible, en dashes only when commas aren't possible, and parentheses only when en dashes don't work.

Examples:

> *Johnny ran to his mother (who had been gone for the day) to tell her about...*
> *Johnny ran to his mother – who had been gone for the day – to tell her about...*
> *Johnny ran to his mother, who had been gone for the day, to tell her about...*

TIP 12
Footnotes
It's very important to double-check all footnote references before submitting your final manuscript. We don't double-check footnote references because of not having all the referenced books, and not knowing where to go for a new hyperlink if the existing doesn't work anymore. This is important, as the times when we have double-checked the footnote references, we have almost always found a handful that needed to be updated/corrected.

Footnotes should be formatted as examples shown below. Regardless of media type, the format generally is as follows: Author, *Title* (Publisher), Date. Please use your word processing program's footnote or endnote reference feature.

Footnote reference for book (example):
> Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), 100-102.

Footnote reference for website (example):
> Cal Thomas, "Have We Settled for Caesar?" *Is the Religious Right Finished? Christianity Online: www.christianity.net/ct/current/* (September 21, 1999).

Footnote reference for periodical (example):
> James Johnson, "Charles G. Finney and a Theology of Revivalism," *Church History* 38 (September 1969): 357.