

EDITING POINTS

1. Improve words: Ask of every important word. "Is this the best word for what I want to say?"
2. Improve meanings: Have I said what I real!)' intended, or did I just get close?
3. Remove words: As a general rule, the shorter, the better. But don't make it lifeless either.
4. Adding words: Sometimes however, you will want to add a word or two to make a sentence or paragraph easier to read or improve the meter. You may even decide to add an anecdote or dialogue to enhance the meaning- -to show..
5. Rearranging: Ask, "Is this the best place for this thought or does it belong elsewhere.' Would this sentence be improved by rearranging the words?"
6. Deletions: (the hardest of all): "Does this paragraph, thought or sentence real!)' help the testimony, or is it more words? What would happen if I just left it out? Would it be missed?"
7. Readability #1: Break long sentences into two. In most cases limit your sentences to one thought.
8. Readability #2: Change long words in to short ones. Look out for words that end in "ize." Many of them are red flags that something needs to be illustrated.
9. Check your thoughts for impact: If they just connect one thing to another, OK. But, if they are key events, you may need to use an anecdote, scene, action, or Quotation to illustrate.
10. Flow: Do the paragraphs and thoughts lead one into the other? There should be no surprises where the reader wonders, "What does this have to do with what I just read?"
11. Style: Check tenses, punctuation, paragraphs, and sentences for correct English. A standard little reference everyone should have is "The Elements of Style by Strunk and White."
12. Lengths: Look for strings of sentences that are the same length. Restructure for variety. Try to state the main thought of a few paragraphs in sentences of five or less words. Two paragraphs together of the same length will usually make the page look boring .
13. Repetition: Look for unusual or long words that are repeated. Some words may only be used once in a thousand. Check for phrases or expressions that are repeated.
14. The wisdom and understanding test: "Is this what my readers will understand?" Remember Christ became a human being so that he might minister to human beings. And he used the language of the day. Read 1st Corinthians 9:20-23. Make it your standard of communication.
15. The love test: Does love shine through your words? In most cases (99%) you may not criticize anything except yourself. You may not tell your reader he or she is blind. But you may say "I was blind but now I see," if you back it up with experience. You can show error. You may tell about the emptiness of your heart without God's love and his companionship. You may show how you were disappointed by something. You can tell about broken promises, and all other darkness for comparison. But do not judge it. The job is to enlighten, not to curse the darkness.