

Some Questions to Ask When Rewriting

1. Is this comma in the right place?
2. Do I know the *exact* meaning of every word in this sentence?
3. Does this word fit with:
 - a. the mood at this point?
 - b. the voice of my narrator (overt or implied)?
 - c. the tone of the whole?
4. Is this sentence the very best shape it can possibly be?
5. How does this sentence flow when I read it aloud? Do I stumble over any word or phrase?
6. Is this sentence in this form because I want to show off:
 - a. my vast vocabulary?
 - b. my obscure factual knowledge?
 - c. well, because I just bloody well want to show off?
7. Can I see exactly what I am describing? Can the reader?
8. Can the opening/ending of this piece be cut? (i.e., Is this throat-clearing or over-emphasizing the moral?)
9. Is this section scaffolding? (i.e., Is it necessary for me but not for the reader?)
10. Am I telling the reader something:
 - a. they already know?
 - b. they don't need to know yet?
 - c. they don't need to know ever?
11. Would this section be more effective/affecting were it earlier or later in the story?
12. Can I picture the overall work as:
 - a. a building?
 - b. a piece of music?
 - c. a person?What are its weaknesses?
13. Could I describe the overall shape of the work with a gesture of my hand?
14. If so-and-so read this, what would they say?
15. Would I be happy for this work to be published tomorrow?