

NAME:

Writer's Stylus ›

12
Portfolio

A CLERESTORY LEARNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: WRITING

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REVISION SKILLS CHECKLIST: Grade 12

STORY REVISION

While writing in every genre must be assessed and revised at both the macro and micro levels, fiction (i.e., storytelling) features challenges at each stage. Author Donald Miller (2009) describes stories as “music” with several movements contributing to the complete piece. Author and editor Elizabeth Lyon echoes this idea and suggests assessing a manuscript at five stages. Each stage possesses potential problems. The table below identifies a few associated with each stage and provides a checklist for revisions.

STAGE 1 The protagonist has a problem/challenge	
Problem	Revisions
The problem/challenge is too small to capture the reader's interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself if the reader would care about the main character's problem and why (or why not). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase what is at stake for the main character and/or increase the size of the problem or level of the challenge. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make the problem/challenge both external and internal (inner turmoil, emotional distress) for the main character.
The problem/challenge is too great for the main character to believably overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider your main character. Can you give him/her abilities/strength equal to the challenge? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the problem/challenge. Can you alter the challenge to fit the main character's abilities? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the setting. Can elements within the setting balance the main character's abilities and the challenge (e.g., provide tools that can be used)?
The problem/challenge is unclear or overly complicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refocus the challenge; select and develop one clear goal for the main character. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compare the challenge with your intended theme. Focus the goal to support your theme. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluate your events and delete any that do not move the main character toward addressing the challenge. Make the problem/challenge present in every event.
The problem/challenge lacks originality (e.g., reads like something recently seen on a television show or in a movie)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the problem/challenge. Does it seem similar to other stories/TV shows/movies? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm alternatives and revise.

STAGE 2 Conflict increases as complications arise	
Problem	Revisions
<p>The established problem/ challenge lacks complications; the conflict fails to intensify</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider your main character. Would an additional flaw or weakness allow for an intensifying of the conflict? Could an internal conflict be added to increase the conflict and/or raise the stakes? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the plot. Would additional or more difficult events complicate the main character's progress toward solving the problem or overcoming the challenge? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the problem/challenge. Does it contain more than a physical element (e.g., a moral conflict)? Could development of additional elements increase the conflict? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider every event. Do any fail to increase the tension? If so, edit them. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the antagonist(s). Could increasing their strength/influence increase the conflict or add complications?
<p>The established problem/ challenge becomes confusing due to its complexity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider characters. Are too many peripheral characters giving the reader too much to track? Edit any unnecessary characters. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider relationships. Are the characters clearly connected to one another? If not, strengthen relationships between them. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider plot. Does one, main journey (the main character's) flow through the events? or are other, less important journeys distracting from the central conflict? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduce subplots and edit "rabbit trails."
<p>Subplots fail to intensify to a climax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review subplots. If they play an important role, treat them like the main plot, giving them increasing conflict and a climax that coincides with or occurs just before that of the main plot.

continued

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STAGE 3 Conflict reaches its greatest intensity, its climax	
Problem	Revisions
Climax lacks intensity, tension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider events. Increase tension by making connections between events and the conflict more direct or by making things worse for the main character. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the main character's investment. Does the main character truly stand to gain or lose something valuable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Raise the stakes for the main character.
Climax lacks originality or is predictable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the climax. Does it seem similar to other stories/ TV shows/movies? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm alternatives and revise.
Climax is missing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider your main character. Does he/she grow without a dramatic stimulus? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop the plot so that events intensify tension or raise the stakes for the main character and provide the reason for the main character's growth.
STAGE 4 The protagonist solves the problem or meets the challenge	
Problem	Revisions
Resolution lacks clarity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the climax and the events that follow. Is the main character's triumph (or failure) obvious? Is a return to calm or peace obvious? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revise to make a resolution obvious to the reader.
Resolution introduces or creates new problems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the conflict's outcome and the events that follow. Do new problems or challenges appear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revise so that all major problems resolve, leaving the main character without major distractions.
STAGE 5 The protagonist gains self-knowledge or learns something	
Problem	Revisions
Character fails to change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconsider the main character. Does he/she gain a new or deeper understanding about self or life, or an ongoing wound or weakness? If not, the events seem not to have had any influence. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revise to strengthen connections between the plot's events and the main character's thoughts/beliefs/perspectives. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How has the world changed from inside the main character's mind, memory, and viewpoint? Consider adding a scene(s) that explore how the character has changed/grown throughout the text.

Unit
1

Unit
2

Unit
3

Unit
4

A series of 30 horizontal lines for writing, arranged in six groups of five lines each. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

JOURNALING

PRACTICING

VISIONING

DRAFTING

COACHING

REFLECTING

JOURNALING

PRACTICING

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SKETCHING



JOURNALING

PRACTICING

VISIONING

DRAFTING

COACHING

SHAPING

SLANT



CENTRAL QUESTION

REFLECTING

VISION STATEMENT



JOURNALING

PRACTICING

VISIONING

DRAFTING

COACHING

REFLECTING

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JOURNALING

PRACTICING

VISIONING

DRAFTING

COACHING

REFLECTING

MY WRITING: What's Working

MY QUESTIONS

JOURNALING

PRACTICING

VISIONING

MY TEACHER'S THOUGHTS

MY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DRAFTING

COACHING

REFLECTING

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