Rock Your Revisions: A Simple System for Revising Your Novel Workbook

Developing a road map for your revision begins with a systematic approach:

I. Identify what needs fixing in a manuscript.

II. Create a scene-by-scene revision plan.

III. Perform an overall prose polish.

PART I: Overview of the Structural Revision Pass checklist

The Warm Up:

___1. Quick read/General impressions-- *address draft comments/notes, mark anything that yanks you out of the novel or causes your attention to wander, characters that bother and action that doesn't make sense, lackluster scenes, scenes that need clarification, *scenes you like, if something feels but you don't know why*.

___2. Scene chart: *Complete Scene Chart. (suggest recreating in Landscape view for more room)*

SCENE	POV	GOAL	MOTIVATION	CONFLICT	DISASTER	NOTES

__3. Character (Story Level)-- *Identify Protagonist(s) and define GMC. (What he/she wants and why, and what is standing in the way.) Fill out one chart for each Protagonist & Villain.*

(Character Name)	External	Internal
Goal		
Motivation		
Conflict		

__4. Plot Points and Story Arc

Story Premise:

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Plot Points:

PLOT POINTS	Character 1:	Character 2:
Inciting Incident		
Plot Point 1		
Pinch Point 1		
Midpoint/Plot Point 2		
Pinch Point 2		
Plot Point 3		
Black Moment		
Resolution		

___5. Characters (Scene Level)-- *In each scene, test for consistent GMC/character behavior.*

Scene	
Scene Goal	
POV Character/GMC	
Does Goal & GMC Align?	

___6. Scene Flow and escalating conflict-- *Check chart, make sure each scene flows and has escalating conflict.*

___7. Talking Head Avoidance Devices-- *Check each scene and make sure there is action that forwards the story and balances the dialogue.*

___8. Opening Scene-- what is your "hook"? Is it intriguing? Check for exposition & info dumping. Are details illustrated? Is the inciting incident present or hinted at?

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___9. Closing Scene--*Have you landed the reader gently, resolved all conflict, and evoked the desired emotional finish?*

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___10. Creating the First Pass Plan-- Addresses issues found, scene-by-scene.

Part II: Overview of the scene revision pass checklist

___1. Anchoring/Setting-- *Use scene settings to promote story arc, maintain time consistency.*

___2. POV Revisited & ___3.Dialogue Check-- *Check for head-hopping, consistent character voice, believability, and dialogue that promotes story arc.*

___4. Exposition-- *Telling vs. Showing*

___5. Detail-- *Value stack and multi-task scene passages into streamlined details.*

Part III: Fine Polish Pass checklist

___Typos

___Repeated word/close proximity

___Repeated word/overuse

___Continuity-- be objective

___Clarity

___Flow