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Nine Ways Editing Software Can Improve Creative Writing

By Jennifer Xue | August 9, 2019

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Whatever kind of creative writing you do, editing software can help you improve your finished product. It's suggestions help you reconsider your word choices and structure so you grow as a writer.

Any writing that's not academic, journalistic, or technical is considered "creative." This includes any fiction or nonfiction writing, such as novels, short stories, poems, screenplays, narrative journalism (also called "creative nonfiction"), and others.

Every writer's definition of creative writing is different. For some, it's any kind of writing that sparks interest and triggers certain feelings. Many copywriters consider themselves creative writers, as they aim to make people feel a certain way about a product or service through narrative.

Whatever kind of creative writing you do, editing software like ProWritingAid can help you improve. Its suggestions help you reconsider your word choices and structure so you grow as a writer by exploring new ways of writing you may not have thought of before.

Here are nine ways editing software can improve creative writing.

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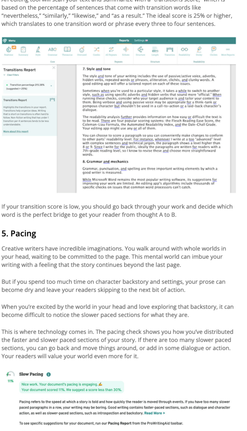
1. Grip your reader instantly

Whether you're writing fiction or nonfiction, a catchy first paragraph sets the tone. It also serves as the all-encompassing idea that dialogues or arguments are based upon. So, develop it carefully.

Considering its essential role in hooking readers, write tightly and precisely. Any excess words or phrases should be trimmed out. An editing tool can help identify sticky sentences, redundancies, and overused words so you can edit out unnecessary parts.



2. Character development

Each fleshed-out main character has his or her own opinions and thought patterns, which can be portrayed with the right diction and synonym choices whilst avoiding clichés.

Select these individual reports in an editing app so you can quickly scan which character's description needs revision. You can further develop it with your own imagination.

3. Dialogue

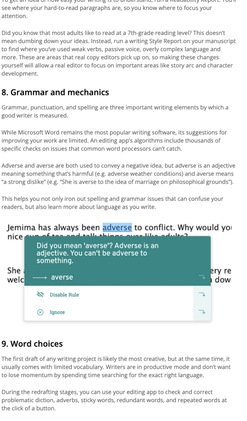
If you're writing fiction, chances are your characters talk to each other. This can reveal relationship dynamics, backstory and characterization without slowing down your pacing.

An editing app helps writers notice things about their dialogue that they may not question otherwise. ProWritingAid scans for dialogue tags, like "said," "asked," "shouted," "moaned," and others. You'll see where you've used unusual dialogue tags that "tell" rather than "show" how a character is feeling or what they are doing.

4. Flow and transitions

Transition words and phrases determine the flow of your writing, as they guide readers to follow your train of thought clearly without having to guess.

An editing tool will scan your text and summarize with a "transitions score," which is based on the percentage of sentences that come with transition words like "nevertheless," "similarly," "likewise," and "as a result." The ideal score is 25% or higher, which translates to one transition word or phrase every three to four sentences.



If your transition score is low, you should go back through your work and decide which word is the perfect bridge to get your reader from thought A to B.

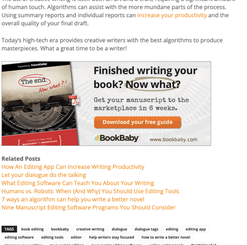
5. Pacing

Creative writers have incredible imaginations. You walk around with whole worlds in your head, waiting to be committed to the page. This mental world can imbue your writing with a feeling that the story continues beyond the last page.

But if you spend too much time on character backstory and settings, your prose can become dry and leave your readers skipping to the next bit of action.

When you're excited by the world in your head and love exploring that backstory, it can become difficult to notice the slower paced sections for what they are.

This is where technology comes in. The pacing check shows you how you've distributed the faster and slower paced sections of your story. If there are too many slower paced sections, you can go back and move things around, or add in some dialogue or action.



6. Consistency

This feature is a lifesaver, especially when you're a UK writer writing in US English or vice versa. Running the consistency check means your editing tool will flag inconsistencies, such as spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, single or double quotes, and ellipsis.

There are over 1,700 spelling differences between UK English and US English and 60% of surveyed writing samples have hyphenation inconsistency. If a reader notices an inconsistency, it will distract them from your content. Use the editing tool to iron these out and allow your readers to stay immersed.

7. Style and readability

Readability and writing style go hand in hand, and it's important to strike the right balance between your unique author voice and writing for your audience.

Sometimes, when you're used to a particular style, it takes a while to break free of certain conventions. You might use specific adverbs and hidden verbs that are more "official." You must consider who your target audience is and tailor your content to them. Being verbose and using passive voice may be appropriate for a think-tank or pompous character, but shouldn't be overused in a call-to-action or fiction novel.

To get an idea of how easy your writing is to understand, run a Readability Report. You'll see where your hard-to-read paragraphs are, so you know where to focus your attention.

Did you know that most adults like to read at a 7th-grade reading level? This doesn't mean dumbing down your ideas. Instead, run a writing Style Report on your manuscript to find where you've used weak verbs, passive voice, overly complex language and more. These are areas that real copy editors pick up on, so making these changes yourself will allow a real editor to focus on important areas like story arc and character development.

8. Grammar and mechanics

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are three important writing elements by which a good writer is measured.

While Microsoft Word remains the most popular writing software, its suggestions for improving your work are limited. An editing app's algorithms include thousands of specific checks on issues that common word processors can't catch.

Adverse and averse are both used to convey a negative idea, but adverse is an adjective meaning something that's harmful (e.g. adverse weather conditions) and averse means "a strong dislike" (e.g. "She is averse to the idea of marriage on philosophical grounds").

This helps you not only iron out spelling and grammar issues that can confuse your readers, but also learn more about language as you write.

9. Word choices

The first draft of any writing project is likely the most creative, but at the same time, it usually comes with limited vocabulary. Writers are in productive mode and don't want to lose momentum by spending time searching for the exact right language.

During the redrafting stages, you can use your editing app to check and correct problematic diction, adverbs, sticky words, redundant words, and repeated words at the click of a button.

ProWritingAid's contextual thesaurus allows you to double-click any word to be shown a list of synonyms that might work. Unlike going back and forth to use an online thesaurus, which doesn't take context into account, this built-in functionality allows you to play with word options.

If you want even more synonyms to choose from, you can go to the Word Explorer. This feature of the editing app helps writers find inspiration and build new ideas around the words already used in the text. It provides various choices for alliterations, rhymes, synonyms, collocations, anagrams, clichés, phrases, and thesaurus queries. The examples provided have been selected by editors and cited from notable books and quotes so you can review them and be inspired.

Putting your editing tool to work

The act of creative writing is itself both an art and a craft, requiring a significant amount of human touch. Algorithms can assist with the more mundane parts of the process. Using summary reports and individual reports can increase your productivity and the overall quality of your finished article.

Today's high-tech era provides creative writers with the best algorithms to produce masterpieces. What a great time to be a writer!

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