15 Tips to Self-Edit Your Book

Once you have a solid draft of your book, the tough work of editing starts. Here's a few pointers to help you along the way.

1. Does a sentence add to plot, or help the reader know the character? If not, get rid of it.
2. Characters should be different – different voice, mannerisms, looks. Be consistent. If Betty Lou has short red hair in the first chapter, don't talk about long blonde locks later.
3. Dialogue can be good, but it can get confusing. One or two pages of continuous dialogue is too much. Tighten it up with some action. (Show, not tell).
4. Provide a brief transition when changing place or time, or starting a new scene or chapter. Help your story move smoothly.
5. Watch too many details. They can bog the reader down or make the story slow and boring. Keep the pace moving with action, leaving a cliff-hanger or question at the end of each chapter. Never end a chapter with someone asleep.
6. If you think you have to use exclamation points, CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics,* or **bold,** to make a point, you're wrong. Stronger words and action verbs are needed. For example, if you write "Jennie was SO EXCITED when she saw the puppy!", the reader doesn't know why or how. Show it. Example: "Jennie jumped up and down, not able to stand still. She squealed with delight when she saw the puppy."
7. . Do a search and replace (keyboard shortcut – Control + H) to look for all the "ly" and passive "ing" verbs. Replace them with stronger verbs.
8. Watch your tenses. If your story is told in the past tense, stay in the past. Some stories may use flashbacks which go back and forth, but they can be confusing to the reader.
9. Be careful of too many adjectives and adverbs. Get rid of those "ly" words and choose a strong word. Long descriptive passages can be like an information dump. Caution! Many times, it's not necessary. Work the information into the story in other ways, little by little.
10. Choose a point of view for a character, stick to it.
11. A character hasn't changed in some way by the end of your story, your story isn't done. Help him/her learn something, grow, solve a mystery, or change for the better (or worse).
12. Does your character talk to himself or do a lot of thinking? Then give him/her a friend to talk to.
13. If you're bored with a character, your reader will be, too. You should know your character inside and out. What's their favorite time of day? Who's their best friend? What worries them? What makes them happy? Treat them like a real person, and your reader will too.
14. To have a complete story, you should be able to tell it in three well-crafted sentences: 1.the opening, 2.the middle, allude to the climax, and 3. hint at the ending.
15. Can't come to a conclusion or end your book? Stumped? Put it down a day or two, and then read it aloud to yourself (or have your computer read it to you). You'll be surprised how much clearer everything becomes.

Once you are done self-editing. Go through it again. Some suggest reading your book through at least three times from start to finish. I suggest five to six times, looking for different weak areas each time. As the book becomes more a part of you, the author, you know what you want it to convey and how you want it said. Hearing it aloud makes a world of difference.

Lastly, get a few beta readers; better yet, get an editor who may see things in a new light that you can't. Your book will be better for it, and your readership will grow because of it.

Resource: http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content-writing