



Romance Novel Revision Checklist

PLOT

Is there internal and external conflict?

Is the conflict strong? Can characters turn back at any time or must they go forward?

Is the conflict introduced early and resolved at the end?

If you take a scene out, will the plot still work? Is it needed in the story? Can some scenes be combined with others?

Do scenes start close enough to the action or “meat”? Are scene endings suspenseful enough to leave readers wanting more?

Do your major plot points have ups and downs? Are monumental moments given the time and emotional impact they deserve?

Is the ending romantic, believable, and satisfying to the reader?

CHARACTERS

Do your characters have specific goals to achieve? Is it clear to the reader?

Do your characters have flaws as well as strengths? Are they sympathetic and consistent?

Does the relationship between hero and heroine become more complicated as the story progresses?

Do your hero and heroine act with integrity?

Is there time in each chapter for the characters to explore and reflect on their feelings?

Is there enough chemistry and sexual tension between the characters? Is it believable they would be interested in each other?

Are the characters’ emotions shown through actions, dialogue, and decisions? Do their reactions make sense and match their personalities?

Do the characters’ pasts and backstories influence the plot?

Do the characters’ arcs leave them changed at the end (from their mindset in the beginning)?

Are secondary characters supporting the hero and/or heroine’s journey? (Aiding or adding more conflict.)

Are all secondary characters doing a job or can some be cut or combined?

DIALOGUE

Does the dialogue sound natural?

Do figures of speech or phrases repeat among characters?

Are any areas chit-chatty or filler?

DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

Is there enough description that your reader feels grounded in your fictional world?

Is the setting active enough or “just there”?

Do you have enough sensory detail to bring important moments to life? (Description that titillates the five senses.)

Do you overuse certain phrases, adverbs, facial expressions, or clichés? Have you cut them or described something in a new way?

Have you picked the right word for the right job? Every word has its own personality and connotations.

WRITING STYLE

Is the point-of-view and tense clearly defined and completely consistent?

Are you showing with enough tangible imagery to make readers feel and see what’s happening?

Are you telling enough to create shortcuts and summarize less important info?

Is every paragraph working its hardest for your story? Trimming by 5 to 10 percent forces you to tighten the writing.

Are metaphors supporting your content or are they falling flat? Decide what’s the best use of your creative energy. And remember: sometimes less is more.