Top Areas to Critique First

1. **YELLOW**: Eliminate most passive verbs and insert active verbs.
2. **RED**: Find and delete adverbs or replace adverb with visual verbs.
3. **TURQUOISE**: Find and delete all unnecessary, overused or empty words.
4. **HOT PINK**: Look for repeated words and replace them.

**Editing Time Saver: Use Find, Replace and Highlight**

1. **Copy and paste verbs into a comment box (see examples below)**: Then use find, replace and highlight to locate passive verbs, repeated words, and unnecessary, overused or empty words in your manuscript.

2. **How to Use Find, Replace, and Highlight**:
   - FIRST, click on the highlighter button and choose the highlight color you want. This button defaults back to white. So if you do a find, replace and highlight FIRST, the words you targeted won’t show any color on your manuscript.

1. **Click on**: Select highlight color.
2. **Click on “Edit” on the menu.**
3. **Click “Find.”** Enter the passive verb in “Find what” box.
4. **Then click on “Replace.”** Type in same verb in “Replace with” box.
5. **Select “Format.”** Click on “Highlight.”
6. **Then click “Find All.”**

1. **Find** and replace passive verbs with active or picture verbs.
   - Changing passive verbs into active verbs is the best-kept secret of professional writers and editors. Every beginning writer uses “to be” and passive verbs. Active verbs transform your writing style from dull, impersonal and long-winded to vigorous, interesting and readable. Interesting note: Passive verbs “to be” verbs follow the past participle of another passive verb.
   - **Show, don’t tell.** Use active voice most of the time. The heartbeat of a sentence, an active verb:
     - ‘shows’ instead of ‘tells’
     - speeds up the action
     - adds action to scenes
     - conveys drama in plots
     - reveals characters’ eccentricities
     - names the person doing the action
     - creates shorter sentences
   - **When to use passive voice:**
     - to slow down the action
     - to reduce tension

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to stretch the narrative
or to emphasize the person who receives the action

**Turn passive verb or adjective into an image or picture verb**
1. **Change tense.**
   a. Readers are annoyed by ‘to be’ and passive verbs.
   b. “To be” and passive verbs annoy readers.

2. **Flip the sentence.**
   a. Diane Sawyer is an anchor on World New Tonight.
   b. Diane Sawyer anchors World News Tonight.

3. **Change a noun into a verb.**
   a. The tutor was the winner of the “Teacher of the Year” award.
   b. The tutor won the “Teacher of the Year” award.

4. **Combine sentences.**
   a. The clacking train fell against the windows.
   b. The rain clacked against the windows.

Online “to be verbs” analyzer: [www.aztekera.com/tools/tobeverbs.php](http://www.aztekera.com/tools/tobeverbs.php)

2. **Find and either delete or replace adverbs with visual verbs.**
   - Adverbs “tell”: He walked angrily/quickly/quietly/slowly/nervously/unsteadily down the hall.
   - Visual verb: He stomped/stormed/crept/paced/staggered down the hall

Online “adverb” analyzer:
   - [www.adverbless.com](http://www.adverbless.com)
   - [http://www.hemingwayapp.com](http://www.hemingwayapp.com)

1. Replace weak, empty verbs with strong visual or sensory verbs.
   a. **Weak:** throw
   b. **Strong:** toss, flip, hurl, fling, pitch, lob, chuck
   c. **Weak:** look
   d. **Strong:** gaze, stare, glance, glare, peep, peek
   e. **Weak:** walked slowly
   f. **Strong:** strolled, ambled, sauntered, limped, meandered

2. **Sensory Verbs**
   a. **SEE:** plod, swoop, pummel, wrench, dribble, ooze, stampede, shimmer, mash, lurch, dodge, careen, Lynch, hurl, plunge, hoist, laced, unfurl, streak
   b. **FEEL:** Forked, knifed, paw, clutch, flinch, jab, crush, cudgel,
   c. **HEAR:** thud, clink, hush, snap, swish, crackle, whir, bang, clang, gurgle, hiss, jingle
   d. **TASTE:** Oily, Buttery, Salty, Bitter, Bittersweet, Sweet, Hearty, Mellow, Sugary, Crisp, Ripe, Bland, Tasteless, Sour, Vinegary, Fruity, Tangy, Unripe, Raw, Alkaline, Medicinal, Fishy, Spicy, Peppery, Gingery, Burnt, Overripe
   e. **SMELL:** Sweet, Scented, Fragrant, Aromatic, Perfumed, Earthy, Piney Gamy, Fishy, Briny, Acrid, Burnt, Moldy, Musty, Mildewed, Damp, Dank

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1. **Use Verbs Associated with Animals**
   a. **Talk:** moo, crow, bray, trumpet, croak, whoop, bleat, neigh, whinny, chatter, gobble, bark, buzz, chirp, peep, twitter, cluck, shriek
   b. **Walk:** slither, pounce, swoop, gallop
   c. **Sit:** roost
   d. **Eat:** graze, wolf down, pig out

2. **Online verb resources:**
   1. **Precise Verbs:**
   2. **Sensory Verbs:**
      a. [http://fcw.needham.k12.ma.us/~cristina_malinn/S02B36079.0/vivid%20verbs%20sensory%20words.pdf](http://fcw.needham.k12.ma.us/~cristina_malinn/S02B36079.0/vivid%20verbs%20sensory%20words.pdf)
   3. **Visuwords:** [http://www.visuwords](http://www.visuwords)
   4. **Vivid Verbs List of All Time**
      a. [http://chelljaguars.tripod.com/verbs.htm](http://chelljaguars.tripod.com/verbs.htm)
   5. **Descriptive Verbs**
   6. **Action Verbs**

3. **Find and delete unnecessary, overused words.**
   1. **Rewrite sentences beginning with: "There is", "There are", "It is", or "Here is."**
      a. Passive: **There is** no reason why he left home.
      b. Active: He left home for no reason.
      c. Passive: **There are** kids swimming in the lake.
      d. Active: Kids swim in the lake.
   2. **Replace "it" with a visual noun.**
      a. **House:** mansion, hut, shack, dump, Victorian
      b. **Car:** station wagon, pick-up, convertible, SUV
   3. **Avoid redundancies, wordy phrases and multiple words with similar meanings.**
      a. **Redundant:** She shrugged her shoulders.
      b. **Tight:** She shrugged.
      c. **Redundant:** She whispered softly.
      d. **Tight:** She whispered.
      e. **Redundant:** My own doll.
      f. **Tight:** My doll.

4. **Look for repeated words and replace them.**
   Find repetitive, pet words.

   **Online “repeated words” analyzer:**
   1. **Word Counter:** [http://www.wordcounter.com/](http://www.wordcounter.com/)
   2. **See words you tend to overuse.** [http://tagcrowd.com/](http://tagcrowd.com/)