



# Checklist: *Five Fast Fixes* for Nonfiction Writers

Use this checklist as you revise your nonfiction writing. Each section highlights a key self-editing strategy drawn from *Five Fast Fixes for Nonfiction Writers* by Sherry Howard Salois. For deeper explanations, examples, and guidance, the full book is available on [Amazon](#).

## Paragraphs: Break Up the Blocks

- ☐ Does the paragraph look long when scanned on the screen or page?
- ☐ Does it shift in topic, angle, or emphasis?
- ☐ Does it include more than one central idea or example?
- ☐ Do you lose focus when reading it aloud?
- ☐ Do you need to scroll to finish the paragraph?
- ☐ Would breaking it up improve pacing or flow?

## Subheads: Guide the Reader

- ☐ Do the subheads clearly reflect each section's content?
- ☐ Are they consistent in style and formatting?
- ☐ Are subheads balanced at the same level?
- ☐ Have you kept the hierarchy to two or three levels max?
- ☐ Does each section under a subhead stand alone clearly?
- ☐ Are you avoiding citations or notes in subheads?

## Transitions: Keep Ideas Connected

- ☐ Does each paragraph link logically to the one before?
- ☐ Are relationships (contrast, cause, addition) between ideas and sections clear?
- ☐ Do section endings lead smoothly into the next?
- ☐ Are you varying your transition words or devices?
- ☐ Do bridge sentences add real value—not filler?
- ☐ Are key terms echoed for clarity without overuse?

- ☐ Are you applying the known-new contract as needed?
- ☐ Does the chapter flow naturally when read aloud?

## Voice: Use Active Sentences

- ☐ Is the sentence focused on the action, not just the result?
- ☐ Does it use “to be” + a past participle unnecessarily?
- ☐ Can you name the doer of the action?
- ☐ Could the doer be moved to the start of the sentence?
- ☐ Is the revision clearer, stronger, and more direct?

## Clutter: Tighten Your Sentences

- ☐ Have you read your work aloud to catch clutter?
- ☐ Does each sentence get to the point quickly?
- ☐ Can you cut weak phrases like “in order to”?
- ☐ Are there redundant pairs you can remove (e.g., “each and every”)?
- ☐ Can you replace abstract nouns with strong verbs?
- ☐ Are there stacked modifiers you can simplify?
- ☐ Can two short sentences be merged without confusion?

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From *Five Fast Fixes for Nonfiction Writers: Polish Your Prose with Pro-Level Edits*

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