

YOUR GREAT CHILDREN'S MASTERPIECE

THE REVISION JOURNEY

A Guide To Polishing Your Children's Book

CONGRATULATIONS

**YOU'RE COURAGEOUSLY BRINGING
YOUR DREAM TO LIFE!**

NOW, TAKE A BREATH, GRAB A CUP
OF TEA (OR COFFEE OR WINE), AND
READ ON TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE
YOUR BOOK THE BEST IT CAN BE!



What This Guide Covers

YOUR REVISION JOURNEY

Introduction to Carla

Your Job As a Writer

The Writing & Revision Process

Self-Editing Tips

Other Ways to Polish & Improve Your Book

Carla Dawes

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT
PHOTOGRAPHER, COACH & EDITOR

WELCOME! I'M CARLA!

I'm so honoured Laurie asked me to help you out with revising your masterpiece! I have always been blessed with a gift for writing and editing - you probably have been too?! I have nearly 15 years of this type of work under my belt and I understand the courage it takes to put yourself out there! I'm excited to share my editing expertise with you so you can bring your masterpiece to life and make it the best it can be.

Enjoy! And please reach out if you have questions!





YOUR JOB AS A WRITER: **Get your readers to** **enjoy the journey!**

YOU MUST REMOVE ROADBLOCKS

Remove roadblocks so your readers (and their parents) keep reading! And, as a children's writer, to keep them reading your book OVER and OVER (who doesn't want to be the bedtime story that has everyone laughing and crying again and again?).

Possibly even MOST importantly, you want them to be anxiously anticipating your NEXT book!



BUT WAIT!

DON'T REMOVE THE ROADBLOCKS AS YOU CREATE YOUR FIRST DRAFT!

Your FIRST job is to FINISH the story, THEN the editing and roadblock removal can begin!

Let's go!

YOUR BASIC WRITING & REVISION PROCESS





WRITE



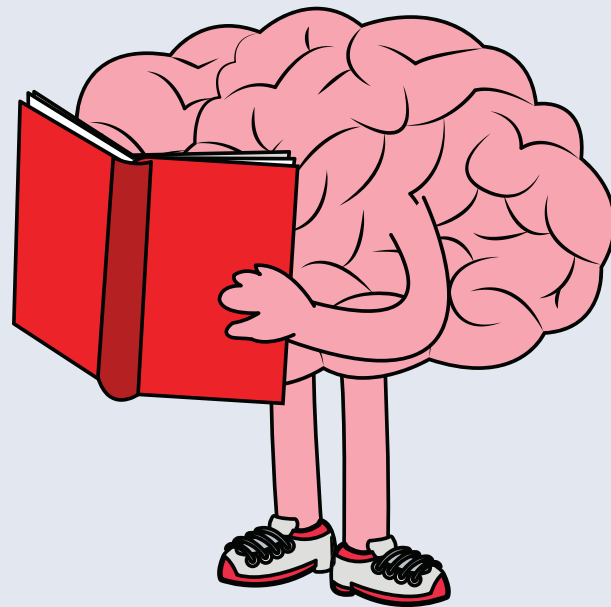
Write WITHOUT editing as you go. Just write!

Don't self-sensor, don't edit as you go, just WRITE the damn thing!

Finish the story. Just finish it. Trust me.

Done is better than perfect and there is LOTS of time to make it perfect if you just GET. THE. THING. DONE! Clear?

2 **READ**



Read the story from start to finish, out LOUD, without stopping. Then read it again and fix all the niggly little things as you go.

DO NOT substantive or creative edit at this point, just fix the glaring errors, if there are any . Things such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, passive voice, etc.

And start to note areas that you might be able to make improvements.



LEAVE IT



Leave it for at least a few days!

LONGER, if you can!

Clean eyes make for clarity and minimize your risk of reading through mistakes.

4 **RED PEN**



GET OUT YOUR RED PEN AND READ IT AGAIN.

And again. And again. Take notes right in your document either literally in red pen, or with your word processor markup function.

Each read you will evaluate it for a different outcome — some examples of those are listed on the next page!

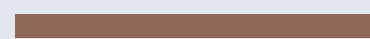
WHAT TO EVALUATE

- Is the story interesting & believable?
- Are the characters fun, interesting, real, natural, relatable (or whatever other adjectives you'd like your characters to be!) Also, are they MEMORABLE? Would a child easily be able to describe the main characters of your book after the book is closed??
- Are you SHOWING instead of TELLING? Again, is each line memorable? Can the reader feel as though they are IN the story?

WHAT ELSE TO EVALUATE

- Does your dialogue sound natural? Would these characters in real life actually have this conversation in this way?
- Is it suspenseful enough? Are the hooks in the right place? (e.g. at the beginning? at the end of each chapter?)
- If you're using rhyme, does the rhythm and rhyme work? Is the syllable count consistent?
- Is the pacing good?

5 REVISE



START REVISING!

NOW is the time to start making your creative fixes. The self-editing tips on the pages that follow will help you do just that!

This also takes you back to the beginning:
WRITE—READ—LEAVE IT—RED PEN—REVISE

Repeat this process as many times as you think you need to make it Beta-Reader and Editor ready!

A person with long hair, wearing a blue shirt, is shown from the chest up, leaning over a desk and editing a manuscript. They are holding a pen and pointing at a page. A typewriter is visible in the bottom left corner. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting.

Self-Editing Tips

SELF-EDITING IS A CRITICAL PART OF
THE WRITING AND REVISION PROCESS.
HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU POLISH AND IMPROVE
YOUR STORY AND MAKE IT THE BEST IT CAN BE!

TIP 1

READ IT OUT LOUD



Reading your story out loud is a sure way to evaluate pace and read-out-loud-ability (does anything trip you up?)

Also consider whether or not a parent would want to read this book out loud to their kid 100 times (and not fall asleep while doing so — that’s the biggest pulse check for me! Ha!)

Fix the big trip-ups first, then continue with your review!

TIP 2

AIM FOR WORD ECONOMY



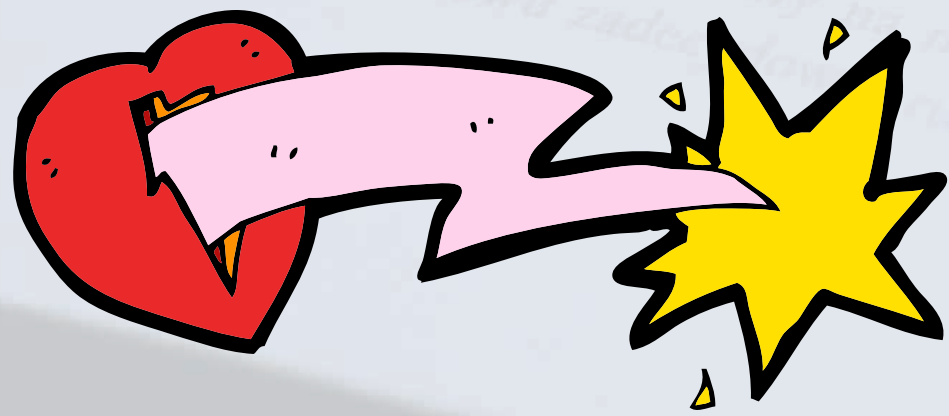
Cut words. Cut sentences.

If you can eliminate and shorten, do it! With shorter text like a children's picture book, every word counts — if it doesn't contribute to plot or character development, get rid of it! Wherever you can find one word to replace two or more words, do it!

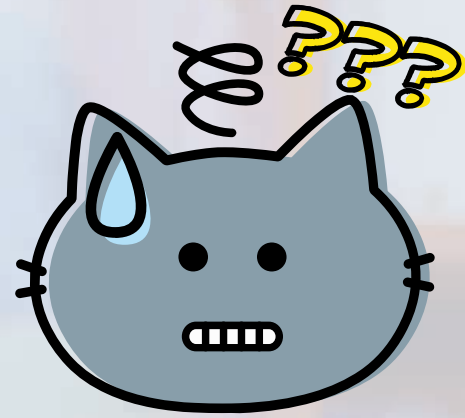
And keep your words simple. Remember that your illustrator will be able to add spice where words won't do justice.

TIP 3

CONSIDER KILLING YOUR DARLINGS



What the heck is a Darling and why should you kill it? William Faulkner supposedly penned this phrase, and “Darlings” refers to words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs that we are often most proud of. We get attached, we LOVE them. To the point that we almost don’t care if those bits are clear to readers or not. They’re usually colourful and obscure language or descriptions that we’ve grown attached to simply because they came to us in moments of inspiration. We attach to them because of the feelings we had when we wrote them! But our “Darlings” might not evoke the same feelings in our readers! So, how do we recognize them? Read on!



HOW TO RECOGNIZE "DARLINGS"

- If you have kids, consider whether or not your “Darling” would be understandable to them. If the answer is no, consider whether or not they would be easily understandable and explainable by an adult reading to the child....if not, it should go!
- They’re usually those lines (and sometimes TITLES!) that you think of immediately when you think about your story....beyond the plot and the pace, you remember these sentences without reading them....that’s a Darling!
- If the story would remain understandable, fun and readable without it but you’re still hanging onto it, it’s probably a Darling!



WHAT NOW?

So, remember, I said CONSIDER killing them....to do this, remove them and set them aside in a different file, just in case you decide to bring them back. Ask yourself the following:

1. Does it NEED to be replaced?
2. If you think the answer is yes, replace it with the simplest line you can think of that shows the reader what's what.

One more way to recognize a darling: when your Beta Readers or chosen Editors say that line doesn't work for them or suggest it be replaced with something else and that makes you want to cry, yell, scream, vehemently resist, it's a good bet it's one of your Darlings. Consider axing it and seeing what happens!! Hard, I know; but worth consideration. Onward!

TIP 4

IMAGINE THE ILLUSTRATIONS



As you write, but more importantly, as you edit, think about the pictures.

The pictures can often tell a large part of the story.

Are there enough changing scenes to inspire different illustrations on each page or at least on each spread?

TIP 5

SHOWING VS. TELLING



As you read/edit, do so for SHOWING vs. TELLING.

This seems simple enough, but as you edit, you will quickly notice when you are telling instead of showing, ESPECIALLY if you have the wherewithal to leave it for a few days or longer and come back to it! Also, imagining the illustrations helps with this too!

A person with long hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt, is looking down at a typewriter. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with light coming through. The overall mood is contemplative and creative.

Subsequent Ways to Polish & Improve Your Story

IT'S IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE CAN'T DO IT ALL OURSELVES. FRESH EYES AND DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WILL MAKE YOUR STORY A MASTERPIECE. HERE ARE A FEW ADDITIONAL WAYS TO CONSIDER POLISHING & IMPROVING YOUR STORY.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black sleeveless top and a necklace, is smiling and holding a stack of books. She is standing in front of a large bookshelf filled with books. The image has a dark overlay.

Enlist Your Local Children's Librarian

Many librarians will likely be happy to help an aspiring author! And they've read it ALL, so see if they'd be willing to offer some thoughts and feedback. Also, they likely know other resources (e.g. potential Beta Readers, editors, proofreaders, other authors) whom they can connect you with.

Hire an Editor (or at least a Proofreader)

Let's face it, not many people can accurately edit their own work without making at least a few mistakes, not to mention those Darlings! You might have a great idea and be great at pacing and word choice, but maybe grammar and spelling are not your thing? No matter how small the mistake, you do NOT want it in your book, it's unprofessional. So, consider hiring an editor who can help you. It can be well worth the investment. Decide what type of editing you would like — the next page gives you some ideas.

TYPES OF EDITING (HEAVIEST TO LIGHTEST)

- **DEVELOPMENTAL or SUBSTANTIVE** — also known as line editing, this evaluates big picture structure and content including plot, character, language, pacing, etc.
- **COPY EDITING** — Checking for grammar, spelling, style, punctuation. Looking for problems such as wordiness, weak transitions, suitable pacing, and any errors or omissions and overall readability.
- **PROOFREADING** — Looking at final text for punctuation, spelling, capitalization, typos and formatting errors to ensure the final product is ready for publishing.



Find Some Beta Readers

Beta readers are the first people you're releasing your 'finished product' to. Thankfully you probably already have some qualified Beta Readers in Laurie's group! But you might want to find some others who are more in line with your target audience! When you choose your Beta Readers, give them specific guidelines — what do you want them to read for? The next page gives some tips on how to choose your Beta Readers.

A composite image showing a man and a woman reading a book to a child. The man is on the left, wearing a green shirt, looking down at the book. The woman is on the right, wearing an orange shirt, also looking down at the book. The child is in the center, partially obscured by the text overlay. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

CHOOSING YOUR BETA READERS THEY SHOULD BE:

- Avid readers.
- Part of your target audience (so probably a parent + their child in your target age group!)
- "Fresh eyed" — in other words, they haven't seen this piece of work before.
- Unbiased (i.e. not your sister and her son, or your bestie and her daughter!)
- Able to convey an HONEST opinion without hurting your feelings.
- Succinct in their feedback.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR BETA READERS TO READ FOR

- When you choose your Beta Readers, give them specific guidelines — what do you want them to read for?
- The graphic on the right is from Reader's Digest and gives you some ideas.
- For more information, click on the graphic to read the complete article!

KIDS AS BETA READERS: QUESTIONS TO ASK

by Marie Unanue

- What is your favorite book currently?
- How does this story compare to your favorite?
- How long did it take you to read this book?
- Was the book hard to finish?
- Did you like the story? Why or why not?
- Are there any characters you want to be like? Why do you want to be like them?
- Was this a story you would tell your friends to read?
- Was there anything missing in the story that you think would make it better?
- Did you dislike any of the characters?
- If you could change one thing in this book, what would it be and why?

WD WRITER'S DIGEST



That's It, That's All!

BUT, I'M HERE TO HELP

Laurie has likely mentioned that I will be available for questions in your Private Facebook Group.

She will provide details as to when and how that will happen!

I'm also happy to offer you an exclusive editing package for your book! Get in touch and we can talk about the details.

I know, I know, you want a ballpark, right?
Yeah, I knew you would...Okay.....read on!

EXCLUSIVE EDITING PACKAGE

Copy-editing + final proofread of your picture book!

UNDER 500 WORDS

~~\$197~~

\$97!

500-1000 WORDS

~~\$297~~

\$169!

And if your project is something different than this,
let's chat, I'd love to see if and how I can help!





CARLA DAWES

www.carladawes.com

PHONE: 780.966.1400

EMAIL: carladawes@shaw.ca



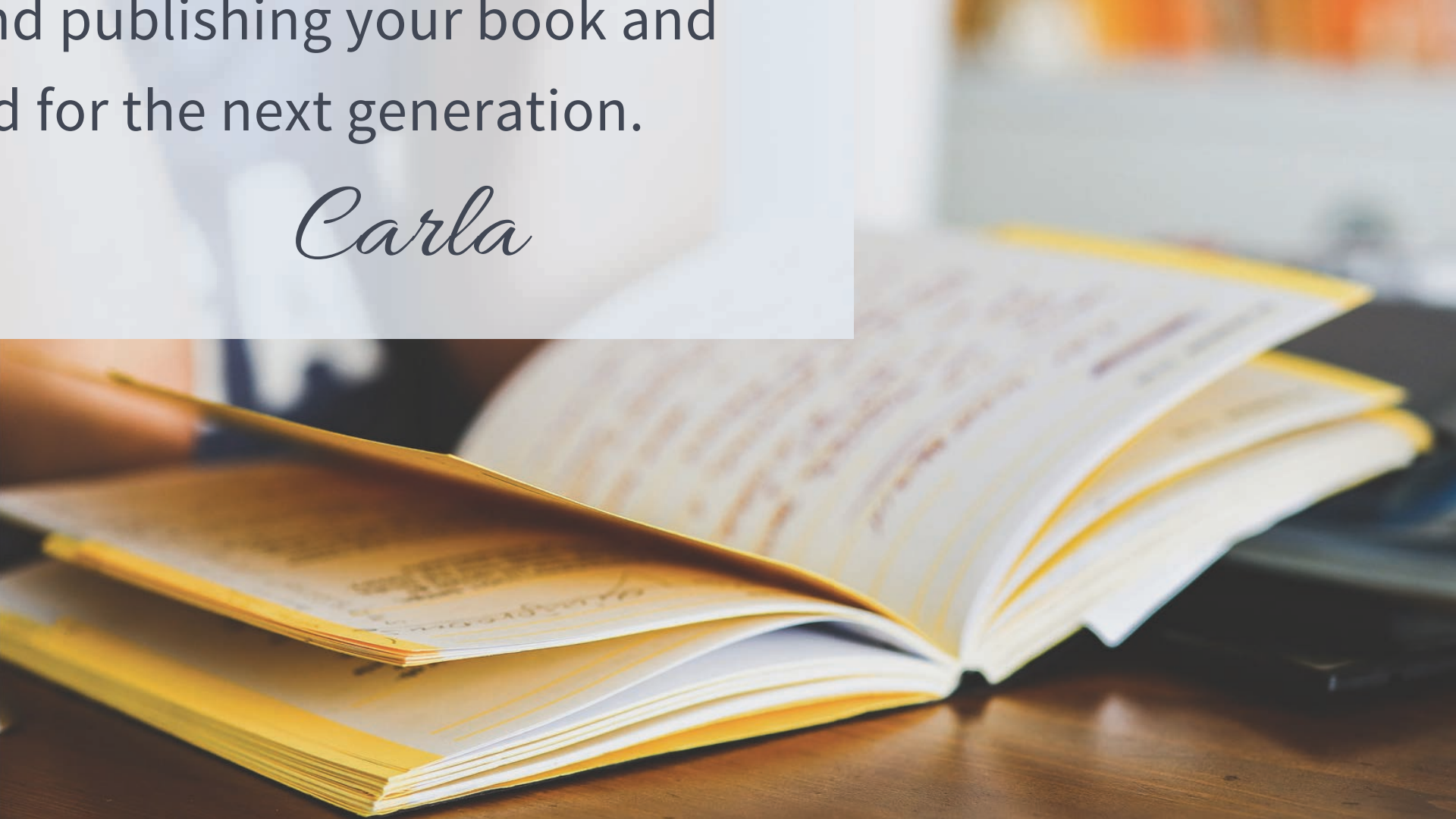
Carla Dawes



@carladawesphoto



Carla Dawes - Conscious Creation Workshops & Retreats



NOW GO GET 'EM!

I sincerely wish you all the best on your courageous journey to creating, revising and publishing your book and helping to change the world for the next generation.

Carla