

A Quick & Dirty Guide to Revising your Novel

Lesson 5: Writing in your changes.

You might be a little worn out from Lesson 4. No worries--take a break. Give yourself some time. It's *always* good to get distance between you and your novel.

Now, I realize that not everyone will print out their novel, and I know not everyone will revise by hand. That's fine. Do what you do, but know that I'm writing this lesson as if you had printed it.

Supplies Needed Today:

- your printed manuscript
- your colorful Perfect Book outline
- your fan letter to yourself
- your Perfect Book worksheets (just have them handy)
- paper clips

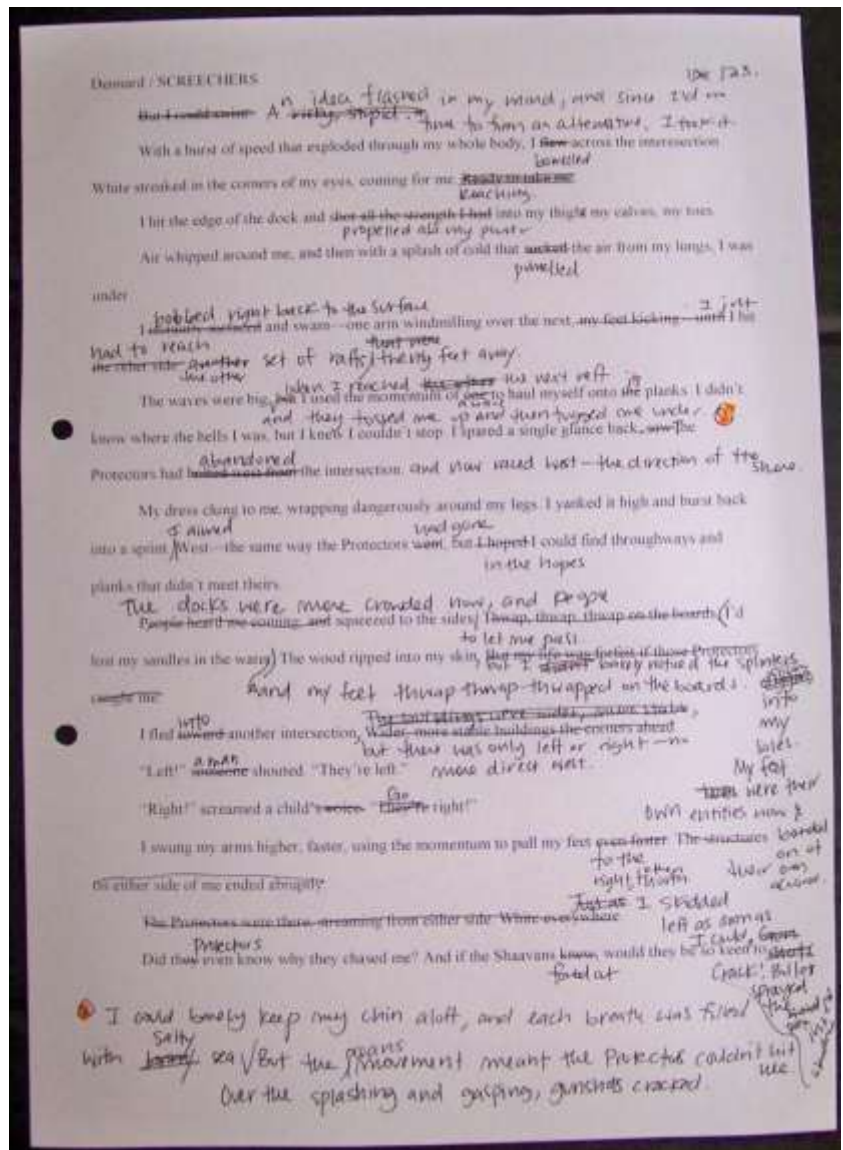
If this is your first draft...

1. If this is your first draft, we'll be approaching revisions **CHRONOLOGICALLY**--i.e. in order: scene 1, scene 2, etc.
2. Get your first scene card and find the pages in the MS that correspond to that scene.\
3. Read the post-its on the scene card carefully. Check them often. You now have to change the scene so it meets all the little requirements on that post-it.
4. With a pen, mark out, reorganize, rewrite, and add in whatever words you need to meet those post-it's Perfect Book goals. (see picture)

5. This is ALL RIGHT-BRAIN! So, tap into that creativity and take as long as you need to reach your target.

6. When you finish the first scene, set the scrawled-upon pages aside (I use 2 folders: one for unrevised MS, and one for revised MS), and move to the next.

7. Don't be daunted. This WILL take time. But I have no doubt you're up to the task. Remember: this is manageable! You know what you have to do, it's all broken up for you, and now you just have to "connect the dots".



If this is NOT your first draft...

8. If this is your second, third, or four hundredth draft, you might benefit from this method instead. This method is for people who are

1. Working on a TIGHT deadline (i.e. agent/editorial revisions)
2. Aren't doing a *major* overhaul of their novel

9. Take your novel and your first scene card with a **BLUE POST-IT** (or your Plot post-its). Pull the pages that correspond do that scene and paperclip it all to the scene card. (see picture)

10. Move to the next scene with **PLOT** issues, pull the corresponding pages, and paperclip it. Wash, rinse, repeat until you've removed every scene that needs plot changes, paper-clipped them, and set them into a stack.

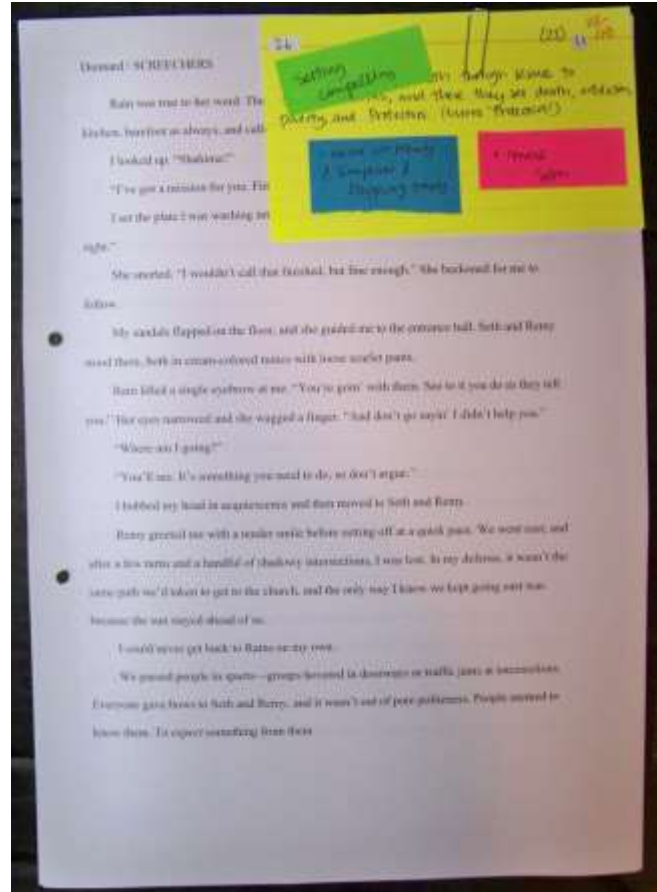
11. Read the post-its on the scene card carefully. Check them often. You must change the scene so it meets all the little requirements on that post-it. Though you've only pulled **PLOT CARDS**, you'll be fixing *everything* on there (character, setting, other). That way you don't have to *come back* to a scene and revise it again (trust me! That gets messy!).

12. With a pen, mark out, reorganize, rewrite, and add in whatever words you need to meet those post-it's Perfect Book goals. (see picture above, step #4)

13. This is **ALL RIGHT-BRAIN!** So, tap into that creativity and take as long as you need to reach your target.

14. When you finish the first scene, set the scrawled-upon pages aside (I use 2 folders: one for unrevised MS, and one for revised MS), and move to the next.

15. Once you've finished dealing with **PLOT**, you'll repeat this process with **CHARACTER**. You will remove all remaining scene cards with a **PINK POST-IT** (or whatever



color you've applied to character). Then you will remove the corresponding MS pages, you will paperclip them together, and you will get started.

16. Once you've finished dealing with CHARACTER, you'll repeat this process with **SETTING**. You will remove all remaining scene cards with a **GREEN POST-IT** (or whatever color you've applied to setting), remove the corresponding MS pages, paperclip them together, and get started.

17. Finally, once you've finished dealing with SETTING, you'll repeat this process with **OTHER**. You will remove all remaining scene cards with an **ORANGE POST-IT** (or whatever color you've applied to other), remove the corresponding MS pages, paperclip them together, and get started.

18. Once you reach the end of the OTHER scene cards, you should be left with scenes (and their corresponding MS pages) that don't require changing. Put the whole MS back together now, in order, and set it somewhere safe.

19. OMGosh, YOU'RE DONE WITH THE HARD PART.

Wrapping Up

WOOHOO! You're into the real nitty-gritty for your revisions, and this is going to take time. Don't worry about that--do as much as you can when you can, and enjoy all this new creativity!

Best of all, know that when you're done, you'll have a really amazing manuscript on your hands! In Lesson 6, we'll talk about **typing in all your changes** and **dealing with line-edits**.

Happy revising!