

REVISING A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE

1. Provide feedback on the title. Is it creative?
2. Does the story hook the reader with a powerful opening line? How is it powerful? How might it be made more powerful?
3. Check that the story does not flip between past tense and present tense. If the story starts in the present, it should remain in the present. Fix it if it slips. If the story starts in the past, it should remain in the past. Fix it if it slips.
4. Does every sentence start with 'I'? Offer suggestions on how to alter 2-3 sentences so that they do not start with 'I'.
5. **Try not to place distance between the reader and the "I."** Using "I thought," "I saw," or "I felt" can create distance between the reader and the first person perspective. Avoid using them when you are writing in the first person, as they can weaken the narrative.
 - For example, rather than write, "I felt sad about losing her as a friend," you may write, "Sadness filled my body as I realized I was losing her as a friend."

Find 2 places where this happens in the story, and revise them to make them more powerful, like the example above.

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6. Suggest 3 places where a strong, specific word could help to elevate the writing. Look for any words that you can replace with more unique terms. Check for any language that does not feel as clear or concise as it could be.

7. Highlight 3 particularly powerful verbs. List, below, 3 words that were not as powerful, and beside them, write out a suggestion for improving the word choice.

8. **Filter the actions of the story through the narrator.** This means describing scenes, other characters, and settings from the point of the view of the narrator.
 - For example, rather than say, "I couldn't believe what I was seeing. A killer spider skittered towards me and I thought, I'm dead," focus on describing the action straight from the viewpoint of the narrator. You may write, "This couldn't be what I was seeing. A killer spider skittered towards me. I'm dead."

Check for moments where this is NOT happening, and offer suggestions to switch the writing around so that it is filtering through the narrator's eyes.

9. **Do not report on the action using the "I."** Allow the first person narrator to describe a scene or moment from their point of view.

Check to make sure that the story does NOT sound like a report or a summary of events. The story should let the reader experience the events spoken about. Offer suggestions on how to improve the writing if it slips into a report style/feel.

10. Read the story aloud. Make sure that it flows naturally; make sure that the speaker's voice remains consistent; make sure that it does not rely heavily on "I"; and make sure that it does not slip between tenses.