



December 2025

High-Stakes Editing Triage Checklist

When there's no time for perfection, this triage checklist helps you protect the essentials. It's built for high-stakes documents: the ones that shape funding, policy, public trust, or executive decisions.

You won't catch everything. That's not the goal.

Instead, this checklist helps you:

- **Clarify purpose**
- **Prevent critical misunderstandings**
- **Catch inconsistencies before they spread**
- **Reduce risk under deadline pressure**

Use it when you're the last editor standing, or when you need to steady your thinking before final sign-off.

Move fast – only 30 minutes for this:

- Purpose stated in one plain sentence near the top
- Key takeaway appears on the first page
- Decision request is explicit (approve, fund, select, adopt)
- Terms are consistent (same name for the same thing)
- Numbers match across summary, body, and tables
- Dates and timelines don't conflict
- Headings guide scanning and mirror the prompt or rubric
- High-risk claims softened or supported (no surprise promises)
- Clear next steps, owner, and due date



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