



October, 2025

Ten-Minute Clarity Edit Checklist

For writers who want their message to land.

Use this quick clarity pass before hitting send, submit, or publish. It won't catch every issue, but it'll catch the ones that make readers pause, squint, or skim.

Prep your workspace before you start the timer: define audience, purpose, and one takeaway in one (temporary) sentence.

a. Who must understand this on one read?

- Can your reader tell this was *meant for them*?
- Would a stranger know what context they need before reading?

b. What do you want them to do next?

- Have you clearly stated what you want the reader to understand, do, or feel next after reading your piece?

c. What's the point?

- Is that idea visible in the first 3–4 lines?

Minute 1: Intent and Audience

- Re-read your one-line purpose. Does your first paragraph clearly point to it?
- Add or revise the first line to reflect what the reader needs to know or do.

Minutes 2–3: Title and Opening Line

- Replace a vague title with one that signals value or outcome.
- In the first few lines, say what this is, why it matters, and what's next.

Minutes 4–6: Shorter Sentences and Simpler Words

- Break up long sentences (especially those over 25 words).
- Replace unneeded jargon or filler with clear, plain terms (use the swap list).

Minutes 7–8: Structure, Signposts, and Flow

- Each section should start with a takeaway sentence.
- Reorder or rephrase for clarity. Add signposts like "next" or "finally".



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Minutes 9-10: Quick Scan and Read Aloud

- Skim headings and topic sentences to see if they match your intent.
- Do one fast read aloud (or use text-to-speech) to catch typos and clumsy spots.
- **Optional Finisher**
Ask one human, "What stuck with you?" If they say, "It was clear," you're ready.