

Lesson 2 worksheet: tweaking hinges

Welcome to the Introduction to

Revise Your Academic Book or Dissertation !

Print out and use this worksheet to drive home the lesson of scanning and focusing on ONE component at a time. And also to make progress right now on your manuscript!

1. Get some appropriate amount of your appropriate text: a chapter or article is a good size. And let's scan through it looking for hinges of any kind (really there is no page min. or max. here).

Remember, hinges swing between presentation of research material, events or object descriptions and depictions, on the one hand, and something very different than that, on the other hand (such as background, concepts, theories). Or vice versa.

Always print out your text for scanning purposes. It is the best way to really "see" what's going on and to take assessments and make critical decisions.

In qualitative-style writing, a hinge can be invisible or it can be super-visible, as in "Now let's examine X."

FIRST: let's identify all the hinges.

Draw a horizontal line, and give that line a number to identify each hinge in your text.

Then on second pass, we'll fill out this worksheet below to identify the type of hinge, what is the underlying question, and some notes for enhancing the hinge.

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Step One: What are the changes or effects, related to hinges, that you are aiming for?

Don't only describe issues or problems but instead frame it in terms of what your target is. Use words like "will be" or "is," in future or some kind of present tense, to describe the change in it's finished form. Such as "The theoretical parts now inform a reading of the material and contribute significance to them." Or even, "The snarky reviewer finds no rambling, sees how everything is unified and connected, and has a smooth streamlined reading experience and doesn't notice the time fly by."

Hinge Scan and Analysis

For each hinge identify as invisible, explicit directing, explicit question, or other label. State or restate the question on which it turns, if known. Assess as good, unclear, weak, disconnected or other label. Then propose enhancements if any, such as "determine question" "heighten question sense" "make question explicit" "layer in hair-grower" or more specifically "increase dramatic tension of the conflict," "polarize Zizek and Butler more," "layer in hair-grower about mushrooms and feminist science," **or any other ideas.**

Hinge #

/ Page #

Hinge Type

Underlying Question

Your Assessment

Proposed Enhancements

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Review

A Hinge swings between descriptions of research material, events, objects or observations on one side, and background theory concepts or other different material on the other.

Underlying every Hinge is a question.

For editing purposes, it must be identified as ONE question.

More hinges, especially invisible ones, usually make for nuanced and interesting reading, where appropriate for genre and audience.

A Hinge can be invisible or explicit, and shades between.

Invisible hinges are the hallmark of quality qualitative writing.

Invisible Hinges can't always be pulled off.

Invisible Hinges aren't literally invisible--it's just a good way to hold the concept and aim at what we're shooting for: natural and inevitable-feeling progression.

Hinges can be enhanced mainly through 4 tools:

1. Heighten the sense of underlying question through enhanced contradictions, tensions, missing information, and mystery
2. Make the underlying question explicit.
3. Use explicit directions and sign posts
4. Infuse Hair-Grower pre-transitions that layer in pertinent elements that implicitly call to mind or are relevant to material on the other side of the next hinge. (important: hair growers are no substitute for one underlying question).

Great Work !!

And great focus! Now you know some key places in the text that can be tweaked or changed for certain effects. You may have found a little work to do on hinges, or maybe even found some places where, for instance, the underlying question was unable to be determined. In that case, you found something that has to be re-written until it achieves a singularly important underlying question.

The great thing is, even if you uncovered a big job, you now know what that job is and what you are aiming for in that rewrite.

The most important thing is you have learned about scanning your document for components and analyzing their function. Even if your work doesn't really have hinges because it doesn't have empirical objects or it is not qualitative, at least you have the idea down now that there is a difference between revising pages and hunting out particular components in a strategic manner. *This technique works for any component of your manuscript.*

Some components you'll spend a bit of time on, others not so much, depending on your assessment and your aim, as well as your genre and audience. I can't go into all the possible components now, but I think you can see that clearly now you know why going step by step with a system makes everything easier. And it doesn't stop with revising. As you analyze components you infuse into yourself wisdom about writing that shows up in your future projects at the drafting stage.

In the full workshop we'll go into way more detail and proceed in the exact order of steps so that you learn all the ins and outs of putting a manuscript together. Then we'll know a lot about how to proceed.

Next up: Scanning Your Text for Self-Assessment. Lesson 3 will drive home the reason why systematic assessment of your text arms you with the clarity to make decisions, and why that clarity must come first.

See you for the next lesson, and about your finished book:

You are going to get there!

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