

Line Editing Sample—A Typical Line Edit

This is an example of a typical line edit. Along the right side of the page, you can see what's been changed.

The scene was originally 403 words long. The revised text is 326 words long—an almost 20 percent reduction.

To see the original and the revision side by side, go to pages 3 and 4. You'll see the revision's pacing (how fast the story is moving along) is stronger, and necessary corrections have been made.

“Mom, why do you wear *that* when you drive my friends and me to school?” Ashley asked, sitting cross-legged on her seat in the minivan. Ashley was fifteen, slender, and strawberry blonde with certain high standards.

Rebecca was still in her yoga clothes—blue leggings with a tight tank top covered with a lotus blossom. “I went to my early class. What’s the matter with what I’m wearing?”

“Those pants. Nobody else’s mom wears that kind. They bulge out everywhere, and your top is way too tight on you.”

That morning, Rebecca had lingered over her reflection in the full-length mirror. Her shape was changing, but it didn’t matter anyway. A female middle-aged body took up space in the world often unnoticed. The leggings pressed against her flesh like sausage casings, and the top held her big breasts in place, just like the woman in the store had promised it would. She tied her brown hair back and squinted at her reflection. Not so bad for a woman of forty-nine, she thought to herself.

Deleted: Seriously,

Deleted: my

Deleted: -

Deleted: fifteen

Deleted: checked her attire. She

Deleted: :

Deleted: just

Deleted: Too, fast, She backed out of the driveway.

Deleted: just

Deleted:

Deleted: a whole lot

Deleted: It was just taking up a lot of space, that middle-aged body, in the world no one really noticed. But maybe because she didn’t sleep well the night before, in that pre-dawn light, she’d stopped to look at herself, how the

Deleted: how

Deleted: her eyes

Deleted:

“You should know, those clothes make you look really fat,” Ashley said.

Deleted: Mom,

Deleted: really

Deleted: said

Rebecca jolted the car to a stop at the corner, where they waited for the other kids in their carpool. “Listen, your mother gets up at six every morning to exercise. Be grateful for that.”

“It’s completely embarrassing. You don’t even wash your hair after class. It’s all sweaty and frizzy.” Ashley turned up the radio and filled the car with a female singer from the 1990s. She sang along. Ashley’s friend Parker ran down the sidewalk toward them.

“Are you saying I embarrass you? There’s something wrong with the way I look?”

Rebecca shouted over the music. She knew she shouldn’t yell at Ashley because it didn’t solve anything, and Ashley didn’t know about the recent scene with her sister, Yolanda.

Deleted: She thought many things she shouldn’t and said, or almost said, many more, but she thought she looked normal at least.

Deleted: be yelling

“Forget it. Wear whatever you want. I’ve been thinking I might want to walk to school anyway.”

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Line spacing: Double

Deleted: Okay fine forget

Deleted: , Mom

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Line Editing Comparison

ORIGINAL TEXT—403 words

“Seriously, Mom, why do you wear *that* when you drive my my friends and me to school?” Ashley asked, sitting crosslegged on her seat in the mini-van. Ashley was fifteen, slender and strawberry blonde with certain high standards.

Rebecca checked her attire. She was still in her yoga clothes: blue leggings with a tight tank top covered with a lotus blossom. “I just went to my early class. What’s the matter with what I’m wearing?” Too, fast, She backed out of the driveway.

“Those pants. Nobody else’s mom wears that kind. They bulge out everywhere and your top is just way too tight on you.”

That morning, Rebecca had lingered over her reflection in the full length mirror. Her shape was changing a whole lot, but it didn’t matter anyway. It was just taking up a lot of space, that middle-aged body, in the world no one really noticed. But maybe because she didn’t sleep well the night before, in that pre-dawn light, she’d stopped to look at herself, how the leggings pressed against her flesh like sausage casings and how the top held her big breasts in place, just like the woman in the store had promised it would. She tied her brown hair back and squinted her eyes at her reflection. Not so bad for a woman of forty-nine, she thought to herself.

“You should know, Mom, those clothes make you look really really fat,” said Ashley.

Rebecca jolted the car to a stop at the corner, where they waited for the other kids in their carpool. “Listen, your mother gets up at six every morning to exercise. Be grateful for that.”

REVISION—326 words

“Mom, why do you wear that when you drive my friends and me to school?” Ashley asked, sitting cross-legged on her seat in the minivan. Ashley was fifteen, slender, and strawberry blonde with certain high standards.

Rebecca was still in her yoga clothes—blue leggings with a tight tank top covered with a lotus blossom. “I went to my early class. What’s the matter with what I’m wearing?”

“Those pants. Nobody else’s mom wears that kind. They bulge out everywhere, and your top is way too tight on you.”

That morning, Rebecca had lingered over her reflection in the full-length mirror. Her shape was changing, but it didn’t matter anyway. A female middle-aged body took up space in the world often unnoticed. The leggings pressed against her flesh like sausage casings, and the top held her big breasts in place, just like the woman in the store had promised it would. She tied her brown hair back and squinted at her reflection. Not so bad for a woman of forty-nine, she thought to herself.

“You should know, those clothes make you look really fat,” Ashley said.

Rebecca jolted the car to a stop at the corner, where they waited for the other kids in their carpool. “Listen, your mother gets up at six every morning to exercise. Be grateful for that.”

“It’s completely embarrassing. You don’t even wash your hair after class. It’s all sweaty and frizzy.” Ashley turned up the radio and filled the car with a female singer from the 1990s. She sang along. Ashley’s friend Parker ran down the sidewalk toward them.

“Are you saying I embarrass you? There’s something wrong with the way I look?” Rebecca shouted over the music. She thought many things she shouldn’t and said, or almost said, many more, but she thought she looked normal at least. Rebecca knew she be yelling at Ashley because it didn’t solve anything and Ashley didn’t know about the recent scene with her sister Yolanda.

“Okay fine forget it, Mom. Wear whatever you want. I’ve been thinking I might want to walk to school anyway.”

“It’s completely embarrassing. You don’t even wash your hair after class. It’s all sweaty and frizzy.” Ashley turned up the radio and filled the car with a female singer from the 1990s. She sang along. Ashley’s friend Parker ran down the sidewalk toward them.

“Are you saying I embarrass you? There’s something wrong with the way I look?” Rebecca shouted over the music. She knew she shouldn’t yell at Ashley because it didn’t solve anything, and Ashley didn’t know about the recent scene with her sister, Yolanda.

“Forget it. Wear whatever you want. I’ve been thinking I might want to walk to school anyway.”