

Pet phrases and Words, and Repeating and Rearranging Words

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Watch out for any word or phrase that you particularly like, especially at first, when you are a new writer. One of my pet words was/ is “gleaming.” I had to consciously think and see if that was really the best word for the sentence, or whether I could find a fresher one that fit better, that said what I wanted. Often times I found a better.

Repeating words in successive sentences can be annoying, or used to great effect.

Ex. 1 Now standing over the wound, Nina looked up at Troy as she grabbed the sword that drew life from the dragon. “Pull with all your strength before my sword cools,” Troy said. She turned from him and wrapped both hands tightly around the handle of the sword and pulled it from the dragon.

The sword moved slightly, and the dragon twitched.

“Again!”

The sword moved again as Nina pulled. The muscles flexed in her arm as she pulled again. Her face began to turn red as the sword moved again. The muscles in her arm now bulged against her skin.

This is from a printed book. Guess which word is repeated too much. Answer is at the bottom of the flyer.

Ex.2 And she was blue. And red. And gold. A kaleidoscope of royalty: spinning, her robes throwing out scents of flowers—now slowing, showing the queen’s slender form. A form potentially deadly to all—most of all, to me. Her face, pale and edged as a knife
...

Which word is repeated for a positive, cumulative effect?

Rearranging words, cutting apart or combining words to make new beasts or peoples, to describe colors, places or things, is a large pleasure given special scope in fantasy and sci-fi. Elizabeth Moon’s *Deed of Paksenarrion* and C.J. Cherryth’s *Foreigner* are good examples, and I’m sure you know many more. Even if you write in other genres, how you combine words gives your story scenes new flavors, and so makes them into new worlds for your characters, and hence for your readers. Every aspect or facet of our world, seen from another angle than we have experienced it before, is a new world to us.

Answer 1. “again.” Answer 2. “and.”

In this flyer where I use block quotes (if applicable), I have changed to single-spacing for readability.