

TIPS FOR PASSING THE CRR by Kathy Davis

By a show of hands, how many of you are actually holding CRR practice sessions for yourself or with others – that's with a CD or tape?

I believe that mandatory prerequisites for passing the CRR include:

- 1) Identifying what in your writing style must change;
- 2) Making those changes in your writing style;
- 3) Practicing to tapes or CDs X number of times before the actual test.

Do the first two prongs and “write with intention,” and your writing will improve, your editing time will decrease. You may even eventually pass the test. Add practice, and voila!

Scenario 1: It would be fabulous if we could come up with the magic formula: Prongs 1 and 2 above plus 21 separate practice sessions of 15 minutes each time = PASS! (While I don't know the actual numbers, it's safe to say that 0 practice does not equal a pass.)

Scenario 2: If you use the actual CRR tests as your only practice sessions and 21 times is the magic number of those required to pass, you'd have to take the test for seven years (if they continue giving it three times a year) to reach the 21.

What do you have to lose? With either scenario, if you want to pass the test, you must sacrifice the time and effort to accomplish Prongs 1 and 2. On the question of practice, with Scenario 1, you lose a total of 5 ¼ hours practicing over the next two and a half months (when the FCRR will be held) plus the cost of the FCRR. With Scenario 2, you lose \$3,360 (NCRA's cost of seven years of taking the test three times a year), 21 Saturdays (testing days), and seven years' worth of the raise you'll receive when you pass. In addition, you'll continue to have the aggravation and stress not passing adds to your life.

So what do you say? Will you give it your best shot for two and a half months? It's too cold to play golf anyway! Get those practice sessions in.

Need help? I've analyzed the writing of two officials over the past month. That consisted of having them send me 10 pages of a rough draft straight out of court. I broke the errors down (of course, I couldn't know about any word drops) to errors with: mandatory punctuation, word endings, conflict issues, wrong words, and untranslates. I have zero desire to criticize anyone's work. I'm just offering to do anything in my power to help you pass. Send me the rough drafts in .doc or .pdf form, and I'll get back to you within a day or so. kdavis@agren.com. At the very least, do this analyzation yourself.

Keep a journal of your efforts between now and the next test. Put gold stars on the calendar for the days you practice. When you pass, help the Realtime Task Force put together a manual of sorts to help others: “What worked for me in passing the CRR.”