

REVISION

Who is my audience?

What is my main point?

Why is it main point?

How can I summarize the situation for the reader?

How can I present my main argument?

How can I present the counter-arguments?

How can I refute the counter-arguments?

How can I develop a plan of action to present to the reader?

How can I close?

THESE ARE QUESTIONS FOR THE REVISION PROCESS, WHICH OCCURS ON THE LARGER STRUCTURAL LEVEL

THEN CHECK OUT EACH PARAGRAPH. DOES EACH HAVE A TOPIC SENTENCE? IF YOU PUT THE TOPIC SENTENCES TOGETHER, WOULD THEY BE A COHERENT NARRATIVE?

FINALLY, LOOK AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL. HERE IS WHERE YOU NEED TO GO FOR PRECISION.

Revision Tips:

- Does the essay respond to the assignment? Does it follow the guidelines for the paper?
- Is your essay appropriate to the audience of the paper?
- Is your thesis clearly stated? Does the argument of the paper respond to this thesis?
- Try writing an outline in reverse. Look at your finished paper. Then outline what you actually discuss in each paragraph. You can then see if your argument strays, if you might benefit from reorganizing, or if you have a paragraph that might not fit as well with the rest of the argument. You might also find that the argument you make and/or the evidence you use do not quite match the thesis you set out to prove.
- Review your introduction and conclusion. Do they introduce and conclude your paper or did your argument shift after your conception of them? After your revisions do they still fit?
- Look at each paragraph individually.
 - How does each paragraph cohere?
 - Is there a topic sentence and, if so, do all of the sentences in the paragraph support that topic sentence?
 - Is the paragraph itself well organized?
 - Do you move through the argument effectively within the paragraph?
 - Does the paragraph respond to the thesis? If not, how can you revise to make it do so more closely?
- Do you make smooth transitions between paragraphs? Do you lead the reader through your argument? Is there a logical progression between ideas?
- How did you incorporate your evidence? Do you have enough to support your argument? Does it follow a logical progression? Do you both integrate and comment on the quotations you have chosen as supporting evidence?
- What is missing? Is there anything you feel you may have left out of your draft?

Editing Tips:

- Read your paper backwards sentence by sentence. This will break the logical flow of the paper and will help to look at each sentence on its own.
- At the sentence level:
 - Are the sentences varied in length?
 - Are the sentence openings varied?
 - Are the sentences varied in structure?
- Read your paper out loud. You will naturally hear where sentences are dragging on, where you might need punctuation, or where the phrasing is awkward.

Revision Strategies

There are differences between the processes of *revising*, *editing*, and *proofreading*.

- **Revising** is more conceptual in nature. When revising, one rethinks the structure, organization, and logic of the paper. In the process of revising one should ask if the intended or planned argument matches the argument on paper. Typically revising is on the level of the paragraph and higher.
- **Editing** tends to revise the language of the paper. Here one can refine the wording and/or phrasing to best express the ideas of the paper. Editing is most often at the level of the sentence.
- **Proofreading** is typically the final stage of the revision process. When proofreading one reads for errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, subject-verb agreement, citation, etc. While Word's spell and grammar checks are an effective first pass, they are still not as effective as the human eye.

Revising requires a sense of detachment from your writing. You need to see the paper as a reader rather than a writer. This is why it often makes sense to allow for time between drafts; by letting the paper sit for a few days, you can come at it with a fresh eye

General Tips:

- First and foremost, revision and editing take time. Be sure to allow for this when planning to write. In fact, sometimes revision can take almost as long as the writing itself.
- Keep an untouched copy of your original draft just in case you need to return to an earlier version. Save files as version 2 or v2 and such.
- Do not delete the sentences and/or paragraphs you cut. You never know when you may find another spot in the paper in which to reincorporate these ideas.
- Decide whether you revise better onscreen or whether it is more useful to mark a paper copy. While marking a paper copy and entering changes may take more time, it is oftentimes more effective.

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