

# Tips for the Writing Process: Revising & Editing

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## Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

Revision is the step or stage of the writing process where the writer reviews and then amends their essay. Revision is not a one-stop stage in the writing process and often involves circling back and forth between drafting. Good writers will go through multiple drafts and revisions before moving on to the editing and proofreading stage. Revising differs from editing and proofreading because it requires the writer to look at large-scale or global matters in their essay.

To ensure that you are able to read your essay critically, you will have to create some distance between your draft and yourself. Keep some of the following strategies in mind:

- Ø Take a break after finishing the draft. A few hours may be enough; a whole night or day is preferable
- Ø Ask someone to read and react to your draft.
- Ø Outline your draft. Highlight the main points supporting the thesis, and convert these sentences to outline form. Then examine the outline you have made for logical order, gaps, and digressions.
- Ø Listen to your draft. Read the draft out loud to yourself or a friend or classmate, record and listen to it, or have someone read the draft to you.
- Ø Ease the pressure. Don't try to re-see everything in your draft at once.

Use this checklist for global revision to assist you in getting started:

### Purpose and audience

- ü Does the draft address a question, a problem, or an issue that readers care about?
- ü Is the draft appropriate for its audience? Does it account for the audience's knowledge of and possible attitudes toward the subject?

### Focus

- ü Is the thesis clear? Is it prominently placed?
- ü Are any ideas obviously off the point?

### Organization and paragraphing

- ü Are there enough organizational cues for readers (such as topic sentences)?
- ü Are ideas presented in a logical order?
- ü Are any paragraphs too long or too short for easy reading?

### Content

- ü Is the supporting material relevant and persuasive?
- ü Which ideas need further development?

ü Are the parts proportioned sensibly? Do major ideas receive enough attention?

ü Where might material be deleted?

#### Point of view

ü Is the dominant point of view – first person (I or we), second person (you), or third person (he, she, it, one, or they) – appropriate for your purpose and audience?

Once you feel you have a solid draft after multiple revisions, you then move on to the editing and proofreading stage. Smaller-scale matters like sentence structure, word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics are examined at the editing and proofreading stages. Some strategies to keep in mind at this stage are:

Ø Take a break. Even fifteen minutes can clear your head.

Ø Read the draft slowly, and read what you actually see. Otherwise you are likely to read what you intended to write but did not.

Ø Read as if you are encountering the draft for the first time. Put yourself in the reader's place.

Ø Have a classmate, friend, or relative read your work. Make sure you understand and consider the reader's suggestions, even if you decide not to take them.

Ø Read the draft aloud and listen for awkward rhythms, repetitive sentence patterns, and missing or clumsy transitions.

Ø Learn from your own experiences. Keep a record of the problems that others have pointed out in your previous writing. When editing, check for the same types of errors.

Use this checklist for editing and proofreading to assist you as you move toward the final stage of publishing:

ü Are my sentences clear? Do my words and sentences mean what I intend them to mean? Is anything confusing?

ü Are my sentences effective? How well do words and sentences engage and hold the reader's attention? Where does the writing seem wordy, choppy, or dull?

ü Do my sentences contain errors? Where do surface errors interfere with the clarity and effectiveness of my sentences? Check especially for: sentence fragments, comma splices, verb errors, and pronoun errors.

ü How is my word choice? Have I used appropriate and exact language? Do I overly repeat words that should be changed for variety?

ü Have I used effective transitions both between sentences and between paragraphs?

ü Is my spelling accurate and punctuation correct?