

• Revision Strategies and Ideas

Revising is not proofreading. Revising is not editing. Both proofreading and editing are part of revising but to limit your draft to one or the other hinders your chance of becoming a strong writer. A strong writer will take a new look at a draft, a *re-vision*. Even for drafts that are successful in their initial forms, revision can and should take place. Think of revision in its two component parts: *vision = to see*, and *re = again*: *re-seeing*, *revising*.

Revising vs. editing:

revising is about exploration; editing is about correctness
revising is about taking risks; editing is about getting it right
revising is global; editing is local

Suggestions and strategies for revision

- Get some **distance** from your paper.
- Recall your **purpose**. After you reread your paper, note the main purpose. Does it match your original purpose? Do you do what you say you will do in the introduction? Does the conclusion go with the rest of the paper?
- Reconsider your **stance** or position. Have your views changed since your first draft? How would you argue a different position?
- Think about types of **audience**, such as intended, invoked, and ideal. How would writing to a different audience affect your argument?
- Consider the **genre**. Is there another form this argument could take? What are the implications of a change in genre? What would happen if you recast the whole piece in a completely different form?
- **Limit** the time, place, action, scope, or focus of your paper. Don't write everything about an incident, story, or argument. Limit it to the most interesting perspective and details.
- **Add** details, information, explanations, and examples if needed.
- **Switch** the tense, person, voice, or point of view. Tell the story or make the argument from a different perspective.

Read Aloud—Slowly

Yes, you'll feel foolish, but think about why you're reading aloud: to catch errors that might lower your grade. You can *hear* sentences that don't sound right, so *trust your ear*. If you stumble over specific words or phrases, that's a sign you need to revise to make those areas clearer to your reader. However, *you must read exactly what's on the page*—not what you thought you wrote, what you intended to write, or what you're positive you had written on an earlier draft.

Read with a Pencil

First, print out your draft. As you read aloud, track slowly, with your pencil moving underneath each word as you read it. This way, you'll catch errors, awkward phrases, or places where you left out words. This is important because revising on a computer can actually increase your errors. Why? Grammar and spell checkers make writers lazy.

Relying on a computer's spell check is NOT proofreading. Do you check a dictionary to be sure the word you chose from the spellcheck list is the right one? For example, spellcheck lists these three spellings: *weather, whether, wether*

Which one is right? That depends on your sentence. Checking a dictionary, you read these definitions:

weather: the state of the atmosphere

whether: a conjunction indicating possibilities

wether: a neutered male sheep

Once you know the meanings, you can easily choose the right word. Remember, spell checkers search for letter groups like the one you typed—but they can't think for you.

Word processing programs make revision almost too easy. While revising on the computer, students make changes, but then sometimes delete either too much or not enough. The result is an unclear sentence or paragraph.

Read Backwards

Being by reading the last sentence, second-last sentence, third-last sentence and so on back to the beginning of your essay. This simple trick takes sentences *out of context* so that you can concentrate on errors and awkward phrases. If you're like most students, when you reread your essay from beginning to end, your brain pays attention to the flow of ideas, skipping right over errors you need to fix. When you read backwards, your brain can concentrate on the sentence you're reading and notice errors.

Revising for Audience

- Who is your ideal or imagined audience? Be as specific as possible. If it is the government, specify which chair of which committee of which branch, etc. If it is the "general public," try to specify further which segment of the population you mean or in what capacity you wish to address them—adult Americans, taxpayers, voters, consumers, parents, etc.
- Why should your audience care about your issue? How and where does your problem affect their lives, responsibilities, jobs, health, etc?
- What emotions do you want your audience to feel? Outrage, sadness, anger, pity, shock? What strategies will accomplish this effect?
- Name three to five other audiences to whom you might present your concerns. Choose one and write another audience analysis accordingly.

Revising the Thesis

Read your draft and locate your thesis.

- rewrite your thesis beginning with, "In this paper, I will..."

Does your draft fulfill this promise?

Revising Paragraphs

- summarize each paragraph into a phrase

If you can't summarize a paragraph into a phrase, you know you have too many things going on in that paragraph and perhaps it needs to be broken down into two paragraphs or some thoughts eliminated.

Main Points and Argument

- List the main points of your paper and review them one by one.
- Do any need to be explained more or less fully?
- Should any be eliminated?
- Do any seem confusing or boring?
- How well are the main points supported?

Claims and Support

- find your thesis sentence and write it down
- write down the topic sentence from each paragraph

Does each topic sentence support your thesis? If not, this is a place to revise

- write down all the claims in each paragraph

Does each claim support the topic sentence of the paragraph? If not, this is a place to revise

WIRMS: What I Really Mean to Say Is...

Read your draft and locate a few sentences that don't sound right. It might be a sentence you struggled with while drafting your paper, or a sentence or phrase that sounds awkward to you now.

- underline or circle the sentences.
- write seven or eight new sentences that keep the idea of the sentences you circled, beginning with "what I really mean to say is ..."

Is this what you said in your original sentences? If not, consider revising your sentences to make them clearer.

Demolition

- print a copy of your paper
- physically cut apart paragraphs and/or sentences to make space for adding new ideas or for rearranging
- tape the new paper together

You will see that revision is often a matter of rearranging what you have already written, not always starting from the very beginning.

Some verbs to introduce quotes

acknowledges	advises	agrees	argues	asserts
believes	claims	charges	concludes	criticizes
declares	describes	discusses	disputes	emphasizes
expresses	interprets	lists	objects	observes
offers	opposes	remarks	replies	reports
reveals	states	suggests	thinks	writes

Action Verbs

argue	anticipate	assert	believe	contend
define	establish	exercise	explain	foresee
insist	locate	propose	show	suggest
sustain	utilize			

Common Mistakes

you're	You are.
your	It belongs to you.
<hr/>	
they're	They are.
their	It belongs to them.
there	A place.
<hr/>	
we're	We are.
were	Past tense of are.
where	A place.
<hr/>	
then	A point in time.
than	A method of comparison.
<hr/>	
two	The number 2
to	Indicates motion.
too	Also or Excessively.

How to Identify Passive Voice

If you can insert "by zombies" after the verb, you have passive voice.

Transition Words

Two steps should be used when you consult the below list: first, determine the type of signal you need. Next, select from that signal group the word that is most appropriate to the meaning of your sentences. Note that the same transition word or phrase can sometimes serve different purposes.

To signal an addition :	in addition, furthermore, moreover, also, equally important, likewise, another, again
To signal an example :	for example, for instance, thus, in other words, as an illustration, in particular
To signal a suggestion :	for this purpose, to this end, with this objective in mind
To signal emphasis :	indeed, truly, again, to repeat, in fact
To signal granting a point :	while it may be true, in spite of this
To signal a summary/conclusion :	in summary, in conclusion, therefore, finally, consequently, accordingly, in short, in brief, as a result, on the whole, thus
To signal the development of a sequence :	<i>Value sequence</i> : first, second, secondly, third, thirdly, next, last, finally <i>Time sequence</i> : then, afterward, next, subsequently, previously, first, second, at last, meanwhile, in the meantime, immediately, soon, at length, yesterday, today, tomorrow, eventually <i>Space sequence</i> : above, across, under, beyond, below, nearby, nearer, opposite to, adjacent to, to the left/right, in the foreground, in the background
To signal a relationship :	<i>Similarity</i> : similarly, likewise, in like manner <i>Contrast</i> : in contrast to, however, but, still, nevertheless, yet, conversely, notwithstanding, on the other hand, on the contrary, at the same time, while this may be true <i>Cause and Effect</i> : consequently, thus, therefore, accordingly, hence, as a result
To signal an argument :	accordingly, as a result, at the same time, besides, equally important, in fact, otherwise, therefore
To signal a comparison :	also, at the same time, in like manner, in the same way, likewise, similarly, so too
To signal a contrast :	but, however, in contrast with, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, yet