

REVISING AND EDITING

Revising and editing are the last steps of the writing process. These steps occur after you have revised for content, and spending quality time doing these steps gives you the opportunity to correct grammar or style errors as well as citation, and formatting mistakes. Editing also gives you a chance to review your assignment and writing goals to make sure you have met the criteria. To help focus your revision and editing, develop a checklist based on your prompt and your knowledge of disciplinary conventions in your area of study.

Dependent on the prompt or type of assignment, an appropriate checklist might look like the following:

- √ Answers the Prompt appropriately; writing style exhibits clarity and concision
- √ Uses varied sentence structure and avoids redundancy
- √ Diction (word choice) is appropriate (rather than flowery)
- √ There are no grammar, spelling, or mechanical errors
- √ Effectively uses scholarly sources and correct writing style

1. REVISING:

THE REVERSE OUTLINE STRATEGY

Either on a separate sheet of paper or on the margins of your draft, write the focus/main idea of each paragraph. This activity gives you a lot of information, for instance:

- If you have difficulty selecting one focus for the paragraph—you may have to split up the paragraph. An easy way to making sure each paragraph focuses on one theme, is having strong topic sentences for each paragraph. This will help with organization.
 - If you have multiple paragraphs with the same focus—you may need to delete some paragraphs or combine them to avoid repetition.
- If there is no transition from one idea to the next—you will have to address this problem for clarity.

BEFORE THE EDITING PHASE

Before you edit your paper, make sure that your essay is carefully organized, supported, and argued. Use the following techniques to ensure that your paper is ready for the final touches:

Review your assignment guidelines and prompt

- Double-check the rubric: length, citation style, number of sources required

Read your paper out loud

- Read the paper slowly, making sure that you read each word on the page
- Ask a friend to read your paper to you
- Read your paper backwards, beginning with the final sentence

Bring out the red pen

- Cross out sentences (or even paragraphs) if they do not support your thesis/main idea
- Reorganize paragraphs, sentences, or sections so that there is a logical flow in your text

2. EDITING

Once you have decided what is going to stay in your paper, ensure that there are no typos or other errors that might distract from the content of your argument. Some common things to look for during the editing stage are misspelled words and misplaced commas (like comma splices), semicolons, and colons. Other common things to check on are run-on sentences and sentences fragments.

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