

Revision

Revising is an important skill to learn because it's one of the most important steps in the writing process. Like brainstorming and drafting, the revision process is vital to producing quality work.

What are the steps of the Revision Process?

Editing: Editing involves examining your organization, thesis, citations, transitions, etc. During the editing stage, you should assess whether your paper makes sense to your reader and flows from one paragraph to another. You will also want to check to make sure you have a clear introduction and conclusion and that your paragraphs are structured correctly (topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences/transition).

Proofreading: Proofreading involves inspecting your paper at the sentence level for grammar errors and typos. This could include critical errors such as comma splices and fragments or minor surface level errors like punctuation and spelling.

Revision Checklist:

- ✓ Do I meet my instructor's guidelines (purpose, content, page length etc.)?
- ✓ Do I incorporate a main idea/thesis/claim in an identifiable location?
- ✓ Are my paragraphs structured effectively, utilizing subclaims, supporting evidence and transitions?
- ✓ Do I cite all of my outside sources properly in the instructor's specified format?
- ✓ Are my direct quotations correct and my paraphrases documented correctly?
- ✓ Do I write in my professor's desired tone of voice (first, second or third person)?
- ✓ Do I make complete sentences, eliminating fragments, comma splices and run-ons?
- ✓ Do I use verbs correctly, maintaining consistent verb tense and correct subject/verb agreement?
- ✓ Have I used correct punctuation, including apostrophes, semi-colons, periods, quotation marks, question marks, and commas, etc?
- ✓ Have I used correct forms of words, addressing commonly confused words that sound the same but are spelled differently?
- ✓ Do I spell words correctly?
- ✓ Have I eliminated wordiness and/or left out words?
- ✓ Does my paper contain any typos or inconsistencies in formatting or spelling?
- ✓ Do I have any questions about my paper, the writing process or grammar that I should ask a tutor in the writing center?

Revision Strategies and Tips:

- Don't procrastinate. Give yourself enough time before the final draft is due to make the necessary revisions and present the best version of your paper you can.
- Review your instructor's comments on past papers, your instructor's comments on this paper and your past peer edited drafts to help you identify common errors.
- Give yourself a break between the drafting and revision processes, so the information in your paper will stay fresh to you. A day is best, but even an hour is better than nothing.
- Use a spelling and grammar checker on your computer word processor, but evaluate each mistake it brings to your attention before letting it correct it.
- Print your paper before you proofread and mark your changes.
- Read your paper aloud.
- Have someone else read your paper to you.
- When proofreading, look for one type of grammar error or typo at a time.
- Read your paper backwards sentence by sentence so that grammar errors will be easier to locate.
- Keep track of what errors come up multiple times. Identify these problems, and develop a strategy for reducing them.
- Use handouts in the writing center or research the internet to study grammar or other stages of the writing process.
- See a tutor in the writing center if you have any questions about your paper or need to develop a revision strategy.

Where does the writing center fit in?

It can be frustrating for students who mistake the writing center for a paper "fix-it shop" to not get the help they expect when they sit down with a tutor. Remember that the revision process is a stage of the writing process, just like brainstorming and drafting. If a tutor did any stage of this process for you, it would no longer be your work; this amounts to plagiarism. The writing center can provide a student with valuable advice about writing, but we cannot do the revision work for you. It is ultimately your responsibility to produce the best work you can.

A tutoring session works best for you if you plan ahead and bring specific issues you want the tutor to address. If you are focused currently in the revision process, try to complete this stage on your own, and any roadblocks you encounter would be good issues to bring up in a tutoring session. When you sit down with a tutor, avoid statements like "I need help with grammar" or "I just need a proof." Instead, statements like "I need help identifying comma splices" or "My instructor requires MLA formatting. Have I done this correctly?" are more effective.