

## Revising

Revising implies a willingness to make significant changes to a draft. The word "revision" means or "re-visioning" or re-seeing the paper. The following questions may help you as you prepare to revise a draft:

- Does the writing accomplish its goal or purpose?
- Is the main point or thesis clear?
- Are the vocabulary, tone, and style appropriate for the intended audience?
- Are the paragraphs arranged so that the argument is convincing?
- Are there enough specific examples within paragraphs to convince a reader that the statements made in the topic sentences are valid?
- Does the writing stick to the topic? Are all examples clearly related to the topic?
- Does the writing seem choppy? Are transitions made between sentences and paragraphs?

You may rewrite or reorganize paragraphs, omit and replace paragraphs, or even change the overall focus or main point of the writing itself. When you are revising your papers, begin with overall questions of focus, organization, and content first. Looking at sentence-level matters such as grammar and mechanics usually comes later in the writing process, and revision on the larger aspects of your paper will change sentences anyway.

- [Higher Order Concerns and Later Order Concerns](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/690/01/) [<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/690/01/>] gives some excellent questions to guide your revision.

Bring your draft to the Writing Center for another perspective. A writing tutor can give you suggestions for revising. Bring your own concerns about the paper when you come.

## Editing

When you have revised your paper and are satisfied with its focus, organization and content, you are ready to work on editing. Editing means reading closely with an eye for the sound and structure of sentences within your writing, working to make changes with sentences and words so that they express your meaning most precisely. Editing also involves checking grammar and mechanics.

Consider what teachers have previously marked as errors on your papers. What are your usual problems with grammar and mechanics? Your college years are a good time to work on writing, and Writing Center tutors can help you identify patterns of error and figure out why you make those errors. They have handouts on punctuation to use in working on your paper.

- See the [Top Twenty](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/easywriter4e/#518364__523173__) [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/easywriter4e/#518364\_\_523173\_\_] most common errors students make. Most likely your trouble spots are on this list. You can find explanations for these errors and others on this site.
- [The Purdue Owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/) has excellent information on [grammar](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/) [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/] and [punctuation](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/6/). [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/6/]

### **Proofreading**

The final step in the writing process involves slow reading. Try some of these suggestions.

- Take a break between writing and the final proofreading.
- Make a short list of your usual editing problems to watch for: verb tense, commas after introductory clauses, commas with *and*
- Read the paper aloud.
- Cover all but the line you are reading with a clear or colored sheet of paper
- Read the document backward, sentence by sentence. You won't pay attention to content if it is presented out of order; therefore, you can pay close attention to individual sentences or words.
- Read for one problem at a time: check verb tense on one reading, commas on another.
- Tape record your reading. Then listen and check each word with a pencil to see if you have written what you read.
- Take the paper to the Writing Center and read it aloud to a tutor who can help you spot your patterns of error and work on them with you.

Reserve a writing conference in the Presbyterian College Writing Center to work with a tutor on editing and proofreading.

by Dr. Jerry Alexander, Presbyterian College English Department, and Jill Frey, Writing Center Coordinator