

## TIPS FOR REVISING & EDITING ESSAYS

**REVISING** = changing the content of your essay. Determine areas where you could add, delete, or move text to make your content more effective.

**EDITING** = finding errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling and eliminating unnecessary words or phrases

1. Type your rough draft and use spell check and grammar check. Correct errors the computer identifies, but realize that the computer is not infallible.
2. Let your paper rest for at least 24 hours, if possible.
3. Read your paper aloud slowly—every word—to someone else, if possible.  
Read only what is actually on the page, not what you intended to write but didn't. As you read, insert any information that you think is missing. If you stumble over words, phrases, or sentences while reading aloud or if you have to re-read certain sentences several times, you probably need to rewrite that sentence.
4. Find and correct the types of errors that your instructors have marked on past papers.
5. Choice of subject:
  - a. Does my subject match the assignment?
  - b. Is there a clear thesis statement that encompasses all of my main points?
  - c. If there is a title, is it specific, appropriate, and effective?
6. Thought and interpretation:
  - a. Is my paper really a discussion of the subject and not merely a collection of quotations and summaries?
  - b. What is my own contribution to the discussion of the subject?
  - c. Have I offered evidence and support for my point of view?
  - d. Have I indicated how my point of view differs from the points of view held by other writers?
7. Use of material:
  - a. Am I sure that all my quotations, paraphrases, and summaries are accurate?
  - b. Am I sure that my references are accurate?
  - c. Is my final bibliography or works cited accurate?
  - d. Is my documentation in the proper form, the one my instructor assigned?

8. Organization:
  - a. Does my introduction get my readers' attention and prepare them for what is to come?
  - b. Are my paragraphs too short or too long? Are they unified, coherent, and well-developed? Are they relevant to the thesis?
  - c. Does each paragraph follow the preceding one logically with good transitions?
  - d. Is my conclusion relevant and effective?
  
9. Style:
  - a. Is my word choice precise or inaccurate? Fresh and lively or dull?
  - b. Is each sentence clear, effective, and economical?
  - c. Are successive sentences varied in length and wording?
  
10. Spelling, punctuation, and mechanics:
  - a. Is my paper neat and legible? Does it have adequate margins and appropriate page numbers and headings?
  - b. Are spelling and capitalization accurate and consistent?
  - c. Have I found and corrected punctuation and sentence errors, especially regarding commas, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences?
  - d. Are direct quotations properly introduced, spaced, and punctuated?