

Revising and Editing Your Writing

(Using the AFOSEP process)

Revising improves the quality of your academic writing. When you edit, you find opportunities to develop your work further, and you find problems to correct.

There are 6 steps to the AFOSEP* revising and editing process. After you review your draft at each step, make any changes to your paper before moving on to the next.

(Revising Steps)

Assignment Instructions

Reread the instructions and your paper. This is the most common reason students lose marks.

- Do the content and organization fit the assignment instructions?

Focus

After identifying the focus of the paper, read the paper over considering whether each idea is related to the focus. Consider removing parts that do not directly relate to the focus.

- Is the main focus of the paper stated clearly?
- If you are writing an essay, is the focus stated in a strong thesis statement?
- Is there any information in the paper which is not clearly related to the focus? (unity)

Organization

A good strategy for doing this is to make a simple outline from the paper. Identify the thesis and the topic sentences. Look for the links between ideas. Add any missing links. Reconsider the order of ideas.

- Does the paper have an introduction, body and conclusion (as required in the instructions)?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Does each section of the paper clearly link to the thesis or focus of the paper?
- Is each section of the paper clearly linked to the section before it?
- Are the paragraphs in a logical order?

Support

Mark up each body paragraph by circling each topic sentence and supporting point. Then, underline the specific evidence for each point. Put a star beside the explanation of the evidence that links it back to the topic sentence. Then consider the key questions for Support.

- Is each topic sentence supported by main supporting points and evidence?
- Does each point have sufficient specific evidence (e.g. examples, statistics, description, quotations)?
- Does the paper explain the evidence and link it back to the point being supported? A frequent teacher comment in marked papers is “Explain!” or “Develop!”
- Are there any gaps or errors in logic which cause the support to be less than convincing?
- Are sources of information credible and documented?

* Adapted with permission from a rubric developed at the Washington State University Writing Center.

(Editing Steps)

Editing the Language

Read the paper aloud, slowly, to yourself. Listen to the wording. Analyze any part that sounds awkward or causes you to stumble while reading.

Consider mistakes you commonly make. List your most common types of errors. Read through the paper looking for each error type.

- Are there language errors that make meaning unclear?
- Are there language errors that make it difficult for the reader to understand?
- Are there mistakes in grammar or word choice?
- Are there mistakes in sentence structure or punctuation?
- Are there sentences that could be worded more effectively?

Proofreading

Go through all citations checking order of information, capitalization, spacing and punctuation with the style guide.

Revisit the assignment instructions concerning the required format. Check your page setup.

- Are there detail errors in citations/bibliography?
- Are there formatting errors?