

Revising and Revising Strategies

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WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial covers revision and some of the best strategies for revising essays to be as effective and successful as possible:

1. The Revision Stage

Revision is the process of re-envisioning an essay or other writing project. This means that it's a chance to re-see your writing, look back at the big picture of your arguments and ideas in your essay, and make changes to form a new **draft** of the project.

Remember, too, that writing is a process, not a product, and thus should have multiple drafts. A draft is an essay or other writing project that is in development. This can be an early rough draft or a late published draft.

After you've finished one draft, you have to revise before you can edit and proofread. This is because if you revise well and carefully, you can improve your essay substantially by making your structure, focus, and clarity better, stronger, and more effectively presented.

Revision can help you get:

- Clearer logic
- Smoother flow between ideas
- Stronger support for your thesis
- More well-thought-out content
- Cleaner organization

All of these improvements will lead you from your draft to a final essay that is much more convincing and interesting for your reader.



TERMS TO KNOW

Draft

An essay or other writing project that is in development; a draft may be an early, rough draft or a late, polished draft.

Revision

The process of re-envisioning an essay or other writing project.

2. Revision Strategies

When you revise, you want to look at three elements:

- Structure
- Focus
- Clarity

There are some specific revision strategies that target each of those issues.

2a. Revising for Structure

When you revise for the overall structure, you are ensuring that your essay has all the important and required components present.

This means that you might ask yourself:

- Do I have an introduction with a strong thesis, body paragraphs with clear support, and a concise conclusion?
- Is my thesis stated clearly within the introduction?
- Does my conclusion effectively provide closure for the essay?
- Is my conclusion in a format that fits the needs of this essay?

Remember that conclusions can summarize, expand the conversation, provide a solution to the problem, or look to the future of the issues. You'll want to fit the kind of conclusion you use to the type of essay you've written.

Revising for these issues will ensure that you're meeting the basic needs of your essay project and including all the necessary pieces.

2b. Revising for Focus

When you revise for the essay's focus, you're making sure that all of those structural elements—intro, thesis, body paragraphs, conclusion, support, etc.—provide support for the purpose of your essay.

To evaluate these elements, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- Does my thesis still match the content of my essay, and is it still worth discussing?
- Does each body paragraph provide direct support for the thesis?
- Inside my body paragraphs, does each supporting sentence do its job to support the paragraph's topic sentence?
- Have I included details that are irrelevant or unconnected?
- Do I see any spots where I need more details, evidence, or support?
- Do my ideas and paragraphs move from one to the next in a clear, logical order?
- Do I transition between ideas and paragraphs effectively to help the ideas flow smoothly from one to the next?

Doing this kind of revision will ensure that all of the elements of your essay are put together well and work towards the overall purpose.

2c. Revising for Clarity

When you revise for clarity, you're ensuring that all of the parts of your essay can be easily understood by your readers and that they all communicate what you intend them to.

To evaluate for clarity, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there an illogical order of ideas (i.e., putting the paragraphs in an unclear order)?
- Are there any major holes in the logic, either because there is not enough support or because I'm not addressing an important aspect of the thesis?
- Did I include irrelevant information, which distracts readers, confuses the main idea, and dilutes my message?
- Are there tangents that take my reader away from the topic and main point?
- Are there any transitions between ideas that are either missing or don't clearly indicate the connections as they should?

A clear essay won't confuse the readers or cause them to misunderstand your point. Clear writing won't create multiple possible meanings, whereas unclear writing will make your reader have to work harder to understand you.

Since readers might not be able to process what you've written, unclear writing will inhibit your ability to meet the essay's purpose. Therefore, revising for clarity will help ensure that your writing does what you want it to.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial, you learned that **the revision stage** of the writing process occurs after you complete a draft of your essay. The purpose of revision is to re-see your writing in order to make changes that will substantially improve your essay.

You now understand that there are several **revision strategies** you can use to help you focus your efforts during this stage: **Revising for structure** involves ensuring that your essay has all the important and required components present; **revising for focus** involves ensuring that all of the structural elements provide support for the purpose of your essay; **revising for clarity** involves ensuring that all of the parts of your essay can be easily understood by your readers and communicate your ideas the way you intend.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Martina Shabram.



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