

# REVISION



Revision is the process of **revisiting** your work to make sure it says what you want it to say. You need to be flexible and prepared to make major structural and organizational changes. It takes time and is a **circular process**, which means going back over your work several times throughout the writing process.



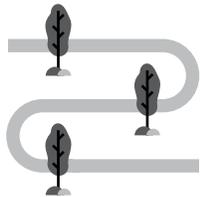
What is the difference between revision and proofreading?

**Proofreading** is the **final stage** in revising and editing your writing, whereas **revision** looks at more global aspects of your writing such as the **argument, flow, logic, evidence, and organization** of your work. Only when you are satisfied with these larger aspects of your writing is it time to proofread.

*Note that the Writing Centre will not proofread your paper and make changes for you. We will help you determine your personal problem areas and teach you to proofread your own work.*



## General Strategies



### Get Some Distance

Take a break. Go for a walk. Give yourself at least a few hours between finishing a draft and picking it back up again for revision.



### Print Out a Hard Copy

Print out your work and revise from a hard copy.



### Read Your Work Out Loud

Your ears are better at finding problems than your eyes are, especially when you have been working on a piece of writing for a while.



### Revise and Proofread in Stages

Don't try to review all your work at once. If you do, you'll likely become frustrated and miss what you want to change.



### Review Large Elements First

Pay attention to large, overall concerns like content and structure. Work on smaller items like grammar and punctuation last.



## Keep Re-reading

Keep re-reading your work to make sure your entire paper makes sense as you make changes.



## Get Feedback

Give your work to others for feedback. Seeing how your work is understood by a reader can help you improve your writing in new ways.

# Specific Strategies

## Content

When reviewing your content, make sure your information is presented clearly, at the right time, with sufficient **depth**, **detail**, and **relevance** for the purpose of your work. Check that there is no extra and irrelevant information. It's hard to let go of ideas and thoughts, but if they don't fit, they must be cut.

Questions to ask:

- 1 Is my **purpose** clear?
- 2 Is my **main idea/thesis** stated early?
- 3 Do I have sufficient **evidence** or **data** to support my ideas?
- 4 Is all my material **relevant** to my purpose?
- 5 Have I addressed my readers' **potential questions**?

## Structure

The shape and flow of your paper or assignment is very important. Your reader should be able to follow the **logic** and **path** of your argument, easily and without feeling surprised, confused, or lost.

Questions to ask:

- 1 Are my ideas presented **logically**?
- 2 Do I introduce **new information** by connecting it to what I've already said?
- 3 Do I connect back to my **thesis** or **purpose** to show how pieces fit into the overall paper?
- 4 Is my information **easy to follow**? Does the writing **flow**?
- 5 Have I **repeated** any ideas in more than one place?
- 6 Are any parts **too long** or **too short**?
- 7 Does my organization follow the **structure** required for the assignment?



To see whether your paper presents information in a logical order, make a reverse outline:

**Summarize** each paragraph in a single sentence.

**Arrange** these summaries according to the order of your paragraphs.

**Evaluate** the outline. Do you notice any gaps in information or places where the content should be rearranged?

## Paragraphs

Each paragraph or section should be a well-organized, self-contained unit that focuses on a **main idea** and/or serves **one purpose**. Check to see whether each paragraph is cohesive by ensuring that all of your information **flows** and is connected, like a chain, from beginning to end.

Questions to ask:

- 1 Does the paragraph focus on a **single idea**?
- 2 Does the idea clearly relate to my **thesis** or **purpose**?
- 3 Do I begin with a **topic sentence** to summarize the paragraph?
- 4 Do I provide **evidence** and other **details** to support any argument/claims I make?
- 5 Do I provide sufficient **explanation** and **analysis** to connect the paragraph's main idea, the evidence, and my thesis?
- 6 Do I finish the paragraph with a **summary**?

## Clarity

Sentences can be different lengths, but each sentence should focus on **one point** or **idea** as clearly and concisely as possible.

Questions to ask:

- 1 Are any sentences **too long** with **too many ideas**?
- 2 Do any sentences have **more words than needed**?
- 3 Can I replace vague words with more **precise** language?
- 4 Do I use the **right word** (not the biggest word) for what I want to say?
- 5 Can I state an idea more **simply**?

Read your sentences out loud. If you find yourself losing interest, or having to reread to make sense, it's time to rewrite.

