

Five Key Strategies for Effective Revision

“Revision literally means to ‘see again,’ to look at something from a fresh, critical perspective. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper: reconsidering your arguments, reviewing your evidence, refining your purpose, reorganizing your presentation, reviving stale prose.”

-Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill


Revision is different from editing or proofreading, when the focus is on grammar, word choice, and punctuation.

Review the assignment

Determine:

- The writer’s purpose (is the paper supposed to inform the audience or persuade it?)
- The writer’s audience/readers
- The writer’s criteria for development

Gloss the paper. This means to note in the margins of your paper what point is made in each paragraph and/or section.

- Where is the overall judgment/thesis stated clearly?
 - Look for PIE (Point, Information, Explanation)
 - **P**-Does each paragraph or section make a point?
 - **I**-Does the writer support the point with vivid information and sensory details?
 - **E**-Does the writer explain or elaborate on how the information relates to the point?
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Has the writer grouped/organized information in a way that supports his/her argument?

It helps to create a reverse outline by writing the draft first and then organizing the ideas, instead of organizing the ideas before writing the first draft.

Where has the writer anticipated readers’ likely questions, objections, or reservations?

If this is not happening in the paper, consider what responses readers may have and address them if applicable, especially if the reader may have serious and obvious objections about the argument in the paper.

Is the syntax, diction, tone and voice appropriate for this audience?

For example, an academic research paper will have a scholarly tone and diction, and a memoir may be more casual.

