



WRITER'S STUDIO RESOURCES: REVISION



What is Revision?

Revision is the process of looking over your writing and finding ways to improve it. In revision, you look at the paper as a whole to find both strengths and weaknesses in your writing.

Why is Revision important?

Revision is how you take a rough draft and polish it into a finished paper. It is an essential step to any kind of writing—no one gets it right on the first try!

Revision Explained

Revision is arguably the most important step in the writing process. When writing a first draft, it's important to just get something down on the page, no matter how unorganized or undeveloped your thoughts may be. Revision is where this messy first draft writing gets cleaned up and polished into a finished product.



It's important to remember that writing is a process of thinking through your ideas: most often, you won't know what you want to say about your topic until you write it. That's why revision is *always* necessary—and usually, more than once per paper.

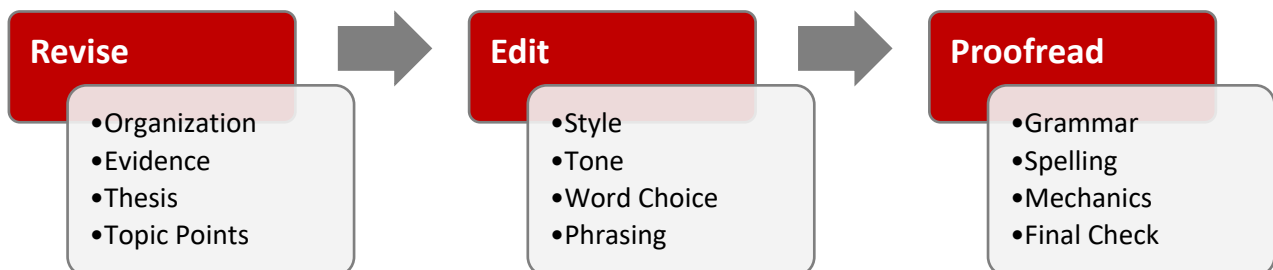
Revision, Editing, and Proofreading: What's the Difference?

The terms **Revision**, **Editing**, and **Proofreading** are often used interchangeably, but in reality, they refer to three distinct processes for improving a piece of writing:

Revision is the big picture view of your writing, looking at the organization, evidence, thesis statement, and main points of your argument to find both strengths and weaknesses.

Editing is sentence-level rewriting, looking at ways to improve the style, tone, word choice, and phrasing of your writing.

Proofreading is the final check, looking for grammar, spelling, and mechanical errors in your writing before submission.





Revision Tips & Practices

While revision is one of the most important steps in writing, it can also be one of the hardest. Here are some basic tips to keep in mind when you start revising:

1. **Walk Away:** The first step in every revision is to set your writing aside for a day or even a few hours. Do something else and don't think about it for a while so you can come back with fresh eyes.
2. **Review the Prompt:** Start by looking at the assignment prompt. Does your essay fulfill the requirements? Did you get off topic or forget something? Even if your writing is perfect, it won't matter if you didn't answer the prompt.
3. **Big to Small:** Look at the bigger picture first, then narrow down to specific paragraphs and sentences. There's nothing worse than spending hours revising a paragraph that you end up cutting anyway!



Pro Tip! You know what you mean to say, but it may not be clear in your writing. Whenever possible, have someone else read your paper to check if your argument makes sense.

Revision: Step-by-Step

1. Read

First, read through your essay and mark the following:

- Underline your **Thesis Statement** and **Topic Sentences** to identify you have them within your essay.
- Circle your **Evidence** to make sure you are using evidence to back up your claims.
- Highlight **Transition Sentences** to be clear that your paragraphs flow into each other.

2. Evaluate

Next, look back over your essay and ask yourself:

- What do you like about your essay? What is working well?
- What don't you like about your essay? What isn't working so well?
- Have you introduced and interpreted your sources?

3. Analyze

Finally, think critically about your writing:

- Is your argument clear and logically organized?
- Have you considered counterarguments?
- **So what?** What point are you trying to make?

Further Revision Tips:

- ★ **Reverse Outline:** Try a reverse outline on your paper to get a quick look at the overall organization and flow of your argument. (*See our Reverse Outline Handout for details!*)
- ★ **Read Aloud:** Try reading your paper out loud to help you catch missing/extra words.
- ★ **Get Feedback:** From friends, family, or your professor—the best revision tool is feedback!