

Revising and Proofreading



Revising should be done with any written work before submission. There are two main areas to look at when revising: **structure** and **grammar**.

Structure

Most essays have a three-part structure. The three parts are the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

Introduction

The **introduction** is the part of the writing that introduces the essay and its main argument.

The introduction should:

- ✓ be interesting enough to attract the reader's attention and interest
- ✓ tell the reader your main point – your thesis
- ✓ tell the reader what to expect (give an idea of the main points that will follow)

When revising an introduction, ask yourself:

1. *Does the essay fulfill the assignment expectations? Are the questions in the assignment answered?*
2. *Do I have a clear thesis?*

Things to avoid in the introduction are:

- apologizing for the topic or your opinion in the writing
- writing long personal things that interest you but not the reader
- saying things like, “the purpose of this essay is to...”

Body

The **body** is the part of the essay that contains the main arguments and information.

When revising the body of your essay, ask yourself:

1. *Does each paragraph have **one** subject or main idea? (If there is more than one main idea in a paragraph, split the ideas into separate paragraphs.)*
2. *Does each paragraph fully support its main idea?*
3. *Are the main ideas in each paragraph connected to my thesis?*
4. *Have I used transitional words to link ideas together? (Transitional words can be used to link sentences in the same paragraph together or at the beginning of a paragraph to connect two paragraphs. Some transitional words and phrases are: subsequently, consequently, equally, as a result, in addition)*
5. *Do I know the exact meaning of synonyms I have found in a thesaurus? Do they make sense in the context in which they are being used?*
6. *Is it clear which antecedent a pronoun is referring to?*
7. *Do all pronouns agree with their antecedents?*
8. *Have I varied the way that quotes are used in the writing?*

Some ways to introduce quotes are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. The author argues that “... | c. Mr. Smith said, “... |
| b. According to the author, “... | d. Mr. Smith mentioned, “... |
| | e. Mr. Smith suggested, “... |

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Conclusion

The **conclusion** is the part of the writing that talks briefly about the whole argument and main points. The conclusion should:

- ✓ be forceful
- ✓ be interesting enough to stimulate the reader
- ✓ make the reader think more about the topic.

When revising an conclusion, ask yourself:

1. *Have I summarized my main points?*
2. *Have I restated my thesis in different words?*

In the conclusion, don't introduce new points or ideas.

Sentence Structure, Grammar & Syntax

Read each sentence individually.

Do your sentences make sense? Do you use a variety of sentence structures?

Do your sentences clearly communicate full ideas?

Grammar and syntax are the details that can improve your writing.

Here are some rules for correct punctuation and grammar.

1. Commas

- a. Are used after words, phrases or clauses that introduce paragraphs or sentences.
- b. Are used before and after words or phrases that interrupt sentences.
- c. Are used commas in to separate items in a list.

2. Semi-colons

- a. Are used to connect two independent clauses (full sentences)

3. Colons

- a. Are used to introduce an idea after the colon: a word, a list of words, or a quotation

4. Apostrophes

- a. Are used to show possession: Dan's bicycle

5. Verbs

- a. A subject and a verb must agree, either singular or plural
- b. Verb tenses should not change unless there is a good reason for them to

6. Articles

- a. Make sure all singular count nouns use an article (a, an, the) or a determiner (this, that, his, her)
- b. Make sure that when using "the" the noun that follows is specific and known to your reader

Here are some tips that will help improve your syntax.

1. Use coordinating conjunctions to connect clauses, phrases, or words to other clauses, phrases or words. (and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet)
2. Use subordinate conjunctions to connect clauses to phrases and words, phrases to clauses and words, or words to clauses and phrases. (when, where, because, although)
3. Use only as many words as are needed and avoid saying the same thing over and over.