The Writing Process

Revising and Editing

Now that you have written a rough draft, what are the next steps of the Writing Process?

Revising

After you have a rough draft, it is time to revise. When revising, reread your paper out loud and look for content clarity and organization. Do not focus on grammar or spelling yet; that will come later. Revising can occur more than once during the writing process, and oftentimes, your paper becomes stronger the more that you revise. When you revise, it is often beneficial to receive feedback from peers or your professor.

Focus on these areas when you revise. For more information, (Bedford pp. 43):

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<tr>
<th>Sharpen the Focus</th>
<th>Improve the Organization</th>
<th>Strengthen the Content</th>
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<td>The easiest way to sharpen the focus of your paper is to clarify your introduction, particularly your thesis, and delete any text that strays from your main idea.</td>
<td>To improve the organization of your draft, you should see that your draft flows in a logical manner. To do this, group paragraphs that go together, and add transitions between them. Look for topic sentences (if you have them, make them clearer; if you don’t have them, add them).</td>
<td>To strengthen the content of your draft, you need to look at your argument. Be sure that your evidence supports your position and also be sure that you have addressed possible opposition to your position. Sometimes, this can involve deleting irrelevant information or adding pertinent information.</td>
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Here are additional questions you can ask while revising (Bedford pp. 40):

Audience:
1. Does the draft address a question, a problem, or an issue that is of interest to readers?
2. Is the tone diplomatic and respectful?

Focus:
1. Is the thesis clear? Is it prominently placed? (See Thesis handouts for more information).
2. If there is no thesis, is there a good reason for omitting one?
3. Are any ideas obviously off the point?

Organization and paragraphing:
1. Are there enough organizational cues for readers (such as topic sentences and headings?)
2. Are ideas presented in a logical order?
3. Are any paragraphs too long or too short for easy reading?

Content:
1. Is the supporting material relevant and persuasive?
2. Which ideas need further development?
3. Are the parts proportioned sensibly? Do major ideas receive enough attention?
4. Where might material be deleted?

Point of view:
1. Is the draft free of distracting shifts in point of view (from I to you, for example, or from it to they)?
2. Is the dominant point of view – I, we, you, be, she, it one, or they – appropriate?

During this stage, it sometimes helps to receive feedback from peers. For guidelines regarding peer revision, see the Bedford Handbook pp. 38 and 42.
**Editing**

Now that your paper has clearly organized thoughts, you can begin editing your paper. Editing is the stage in which you look for errors in grammar, tense, spelling, formatting, and documentation, amongst other things. Proofread your paper for phrases that are unclear or words that are misplaced. Below, you will find a checklist that can help you look for errors:

- Does my paper flow? Are there logical transitions from paragraph to paragraph?
- Is each sentence in a paragraph relevant to the paragraph in which it is placed?
- Is each sentence properly constructed? Are there run-ons, comma splices, etc.?
- Can any long and confusing sentences be broken up into shorter, more concise sentences?
- Can any short and choppy sentences be combined?
- Does each verb agree with its subject?
- Are all verbs in the same tense?
- Does each pronoun agree with its antecedent?
- Is each word used properly with its correct meaning?
- Is each word spelled correctly?

**General Timeline for Writing a Paper**

The following timeline shows you what you should accomplish day-by-day if a paper is assigned two weeks in advance.

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>Day 1: (Paper assigned); Brainstorm possible topics.</td>
<td>Day 2: Do preliminary research on possible topics. Bring your ideas to the Writing Center to discuss them.</td>
<td>Day 3: Narrow down your topic ideas and construct possible outlines.</td>
<td>Day 4: Meet with your professor to discuss your topics.</td>
<td>Day 5: Choose final outline and construct a working thesis.</td>
<td>Day 6: Take a day off and give your mind a break.</td>
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<td>Day 7: Write a rough draft and take it to the Writing Center.</td>
<td>Day 8: Make necessary revisions and construct another rough draft or a new outline.</td>
<td>Day 9: Take the paper back to the Writing Center or have a peer review it.</td>
<td>Day 10: Begin working on the final draft, doing additional research if necessary.</td>
<td>Day 11: Ask your professor any more questions you may have about your final draft.</td>
<td>Day 12: Keep working on your final draft, revising it and editing it as necessary.</td>
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<td>Day 13: Polish your paper. Reread it out loud and check for grammatical errors.</td>
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Remember, some papers may take a month to work on, while others will only need a week. Adapt your plans accordingly, and always be sure to visit the Writing Center early on in the Writing Process.