

## Revising and Editing Academic Writing Notes

### **Revising**

Real revision is more than making a few minor adjustments. It requires being open to the idea that parts of your paper (and sometimes the entire paper) might need to be re-thought and re-written.

*Examples of revision:*

- Changing from passive to active voice
- Reorganizing to provide a single, clear, over-arching structure
- Refining a thesis statement and supplying new evidence
- Improving the argument
  - Introducing opposing evidence (by citing authors who make points that challenge yours)
  - Refuting that evidence (by citing additional evidence that answers the challenges)
- Deleting paragraphs that do nothing to advance your argument, and/or adding additional paragraphs, supported with evidence.

Revising a draft is more than just proofreading

- Reconsider the organization
- Remove irrelevant information
- Review tone & style
- Refine the length of paragraphs and sentences

Revising at the sentence level

- Look for sentences which are distracting or where the audience may lose focus  
Example: "The researcher argued for the importance of the idea" vs. "The researcher defended the idea."
- Look for places where you've used the same word/phrase twice or more in nearby sentences
- Think of alternative ways to say it OR ways to combine the two sentences.
- Aim for precision in word choice: use a thesaurus and dictionary to search for the best word

### **Editing & Proofreading**

Editing is the process of fixing minor problems related to presentation.

Proofreading is the correction of mistakes in punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

*Examples of editing:*

- Deleting needless words
- Correcting spelling or awkward phrasing
- Changing, standardizing punctuation
- Moving sentences or paragraphs
- Adding or improving a transition
- Converting a paragraph to a bulleted list (and vice-versa)

Working with Drafts

- Think critically about what you have written
- Ask yourself:
  - Is it really worth saying?
  - Does it say what you wanted to say?
  - Will a reader understand what you are saying?
- Focus only on 2-3 areas during each revision session
- Wait a period of time after finishing a draft before revising
- Think about large issues in the paper not small mistakes
- Problems that seem invisible on the screen may show up better on paper
- Read the paper out loud to check flow
- Be honest with yourself: are there are opposing viewpoints that you have not considered?