

Revising Your Writing

Writers use several strategies to make sure that their writing achieves its rhetorical purpose with accuracy and consistency. Revising is making sure the writing works! Use these methods alone or in combination with one another, at any stage of the writing process.

Read Aloud

Though simple, this revision tool is mighty. When writers read their writing aloud, they are forced to slow down and read each individual word. Because of this, writers find areas for revision they may not catch by reading, especially errors. It also allows writers to hear their writing from a new perspective, and we can take note of parts that don't quite make sense or sections that should be moved around for a better structure or flow.

Reverse Outline

Reverse outlining is a fantastic way to revise your work once you've got a draft written out. This method creates an outline of what you *already* have, as opposed to a prewriting outline that shows what you *want* to have. This way, you've got a birds-eye view of your draft, and much like reading aloud, you can see what needs to be reworked.

- To begin a reverse outline, grab a pen and paper, and get your draft in front of you.
- Start by assigning a topic sentence to every single paragraph. What is that paragraph saying? What is its overall purpose in the paper?
- Structure these sentences into an outline that follows the structure of the paper.
- Now you should have a fully-fledged outline of your draft. It is the draft in a condensed format, which is great for revision. By seeing those paragraphs in the form of topic sentences, you can see what needs to move, or where there are gaps that need filling.

Thesis Review

Your controlling idea, or thesis statement, is one of the most important parts of your paper because it informs the reader of what they're about to read. Is your paper's controlling idea expressed in a way that is concise, and impactful? After you've completed a draft of your paper, whether it's the first or the final, go back to your thesis and reevaluate it. Is it still the same, or did your thesis become more nuanced as you developed it through your writing? Are the points you've discussed in your paper and provided evidence for in line with the claim(s) your thesis is making? Do *you* still agree with it? Making sure that your controlling idea is infused through your paper, that your thesis still resonates with paragraphs you've written is rhetorically vital to the overall quality of your writing.

Source Review

Whether you've kept track of your research on paper, in a citation program, or in a preliminary Works Cited page, you'll always need to make sure that your in-text citations correspond with the final Works Cited entries, and vice versa. This strategy of revision is simple: go through your paper, take note of all your in-text citations, and then make sure that the information in them corresponds to what you have listed in your Works Cited page. This strategy includes checking the spelling of names and titles for consistency and accuracy, and correctly formatting all citations. Taking the extra time to get this part perfect adds to your ethos as a writer.