Revising and Editing Your Paper

Revising and editing go hand-in-hand and are critical steps in preparing your paper for submission. Revision is focusing on your paper as a whole by making substantial changes to your paper (i.e., moving paragraphs around, cutting unnecessary information, adding transitions, etc.). Editing is focusing on sentence-level issues (i.e., cleaning up spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors).

These phases take time so be sure to plan accordingly. It’s recommended that you set your completed draft aside for a few days and then come back to it to make revisions. This will help give you a fresh perspective.

Here are some questions to ask yourself during the revision phase:

1. Does the paper meet the central purpose of this assignment?
2. Is the thesis statement clear and focused?
3. Does each paragraph support the thesis of the paper?
4. Are there any paragraphs that would be served better moving to a different location in the paper?
5. Are there any sentences or paragraphs that do not further the purpose of your paper or are off topic that could be cut?
6. Are there areas in your paper that are vague or unclear?
7. Are there paragraphs that need further development (i.e., more examples, stronger scholarly support, supporting details, etc.)?
8. Are there clear and smooth transitions connecting the main ideas of the paper?
9. Are the paragraphs cohesive to help with the overall flow and organization of the paper?

During the revision process, you may find that you have to delete sections of your paper or re-write them completely. Don’t be discouraged - every writer has to revise and edit his or her work. Taking the time to look at your paper with a critical eye will help ensure that you submit your best work.