Proofreading and Revising
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Proofreading and revising are two different parts of the writing process. Generally, proofreading is the process of simply looking for and correcting surface errors. In turn, revising involves making significant changes that enhance the written work.

Although proofreading and revising are two different parts of the writing process, writers often proofread as they revise their work.

Reflecting on Your First Draft
As you reflect on your first draft, ask yourself the following questions:

- What did I learn from writing this piece?
- What do I intend to do in the first draft?
- What surprised or delighted me as I re-read my first draft?
- Where is this piece of writing taking me?
- What do I like best in this piece of writing?
- Where is this piece of writing taking me?
- What do I want to say that I have left unsaid?
- What do I think your reader will carry away from this piece of writing?
- What have I learned about your topic?
- What is my purpose in writing this piece?
- Who are my intended readers, and how much do they know about my topic?
- How is this writing task different from or similar to writing tasks I have undertaken in the past?
- What form or structure will allow me best to say what I need to say?

Revising a Nearly Finished Essay
Writers will often divide further revision into two phases, global and sentence-by-sentence revision.

Global revision is an attempt to look at the "big picture" of an essay and improve its larger elements; global revision entails those units of the essay that are on the paragraph level or larger. In turn, sentence-by-sentence revision entails sentences or smaller units such as clauses, phrases, words, grammatical markings, punctuation, and spelling.

Below you will find listed the criteria to help you revise and proofread your own paper. Keep in mind that these suggestions aim to finely tune an essay that is almost at its final draft.

GLOBAL REVISION
1. Read over essay out loud, so you can hear your work.
2. Determine which sentence or group of sentences best expresses your understanding of the essay's purpose.
3. If the thesis statement does not conform to your purpose, re-write it.
4. Read your essay again closely to ascertain whether or not every paragraph, piece of evidence, and sentence are pertinent to the essay's stated purpose.
5. Delete parts of the essay that do not support your thesis.
6. Ask the questions who, what, where, when, why, and how to generate more material to support your thesis if you need it.
7. If you find you do not have enough supporting material, use pre-writing strategies to discover more facts, data, and information.

8. After scanning the new version of your essay, decide whether you can make a stronger case for your thesis by adding evidence at strategic points in your essay.

9. Check the sequence of paragraphs, general points, and evidence to make sure they present your argument in a logical sequence.

10. Check the internal structure of each body paragraph to make sure it contains a transition, a topic sentence, general propositions, internal transitions, supporting evidence and a concluding sentence. Re-write any parts that do not directly support your thesis.

11. Ascertain whether your introductory paragraph establishes the subject matter, engages the reader’s attention, and moves gradually and logically towards your thesis statement.

12. Check your concluding paragraph to make sure it re-states your major points and suggests implications or possible results of the position your essay takes.

Notice that the above helps you build a stronger argument for your essay by adding new ideas, support and evidence. The changes you made during this revision focus on helping you develop your points.

The next step is to proofread, looking for errors while clarifying the ideas and points that you already have.

**PROOFREADING**

1. Once again read over your essay, this time slowly and deliberately, with a correction pencil in hand. If you want to catch all errors, it is best to view your essay in different formats, printed out and on the computer screen.

2. Divide proofreading into the following separate areas: diction (word choice); tone; sentence variety; spelling; format; grammar.

3. Devote at least a half hour to each of the areas of proofreading.

4. As you consider word choice, remember that you are looking for the best possible word to convey exactly what you mean and to work in the context of the sentence and of the essay’s argument. When choosing words, you should also consider the audience you address.

5. Your diction should be varied as well as exact, drawing on all the linguistic sources of English words. Vary short everyday words with ones less frequently used. If you are the slightest bit unsure of a word’s meaning, look it up in a dictionary. *The Oxford English Dictionary* will give you alternative meanings and forms, and etymologies (histories) of the word.

6. Be cautious in the use of a thesaurus; often some or all of the alternatives given will not fit into the context of your argument or the sentence. Too many thesaurus-derived words can mar the tone or meaning, and hence the communication.

7. Word choice is a major contributing factor to tone. Tone is defined as the attitude or mood permeating your essay.

8. Think about the attitude you want to communicate to your reader and then make your linguistic choices accordingly. Just as we hear distinct “tones” in peoples’ voices or infer attitudes from their language, readers infer your attitude and sense the tone of your essay based on the words you choose, the ways in which you arrange them, and even the type of sentence construction you employ. For example, too many polysyllabic words in a single passage might convey a stuffy tone or attitude; on the other hand, too many street expressions such as “weird,” “chill out” or “cool” might suggest a tone and purpose that is careless and shallow. Repeatedly using an imperative sentence structure might imply an attitude of authoritarianism.
9. Use sentence variety. Sentence variety serves two purposes: to give flow and cadence to your prose and to establish grammatical and logical connections among ideas. You should avoid beginning a series of sentences with the same type of construction. Vary simple, complex, compound, and complex-compound sentences. Use infinitive, participial, prepositional and other kinds of phrases to vary your sentence structure and correct any clauses and phrases or incoherent sentences.

10. Be cautious about using unnecessary words which blur meaning or create an unpleasant, jarring effect.

11. Remove any word that does not contribute to your meaning or purpose.

12. Carefully check the spelling of each word; if there is any doubt, use a dictionary.

13. Check for verb and pronoun agreement errors, and any incorrect usage of articles, prepositions, idioms, cases, number, commas and semi-colons.

14. Check for any errors produced by the mechanical process of typing (typos).

15. Check that margins, spacing of title, citations, and your bibliography all conform to the criteria for the specific project you have undertaken.