

Areas of Revision

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the revision process and the most important areas to focus on when revising. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Revising for Clarity and Focus

1a. Asking Questions of the Thesis

1b. Asking Questions of the Body Paragraphs

1c. Asking Questions of the Introduction and Conclusion

2. Revising for Unity and Coherence

2a. Creating Unity

2b. Creating Coherence

1. Revising for Clarity and Focus

Remember that **revising** is the process of re-visioning and rethinking an essay, including its structure, ideas, and support.

All of the components of an essay must support its thesis, so the following are key strategies for improving the clarity and focus of each section of the essay.



TERM TO KNOW

Revising

The act of re-envisioning an essay or other writing project.

1a. Asking Questions of the Thesis

Begin by reading your essay and asking yourself whether you still agree with your thesis. Next, ask whether your thesis expresses your point effectively and concisely.

It's not uncommon for writers to change their views while writing drafts, so consider what you've written and make sure it's in line with your current thinking.

1b. Asking Questions of the Body Paragraphs

When you're satisfied that your thesis is on track, review each body paragraph and ask whether or not it supports your thesis and addresses only one topic. Consider whether any of the content can be removed (even if it is interesting and/or somewhat related to the topic).

You should also ask the following questions about the structure of each of the body paragraphs:

- Does the paragraph have a strong topic sentence?
- Are the ideas clear?
- Does it contain necessary transitions between sentences, points, ideas, and support?

Finally, re-examine the body paragraphs with your supporting sentences in mind, and ask if there are other points that should be made to strengthen them:

- Have you included enough evidence to support the topic of each paragraph?
- Is there better evidence available that you can (and should) use?
- If you've cited sources to support your work, have you represented them fairly and accurately?

1c. Asking Questions of the Introduction and Conclusion

When revising your introduction, ask the following questions:

- Does it present your thesis clearly and completely?
- Is it engaging enough to encourage readers to keep reading?

Then, ask whether or how well your conclusion sums up your argument. If there's anything you should add or change to make it more interesting, now is the time to do so!

2. Revising for Unity and Coherence

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has unity, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong there and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. When the writing has coherence, the ideas flow smoothly. The wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and throughout the essay as a whole.

2a. Creating Unity

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist straying from the main idea. This happens a lot when writing about yourself. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends,

unplanned tangents usually harm a piece of writing, which needs a specific focus.

IN CONTEXT

Mariah stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she titled “Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?” But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she strayed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the off-topic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph:

Nothing is more confusing than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ~~You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs.~~ You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. ~~The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ The ~~other~~ important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. ~~But be careful and tell the salespeople you have budget constraints.~~ Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't ~~let someone make you~~ buy more television than you need!

2b. Creating Coherence

Remember, careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Transitions are not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays.

IN CONTEXT

After Mariah revised for unity, she next examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off-topic:

Finally, nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch

sports and DVDs on. *There's a good reason for this confusion:* You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. *The first big decision is the screen resolution you want.* Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The *second* important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. *However*, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. *Don't buy more television than you need!*



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you examined several important areas of revision that you will need to pay attention to when revising an essay. **Revising for clarity and focus** involves assessing an essay's content by **asking questions of the thesis, asking questions of the body paragraphs, and asking questions of the introduction and conclusion** to gain information that will improve these sections.

Revising for unity and coherence means looking for areas where an essay can improve in terms of organization and flow. Specifically, **creating unity** involves removing any off-topic information, while **creating coherence** involves using transitions effectively between sentences and paragraphs. As you can see, clarity, focus, unity, and coherence are all connected, working together to create a strong piece of writing.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Some of this content has been adapted from Lumen Learning's "Revising and Editing" tutorial.



TERMS TO KNOW

Revising

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