

Writing and Revising Your First Draft

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the process of writing and revising the first draft of a paper. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Writing a Draft

Oftentimes, students who sit down to write a paper can feel overwhelmed by the pressure to get it right as soon as their fingers hit the keyboard. However, experts in the field of writing and composition have increasingly found that successful writing is a process—meaning that successful papers do not emerge fully formed from students' brains; rather they develop through experimentation.

This is why **drafts**—the writing equivalent of a kind of practice run—are crucial to an excellent final, submission-ready paper. Not only do you not need to get everything right on the first try, but working through the process of trial and error tends to produce better results.

It might be more productive to write any portion of your essay you are inspired to write at the moment rather than insisting on proceeding in a linear fashion from start to finish. Similarly, it can often be beneficial to allow your initial ideas to flow freely onto the page as they come to you, instead of scrutinizing each notion for perfection.

Revision and editing are going to be necessary anyway, so there is no need to be too exacting when you produce a first draft.



TERM TO KNOW

Draft

A version of a paper or project that is not yet in its final, completed form. Writing in a series of improved drafts is preferable to attempting to write a perfect paper on your first try because it yields a better result and allows you to explore different approaches and seek feedback.

2. Revising a Draft

To “revise” means “to see again,” and this is your goal when you set out to revise papers for your college courses—to look at what you’ve written in your drafts and reconsider it in terms of what needs to happen before you submit the final version.

One habit of revision that many students find helpful is reading their papers aloud to themselves—sometimes your ears notice things your eyes don't; hearing how your paper “sounds” can alert you to missing words or awkward phrases that you missed in reading the paper over.

Make sure your paper meets the requirements and fulfills the purpose of your assignment. Check to see that the body paragraphs each work to support your thesis and that you transition smoothly between them.

Look for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Make sure any quotations are properly cited and your document is properly formatted.

After you've taken all these steps toward thorough revision—after you've really “seen your paper again”—you can feel confident about turning it in.



TRY IT

Practice revising this short passage. Look for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics, and then, read the passage aloud to see if you missed anything.

Its important to edit you're written work carefully if you don't your work will look careless. Through editing means looking for things like errors in punctuation; spelling and grammer. Sometimes reading your paper allowed can help to.



SUMMARY

When **writing the first draft** of your paper, start wherever you want, and don't try to make it perfect. You will improve it later. **Revise your draft** and make changes to it until it meets the requirements for the assignment and you are satisfied with it.



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