

BECOMING A STRONG SELF-EDITOR

Becoming a good self-editor is all about evaluating your text objectively. This handout discusses some general areas to focus on as well as tips for taking your paper from a rough draft to a polished work. The more you learn about your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, the easier it will become to prioritize areas to revise/edit.

Try not to revise and edit everything at once! Read through your paper several times with a different focus for each reading. For example, you might look at citations the first time through and sentence fragments the next time.

REVISING VS. EDITING

1. REVISING happens when you are perfecting your content.

- Check your:
 - ✓ Organization
 - ✓ Thesis Statement
 - ✓ Scholarly Sources
 - ✓ Potential Plagiarism
- TIPS:
 - Revise your content *before* looking for small errors like grammar/awkward wording, etc.
 - Compare the paper to your prompt to make sure you fulfill the requirements.
 - Skim your paper asking yourself the following:
 - What is each paragraph/section about?
 - What is its function within my text?
 - Check that scholarly sources provide evidence for each major point you make.
 - Seek out feedback on your text from another person, your professor, or the writing lab.

2. EDITING occurs when you adjust the finer points of your text.

- Check your:
 - ✓ Formatting (MLA, APA, or Turabian)
 - ✓ Spelling
 - ✓ Grammar & Punctuation
 - ✓ Active Voice
 - ✓ Clarity/Flow
- TIPS:
 - Only edit *after* you have finished revising your content.
 - Set your text aside before you start editing (anywhere from an hour to a day).
 - Read out loud or with someone.
 - Read the text backwards to catch grammar or spelling mistakes.

PRACTICE NOW