



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OF RHODE ISLAND

Revision Techniques

Dr. Karen Petit



COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

A Definition of Revision

- The word “revision” means “to see again.”
- Revision involves carefully reading, analyzing, and making improvements to a paper, speech, or other communication.



Six Revision Suggestions

1. Be objective.
2. Read a paper out loud.
3. Analyze the parts.
4. Do multiple revisions.
5. Get help with revision.
6. Focus on specific areas.



I. Be Objective



- To achieve objectivity, distance yourself:
 - Wait at least two days before revising each draft of a paper.
 - Separate yourself mentally from the ideas in a paper by doing other tasks for at least an hour.
- Imagine a tired, grouchy stranger who needs to read hundreds of papers. He/she starts to read your paper. What sections might this stranger dislike or not understand?



2. Read a Paper Out Loud

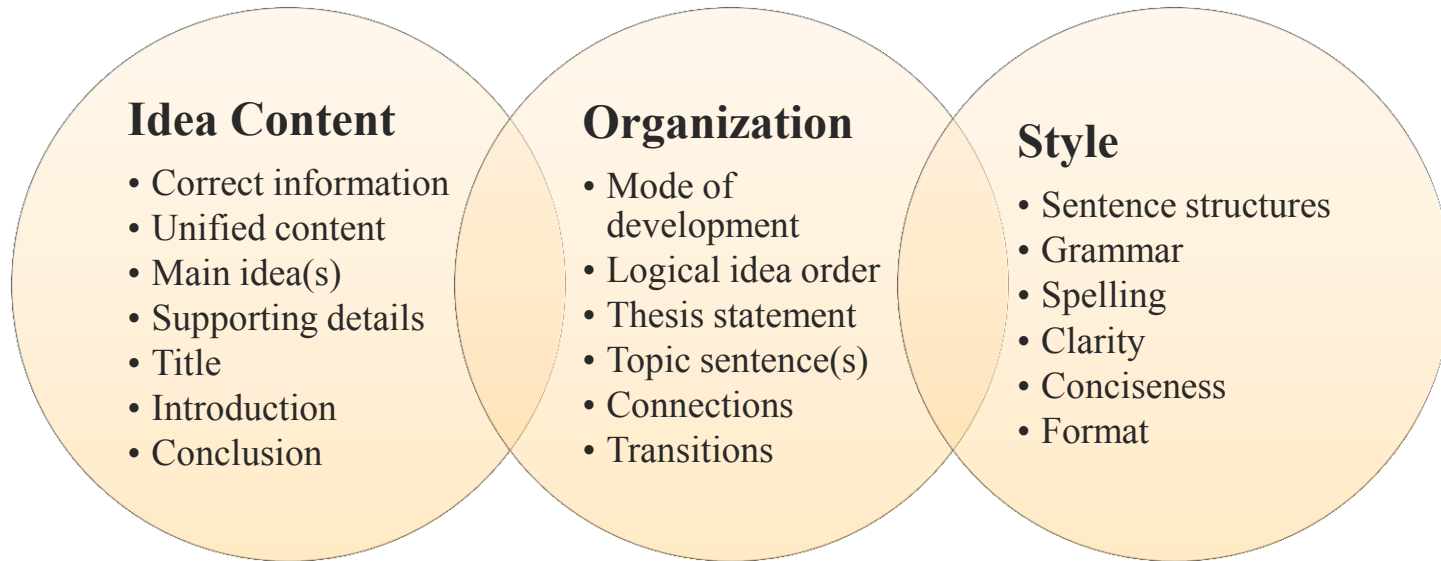


- Listen to the words you say while reading your paper out loud.
- Compare the words you are saying with the ones in the paper.
- Ask yourself if each word makes sense.
- Do the words actually say what you meant to say?
- Did you forget anything?
- Listen to the **way** you are reading each sentence of your paper. If you notice yourself hesitating, re-reading some words, or having other problems, look closely at the problem sections.



3. Analyze the Parts

- Look closely at each part.
- Make certain nothing is missing.



4. Do Multiple Revisions



- Revise for global (large) areas.

- Idea content
- Organization and unity
- Connections and transitions



- Revise again for local (small) areas.

- Grammar
- Sentence structures
- Word choices



- Revise an additional time for each possible problem area.

- For example, if you have a problem with fragments, read your paper while looking only for fragments.

5. Get Help with Revision



- Get help from people:
 - a professor
 - a writing center tutor
 - a peer editing group in a class
 - a friend
- Get help from software, books, and Web sites:
 - Automatic grammar and spell checkers in Microsoft Office
 - Dictionaries and grammar textbooks
 - Online resources at www.ccri.edu/writingcenter

5.1 Help Your Helper



- Work **with** a helper. Helpers do not fix everything; they only **help**.
- During a revision session, both you and your helper should discuss possible revisions for your paper.
- You should ask specific questions, rather than general questions.
 - General questions are bad:
 - What do you think of my paper?
 - Is this a good paper?
 - More specific questions are better:
 - Does my thesis connect to the body paragraphs?
 - My professor said my paper has run-ons. Do you see any?
 - Is the example in paragraph two logical?

6. Focus on Specific Areas

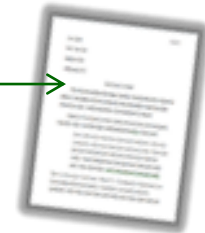


1. Purpose
2. Format
3. Organization
4. Content
5. Style
6. Grammar
7. Clarity
8. Conciseness

Focusing on everything at once can be confusing.



Focusing on one specific area at a time is more effective.





6.1 Purpose

- Often, there is more than one purpose, including rhetorical and personal purposes. Here are some possible purposes for writing an argumentative research paper about drunk driving:
 - To persuade people not to get drunk
 - To persuade people to take car keys away from friends who are drunk
 - To persuade people to send money to MADD
 - To analyze a problem (drunk driving) and suggest a solution (longer jail time for offenders)
 - To persuade a professor to give a writer an “A” for a good paper
- A finished paper should be compared with its purpose to see if it fulfills the initial assignment and/or reason(s) for writing.



6.2 Format

- All parts of a paper need to be formed and placed correctly.
Examples of bad format:
 - A title is typed in a smaller font than the other words in the paper.
 - The title is placed after the third paragraph of an essay.
- A paper should look like what audience members expect.
 - An essay should look like an essay, including an introduction, conclusion, and multiple body paragraphs.
 - A letter to a customer should look like a letter, including a letterhead or return address, inside address, date, salutation, and closing.
- When source material is included, the paper needs to use correct documentation format, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago format.



6.3 Organization

- Organization helps readers to understand the arrangement and meaning of a writer's ideas.
- A thesis can help to organize the supporting points and details of an essay.
- A topic sentence can help to organize the supporting points and details of a paragraph.
- To check the organization, many writers do an outline **after** writing a draft, as well as **before** writing the draft.





6.4 Content

The content should be correct for the purpose, context, and audience.

- Correct content for a family member:

Mom is making us Sunday brunch this weekend at the usual time.

- Correct content for work:

All employees should attend the next meeting in room 202 at the Warwick office on Friday, May 11, at 2 p.m.



6.5 Style

The style should be appropriate for the purpose, context, audience, and content.

- Correct informal style for a text message to a family member:
RU going 2 mom's Sunday?
- Correct formal style for an e-mail message at work:
All employees should attend the next meeting in room 202 at the Warwick office on Friday, May 11, at 2 p.m.



6.6 Grammar

Incorrect grammar can make:

- ideas difficult to understand
- a writer appear to be uneducated and unprofessional

Wrong verb forms	Inconsistent verb tenses	Subject-verb agreement errors	Pronoun errors	Inconsistent point of view	Misspelled homonyms
Run-ons	Fragments	Punctuation errors	Parallel structure problems	Misplaced and dangling modifiers	Mixed sentence structures



6.7 Clarity

- An unclear idea is one that a reader might read multiple times in order to try and figure out the meaning.
 - **Unclear:** Fred told Jim about his large classroom while everyone could hear his voice in the middle of the sixty rooms.
- A clear idea will be immediately understood by an average reader.
 - **Clear:** While everyone in the cafeteria was listening, Fred told Jim about Jim's large classroom in the middle of the sixty-room building.
- Adding more words, using different words, or changing the order of words can often fix an unclear idea.



6.8 Conciseness

Revision Method 1 **Delete** any wordy structures and **rephrase**.

- **Delete** wordy structures: I feel **that** people should enjoy revising papers **that have errors and other problems**.
- **Rephrase**: People should enjoy revising their papers.

Revision Method 2 **Keep** only the essential words and **rephrase**.

- **Keep** the essential words: I feel that **people** should enjoy **revising** papers that have errors and other problems.
- **Rephrase**: People should enjoy revision.

More Information

The Writing Center at the Community College of Rhode Island has more online resources.



Contact Information

This presentation is the creation of

Dr. Karen Petit

Community College of Rhode Island

400 East Avenue

Warwick, RI 02886

E-mail: kmpetit@ccri.edu

Phone: 401-825-2279

