

Cheat Sheet Module 7

Essential Concepts

Revising

- **Effective revision happens in three stages: big picture, paragraph-level, and sentence-level.** Start by reviewing your thesis, structure, and overall organization; then revise individual paragraphs for clarity, support, and focus; and finally, edit for sentence flow, word choice, and tone to polish your writing.
- **Feedback makes your revision stronger.** Don't revise in isolation—talk through your ideas, ask for feedback, and share drafts with peers, tutors, or instructors. Explaining your work out loud can reveal what's missing or unclear.
- **Seek feedback that is specific and focused.** Vague comments like “this is good” or “this is bad” aren't useful. Ask reviewers to focus on structure, clarity, argument strength, or whatever areas you most need help with.
- **Use a method like CARES to give and receive peer feedback.** CARES encourages you to Congratulate strengths, Ask clarifying questions, Request more detail, Evaluate weaknesses, and Summarize insights—making feedback clear, constructive, and helpful.

Revision Strategies

- **Revisit your purpose during revision to sharpen your message.** Clarify why you're writing—whether to inform, persuade, or entertain—and ensure your tone, structure, and content consistently support that primary goal. A vague or shifting purpose can confuse readers and weaken your argument.
- **Revise with your audience in mind.** Consider your readers' background knowledge, interests, expectations, and potential biases. Adjust your word choice, tone, and level of explanation so your writing is clear, respectful, and engaging for the intended audience.
- **Evaluate and improve your structure logically.** Check that your ideas are introduced in a logical order, your evidence is well-placed, and your paragraphs flow smoothly. Use techniques like reverse outlines or paragraph shuffling to assess and improve overall organization.

- **Strengthen your use of evidence.** Revisit each claim to ensure it's supported by appropriate and relevant evidence—such as facts, expert testimony, or personal observation—and clearly explain how the evidence connects to your argument.
- **Use revision strategies to deepen your thinking.** Techniques like hotspotting (expanding key ideas), highlighting (color-coding claims, evidence, and analysis), and the Rogerian method (addressing counterarguments early) can help you revise more thoughtfully and effectively.

Editing and Proofreading

- **Editing focuses on clarity, accuracy, and correctness.** After revising your ideas, edit to fix grammar, punctuation, word choice, tone, and formatting—ensuring your writing is polished and professional before the final proofreading stage.
 - **Target common grammar issues.** Watch for subject-verb agreement, pronoun clarity, verb tense consistency, run-ons, sentence fragments, and parallel structure. Knowing your personal error patterns can help you edit more effectively.
 - **Polish your sentence-level style for clarity and impact.** Avoid vague or wordy phrases, use active voice when possible, and choose strong verbs and specific nouns. Eliminate unnecessary modifiers, contractions (in formal writing), and filler words.
 - **Check punctuation and mechanics closely.** Use commas, colons, dashes, and semicolons purposefully and correctly. Make sure quotation marks are placed properly, and ensure capitalization follows the rules for proper nouns and titles.
 - **Proofreading is your final quality check.** Look for surface errors—like spelling, missing words, incorrect homonyms, or citation mistakes—that may have slipped through earlier edits. A fresh set of eyes or a short break before proofreading can make a big difference.
-

Glossary

chronological organization

a method of organizing a paragraph or essay by presenting events in the order they happened over time—often used for narratives, histories, or step-by-step explanations

editing

a type of revision that focuses on the grammar, punctuation, and overall readability of a paper

general to specific organization

a method of structuring a paragraph by starting with a broad idea and gradually narrowing down to a specific point, detail, or example—like the top of an hourglass funneling into a focused message

parallel structure

the use of the same grammatical form for items in a list or series to create clarity, balance, and rhythm in a sentence—for example, “She enjoys hiking, biking, and swimming,” not “She enjoys hiking, to bike, and swimming”

pronoun reference

the clear connection between a pronoun (like he, she, it, or they) and the specific noun it replaces; a pronoun reference error happens when it’s unclear what noun the pronoun is referring to

proofreading

the last stage of revision that entails checking for typographical errors such as spelling errors, grammatical concerns, or style

rank order

a method of organizing a paragraph or essay by arranging ideas in order of importance—often saving the strongest or most important point for last to build emphasis or lead into a larger claim

revision

the stage of the writing process where you review and rethink your draft to improve its ideas, organization, and clarity—often by rearranging, adding, or removing content

reverse outline (post-draft outline)

a strategy used after writing a draft to review and improve structure by outlining the main ideas and supporting details in each paragraph—helping to check organization, clarity, and the flow of evidence and analysis

run-on sentence

a sentence error that occurs when two or more independent clauses (complete thoughts) are joined together without proper punctuation or connecting words—for example, “I love to write I do it every day”

sentence fragment

an incomplete sentence that is missing a subject, a verb, or a complete thought—for example, “Because I went to the store”

spatial organization

a method of structuring a paragraph by describing details in the order of their physical location or arrangement—such as top to bottom, left to right, or near to far—often used in descriptive or explanatory writing

subject-verb agreement

the grammatical rule that a subject and its verb must match in number—meaning a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb (e.g., “She runs” vs. “They run”)

verb tense

the form of a verb that shows the time of an action or state of being—such as past, present, or future—and should remain consistent throughout a piece of writing unless a clear reason for shifting tenses is needed