

Significant Revision Checklist for Second Drafts

The final draft of your essay should not be merely a corrected version of your first essay, but a significant revision. Do more than proofread for typographical errors and correct grammatical mistakes. You will be graded partly on the extent of your changes. Try to improve its structure and experiment with the design of the theme. Your final grade will be determined to some extent by the quality of the final product you submit, of course, but also by the amount of beneficial revision you have incorporated from the previous drafts. The following are some methods you might use to create a substantially different draft. You don't have to try all of them, but certainly try some of them. Turn in your peer evaluation along with the second version so I can contrast the two and see the improvements.

Suggested methods of revision:

1. If your thesis is located in the introduction of your paper, try positioning it towards the end, or vice versa. Is this more effective?
2. Create a completely new introduction or conclusion. Try out the invention techniques from the class website for ideas.
3. Incorporate material from a later reading that was assigned in the syllabus, but which we had not yet covered at the time you wrote your first version.
4. Take a look at statements written by your peer evaluators. Did they bring up points you neglected to mention? Incorporate these points.
5. Did your readers offer debate with your stance or disagree with your assertions? Take a look at their arguments and incorporate their concerns into your paper.
6. Expand a specific paragraph, or shorten it. Which worked better?
7. Try using different punctuation marks--semicolons, dashes, commas, colons, etc. Be sure to adapt the sentences also so they are still punctuated correctly!
8. Modify your sentence length. If you have several long sentences, try chopping them into small ones. If you have several short ones, try combining them.
9. Try coming up with different, specific examples to support generalized statements.
10. Delete all the adjectives and adverbs from a paragraph in your essay. Is this style more easily read than an essay filled with description? Alternatively, try adding adjectives and adverbs if you have few originally.
11. Have you made use of required invention techniques for this essay?

Checklist: Other considerations to ask yourself:

- ✓ Did I use the spell check function on my word-processor to check the document?
- ✓ Do I have a thesis that a) makes an assertion in one clause and b) provides a statement with a reason in another clause?
- ✓ Did I check my Works Cited page (if applicable) against samples in the *MLA Handbook*, *The Bedford Handbook*, or *The Prentice Hall Reference Guide*?
- ✓ Am I using active voice sentence structure rather than passive voice sentence structure?
- ✓ Have I eliminated informal writing such as contractions and slang from my writing if I want a formal tone?
- ✓ Was my choice of first, second, and third person pronouns appropriate for my audience?
- ✓ Have I eliminated unnecessary and trite words: *great, well, pretty, interesting, today's society, nowadays, very*, etc.? Have I cut out clichés and replaced them with an original way of conveying that idea?