

REVISING A DRAFT

REMINDER! Revisions are for flow issues, not for adding new content. You MAY remove content, but ALL general and specific content should already be in your outlines and therefore in your first draft. It is better to have too MUCH information at first than too little.

1. **Cool Down Phase.** After you have written your first draft, let it "cool" for a few days (at least 24 hrs). This is why you need to PLAN your steps in writing a paper well ahead of the due date! Cool-down allows your brain to come back to the paper and see it for what it is instead of what you THINK you wrote.
2. **PRINT a copy.** We read "cold copy" more accurately than digital copy.
3. **Reading Phase.** With pen in hand (no typing!), go somewhere comfortable and read. Mark locations where you will go back to clarify, delete, or move information, correcting format errors, etc. If there is a need for background information that is missing, put a question mark in that location. These are "high level" errors. Of course, you will correct any obvious grammatical or spelling errors as well. These are "low level" errors.
4. **Peer Review Phase.** You may make corrections from Steps #1-3 and print fresh copies for this phase. Give your paper to trusted sources who will be encouraging AND honest (brave, even). They should mark any areas where they see errors or "muddy" areas that need to be clarified. Tell them what you are wanting them to look for. Be sure to thank them for their time. Collect their feedback and review it, filtering out what is recognizably sound help from areas you believe you have logical reasons for keeping. Have on hand a clean copy for yourself and collect all the revision notes that you accept from your feedback onto this clean copy. This is the copy you will use to make your Second (or Third) Draft (see step #5).
5. **Revise for Second Draft (or Third, if you printed fresh copies in step #4).** Now you will return to the keyboard or make your edits according to the copy from Step #4. ALWAYS run SpellCheck and GrammarCheck before printing or submitting any copy.
6. **Repeat.** Usually, a good paper takes at LEAST 2-3 drafts, if not more. Find new feedback for step #4, or use the same people and ask if this is a better copy and what remains as a literal OBSTACLE in their reading flow or understanding or interest.

A NOTE ABOUT FEEDBACK: Some people give too much feedback. Some people give too little (too polite or too easy to please). Especially when writing an essay, you will want at least 3 persons to read your first draft in order to get a wide range of feedback styles.