

RE-COMPOSING

The stage of re-composing (a.k.a. redrafting, revising, rewriting, revision, etc.) is the most tedious of the entire process. Oftentimes, students would rather be hit by a car than revise their work. Yet, the "fight to the finish" is often made possible by rewriting material.

RE-COMPOSING is generally concerned with these questions:

Additions -

What is missing?

What is needed?

Arrangement -

Does the paper have an introduction?

Does the paper have a solid body?

Does the paper have a conclusion?

What can be moved to better serve the paper?

Do I need headings for my paper to help to guide the reader?

Agreement -

Do subjects and verbs agree?

Are all sentences complete?

Do pronouns and antecedents agree?

Do topic and support agree?

Are homonyms the correct ones?

Do I use a consistent point of view (first, second, third person)?

Do I use a consistent tense in my paragraphs?

Clarity -

Are the words all correct (check the dictionary if not)?

Do I use specific and concrete words?

Is there figurative language that I can change?

Are examples, analogies, and so forth clear for my audience?

Can I change pronouns to antecedents?

Is the writing clear and easy to read?

Is the language specific enough for my audience?

Format -

Is the paper formatted correctly (e.g. Does it meet the conventions as prescribed by the Modern Language Association, the instructor, or the institution)?

Is the name, professor name, course, and date placed correctly?

Are there headers with page numbers?

Do I have a creative title (centered) on my first page?

Sound -

Does the writing read well?

Does it have a good rhythm?

Is there a sense of parallelism (Are sentence mostly of equal length?)

If I read the writing, do I find myself losing my place or stopping abruptly in places?
Are sentences expressed in similar structure?

Style -

Is the language as formal as it needs to be?

Is the language active?

Does the writing display that I know how to write in professional/collegiate contexts?

Are my quotations formatted correctly (if applicable)? Cited?

Do I have a bibliographic page (if applicable)?

Are the parenthetical and bibliographic references correct?

Subtractions -

What can I cut?

Am I being concise throughout the paper?

Are there extra words to cut?

Are there extra sentences to cut?

Are there thought tangents?

Are there too many nonessential items?

STRATEGIES FOR REVIEW

1. Examine just the words in your paper. That is, without reading the sentences definitely, ask if each word seems appropriate.
2. Examine just the sentences in your paper. Read each individual sentence. Decide if the sentence is complete? Then, decide if you have one idea for each independent clause. If you have multiple ideas in a single sentence, you may want to unpack the sentence or break it into multiple sentences.
3. Examine just the paragraphs in your paper. Do you have a topic sentence, for starters? Do you have supporting sentences? Is there any sentence, which does not belong?
4. Read the entire document out loud. If you stumble on a sentence or paragraph while reading, then circle it. Then, when you are finished, go back and repair it.
5. Have a peer or a tutor/consultant read your paper. A bit of a hint, even the best writers in the world have an editor.