

Quick Tips for Revising Your Writing

Document Level

Are all the appropriate pieces of the document present?

- Title
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- References list
- Other?

Is the document formatted correctly?

- Font type
- Font size
- Spacing
- Margin size
- Page numbers/running head
- Indentation at the beginning of each paragraph and/or a space between paragraphs

Is the document divided into the appropriate number of sections & subsections?

Are sections & sub-sections titled appropriately?

Are headings of various levels appropriately differentiated from other text & consistent throughout the document?

Do chapter lengths seem balanced?

Does the document have an overall introduction and a conclusion?

Does the order of the chapters make sense within disciplinary conventions?

Does the overall main idea relate to each chapter? Is that relationship clear?

Chapter Level

Does each chapter have an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph?

Does the order of sections within the chapter meet disciplinary requirements?

Does the order of paragraphs within each section display appropriate logic?

Has all relevant information (quotes, summaries, paraphrases) been cited in the appropriate citation format?

Do all charts, tables, or diagrams have a title or description if appropriate?

Are the relevant terms defined before they are used?

Are all abbreviations or acronyms written out the first time they appear?

Paragraph Level

Does each paragraph have a topic and transition sentence?

Does the topic sentence match the content of the paragraph?

Does the order of information within each paragraph display appropriate logic?

Is the paragraph shorter than 4 sentences or longer than 7 sentences? (If so, consider expanding or splitting the paragraph.)

Do transition words show the connection of ideas between sentences within a single paragraph?

Do the same words or phrases appear multiple times in the same paragraph? (e.g. “however,” “in particular,”)

Does each paragraph include a variety of sentence structures?

Sentence Level

Does every sentence have a subject, an object, and a verb?

Is the same word repeated more than once in a sentence?

Does the order of information within each sentence make sense? Would rearranging it increase clarity?

Can unnecessary prepositions (e.g., “of”) be deleted?

Are verbs conjugated correctly?

Are verbs in the correct tense?

Are sentences correctly constructed for active or passive voice as appropriate?

Are sentences with two or more equal parts parallel and balanced?

Is the appropriate transition word(s) used to show the relationship between two or more ideas within a sentence?

Is punctuation (commas, periods, colons, semi-colons, etc.) used correctly?

Other

What are the common issues other people (like your advisor) point out in your writing? Isolate one problem at a time and check for that.