

## **Revision and the Writing Process**

What is the difference between drafting, revising, and editing?

- *Drafting*: generating text
- *Revising*: working with the text you've created, rethinking and reshaping what you want to say
- *Editing*: working on your text as an artifact, preparing the final version of your document

	<b>Drafting</b>	<b>Revising</b>	<b>Editing</b>
<b>What is it?</b>	Invention, seizing hold of ideas as they come to you, generating text	Rethinking, reshaping a text	Fiddling with sentences, addressing grammar and punctuation errors
<b>What strategies can I use?</b>	Asking questions and freewriting responses; outlining; talking it out	See below!	Reading out loud, deleting parts that don't work, changing words or word order, adding punctuation
<b>Why should I do this?</b>	Help you arrive at what you really want to say	Give your writing a more intentional shape and purpose, help you connect with your target audience	To give your reader an easy and pleasurable reading experience, and to make sure you are clearly understood

## Some Revision Strategies from *Rewriting* by Joseph Harris (2006)

- *Last line of the essay*: In a first draft, we often find that the last line of the draft is only part where the author says something new, interesting, or important. If you notice that your last line is the best sentence in your draft, make that your first line, and see how this leads you to redevelop your essay.
- *Track Changes*: If you track your changes from one draft of an essay to the next, you will start to see patterns of work. Look for moments when you make changes not only to sentences but to the ideas and arguments you are trying to convey. Let these changes lead to a domino effect of revision throughout your paper.
- *Coming to Terms*: Begin your revision work by writing a sketch of your aims, materials, and methods. When you bring forward the key ideas of your project, you force yourself to think about how you have developed your project so far. This can help you see where your ideas need to be refined or developed.
- *What Works?* Don't be so preoccupied with "fixing" what isn't working that you fail to develop your essay's strengths. Spend some time keying in on what you're doing *well*, and think about how you can expand on and develop those strengths.
- *Countering*: While many professors encourage their students to write essays that consider conflicting points of view, Harris reminds us that there are often more than two sides to a debate, and we don't want to get trapped in our writing defending a rigid position against an imaginary onslaught. Instead of arguing against an opposing perspective, consider in your essay whether some alternative positions might be available to you. This approach often leads to a draft that is more developed and nuanced.
- *Looking Ahead*: Concluding an academic essay is extremely difficult, and many student writers avoid this difficulty by falling into the 5-paragraph essay trap and merely repeating their argument. Instead, ask yourself the questions *so what?* or *what next?* Invite your reader to consider some specific implications of your ideas, or to continue your work by applying your ideas to another problem or issue.

**Come to the Writing Center for help at any stage of the Writing Process!**