

REVISING & EDITING YOUR WORK

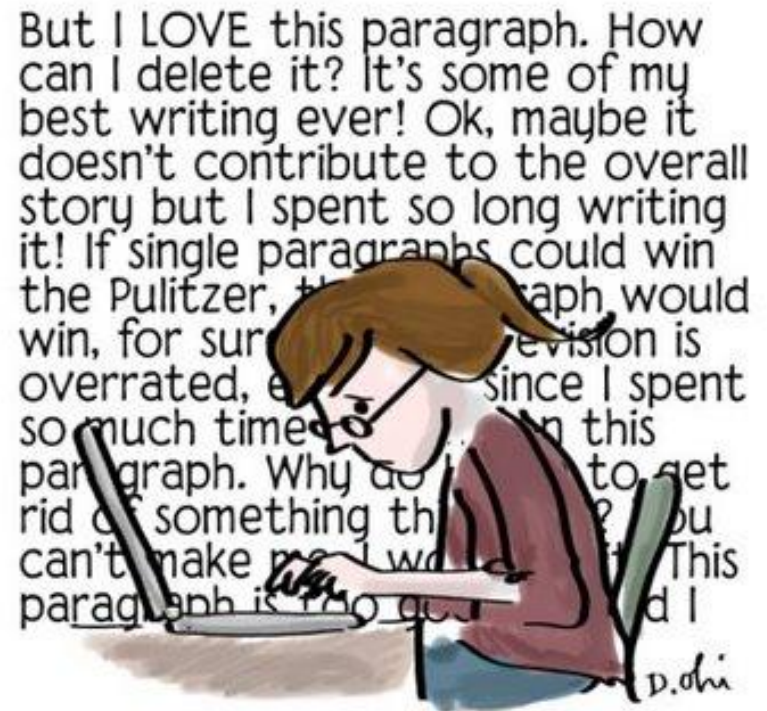
Tips to Making That Effort Count!

Make it *shine!*

- “If a teacher told me to revise, I thought that meant my writing was a broken-down car that needed to go to the repair shop. I felt insulted. I didn't realize the teacher was saying, “Make it shine. It's worth it.” Now I see revision as a beautiful word of hope. It's a new vision of something. It means you don't have to be perfect the first time. What a relief!”—***Naomi Shihab Nye***

So what do I do?

- After you finish writing a paragraph or an essay, it's important to reread what you wrote.
- This process is two-fold and includes REVISION and EDITING.
- There are a few guiding questions to help you create the best writing as possible!



Revision Angst

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“I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.”—Truman Capote

Does it make sense?

Use these questions to help you ensure your writing makes sense!

- ❑ Can you read it out loud without stumbling?
- ❑ Does every word and action count?
- ❑ Is the series of events logical? Do they relate?
- ❑ Is your train of thought clear? Are there any tangents?

Are you organized?

Good writing means you have organized your ideas correctly.

- Is there a catchy introduction? Does the conclusion leave the reader thinking?
- Do supporting details support *only* the topic sentence of *that* paragraph?
- Are transition words used throughout?
- Is there a strong hook, thesis and lead-in?
- Is proper format followed throughout?

An Example

Original Paragraph

Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.

Revised Paragraph

Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.

How about your words?

Word choice is something not to be overlooked. You want your words to be memorable, dynamic, and powerful.

- Are vivid/descriptive words used to describe people, places, actions, and/or events?
- Do you use a variety of verbs throughout the piece? (Something instead of "SAID"!)
- Is it wordy and redundant? Are you using the same words and phrases over and over again?
- Is a vivid mental picture created in the reader's mind?

An Example

Original Paragraph

My sixth grade teacher was bad. Every day, she walked in our classroom and caused us to wonder. She wore the ugliest arrangement of clothing, and her breath smelled of onions and milk! Little strands of hair stuck out of her hair-do. Worst of all, she said the words “groovy” and “far out,” but the word she said the most was “peace”.

Revised Paragraph

My sixth grade teacher **defined the meaning of hideous!** Every day, she **wandered** in our classroom and caused us to wonder. She always **boasted** the **tackiest** arrangement of clothing, and her breath **reeked** of **Vidalia** onions and **sour** milk! Little strands of **red** hair **frizzed** out of her **beehive** hair-do. Worst of all, she **exhausted** the words “groovy” and “far out,” but the word she **repeated** the most was “peace”.

What about conventions?

One of the last things you want to check for are your conventions, which includes spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

- Are all sentences complete or are there sentence fragments?
- Did you use spell-check and grammar-check?
- Did you capitalize the beginning of sentences and proper nouns?
- Have you avoided contractions?
- Have you avoided 1st person?

An Example

Original Paragraph

The arctic fox is comparable in size to the domestic cat. It inhabits the so-called kingdom of the polar bear the area midway between Norway and the North Pole. this canine predator changes to extreme weather conditions. During the winter months, it's white coat is ideal camoflage in these rough northern climates.

Revised Paragraph

The **Arctic** fox is **comparable** in size to the domestic cat. It inhabits the so-called kingdom of the polar bear, the area midway between Norway and the North Pole. **This** canine predator **adapts** to extreme weather conditions. During the winter months, **its** white coat is ideal **camouflage** in these rough northern climates.

Any other strategies?

Here are a few final techniques to help you create your best writing possible!

- Did you read your work out loud?
- Did you ask a friend or family member to read your work and provide feedback?
- Did you use the feedback provided to you from your instructor?
- Did you review the rubric to see how your essay rates?

Final Tips:

- ✓ Take a break between drafts.
- ✓ Reread your writing.
- ✓ Read your work out loud.
- ✓ Use the tools at your disposal.
- ✓ Get feedback from others.
- ✓ Ask for help.

normous

huge, black wash pot had already been scrubbed with river sand the d

fresh from the cistern
filled with rain water. Early this morning Mama had built a fire under the

aw what Mama would want her to do without being asked. Using a sha

shaved

~~cut up~~ an entire cake of lye soap into the boiling, bubbling water. A

soap-smell filled the yard.

Don't Be Afraid of Change!

“Writing is not like painting where you add. It is not what you put on the canvas that the reader sees. Writing is more like a sculpture where you remove, you eliminate in order to make the work visible. Even those pages you remove somehow remain.”—Elie Wiesel

Works Consulted

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