

# Revising Your Writing

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There's no way around it. For most of us, genuine revision is difficult. Once we've managed to get something down on paper, it's hard to admit that it's not perfect. Of course, it's not perfect, nobody's writing is perfect—in fact some people think the best authors are actually the best *rewriters*.

Perhaps part of the problem is that we each revise differently. I have already changed these two paragraphs ten times and I haven't even finished them yet! Revising means making big changes; fixing spelling will come later. Look at the checklist below to see the kinds of things you might work on when you revise.

There are no set rules but there are some helpful guidelines. Remember, the goal is not to torture you, the goal is to make your writing as exciting and interesting as you are.

## Revising Tips:

1. **Walk Away** - don't look at the writing for at least a day before you revise it. You'll be more ready to change things that way.
2. **Share Your Work** - ask a parent or mentor to read what you have written and share the best parts and the parts that raise more questions or aren't clear
3. **Use a different color** - use a skinny marker or colored pencil when you revise. Don't try to squeeze everything in, make a number in your rough draft where you want to make a change, then go to a clean sheet and write the same number and the change.

## Revising Checklist:

- **Content**
  - Did I include all needed information?
  - Did I answer the original questions?
  - Do I still have anything I want to say?
  - Will the reader feel satisfied?
- **Word Choice**
  - Are there vague words that I could make more specific?
  - Have I used interesting verbs?
  - Have I used active voice (instead of "geography was studied by the students" write "the students studied geography")?
  - Have I used the best words, not just big words I found in a thesaurus?
- **Voice**
  - Can I tell that *I* am the author, just by reading what's on the paper?
  - Does my writing **sound like an encyclopedia?** (you don't want it to)
  - Would I be interested in reading my paper if I happened to find it lying on the ground and read the first paragraph?

- **Organization**

- Now that I've written it all down, does it make sense in the order I wrote it? Does it follow the way people think?
- Does my beginning match my ending. Am I able to connect the two in some way like bookends?
- Can I add connections between sections so that a reader can follow the logic I used when I was organizing my information?