

Revision Strategies

Reasons

Throw out the whole draft and start again.

- Original draft helped writer discover ideas and understand the topic.
- New draft needs radically new focus or new structure.

Cross out large chunks and rewrite from scratch.

- Original passage lacked focus; ideas have changed.
- New sense of purpose or point meant that the whole passage needed reshaping.
- Original passage too confusing or jumbled for mere editing.

Cut and paste; move parts around; (then write new transitions, thesis statement, and topic sentences).

- Parts didn't follow in logical order.
- Parts occurred in the order writer thought of them rather than the order readers need.
- Conclusion clearer than the introduction; part of the conclusion moved to the introduction.
- Revised thesis statement required different order for parts.

Add or revise topic sentences of paragraphs; insert transitions.

- Reader needs signposts to see how parts connect to previous parts and to the whole.
- Revision of topic sentences often requires global revision of paragraph.

Make insertions; add new material.

- Need to add supporting details: examples, facts, statistics, and so on.
- New section or more explanation of a specific point needed.

Delete material.

- Material no longer necessary or relevant.
 - Deleted material, though good, went off on a tangent.
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Reasons

Recast sentences (cross out and rewrite portions; combine sentences; rephrase sentences with a different grammatical structure).

- Passage violates old/new contract.
- Passage wordy, choppy, or lacked rhythm or voice.
- Grammar tangled, diction odd, or meaning confused.
- Passage lost focus of topic sentence.

Edit sentences to correct mistakes.

- Writer found comma splices, fragments, dangling modifiers, nonparallel constructions, or other problems of grammar and usage.
- Writer found spelling errors, typos, repeated or omitted words.