

Use Reader-centered Strategies

- Establish relevance
 - get the reader's attention
 - speak to reader's goals and interests
 - explain facts from reader's perspective
 - use examples and analogies as appropriate
- Make information easy to find
 - state main points up front - overview
 - order information by importance
 - use clear headings, bulleted lists, etc., effectively
 - pay attention to details of tables, figures, captions, etc.
 - eliminate irrelevant information
- Sentences longer than 35 words, paragraphs longer than 150 words need surgery.

Tasks during Revision

- reorganize information
 - often move entire paragraphs!
- deepen or extend analysis
- narrow focus, scope
- add data and supporting information
- adjust details of argument
- eliminate repetition and/or restating the obvious
- allocate space to highlight or diminish points

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Possible Tasks while Editing

- correct any remaining weaknesses in organization
- improve coherence / transitions
- drop unnecessary information and eliminate “wordiness”
 - “when in doubt, cut it out” – paragraphs, sentences, words
 - goal is more succinct without losing breadth, depth, or complexity
- create “audience appeal”
- improve sentence structure and correct grammar
- improve vocabulary and word choice
- finalize graphics (tables, figures, pictures, etc.)
- provide or adjust visual aspects of text (title, headings, layout, font, etc.)

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Emphasis of Important Points

- Repetition without redundancy
- Short sentences, dashes, colons
- Dependent clauses, subordination
- Lists
- Figures / Tables
- Look for opportunities for parallel arguments
 - Consistency facilitates understanding

Editing

Before editing someone's document,
you should first consider the constraints

- Audience of Document
- Process to Publish Document
- Other Editors of Document (where are your strengths)
- Format of Document
- Formality of Document
- Circumstances, Politics and Ethics

Three aspects of the writing affect the way that editors assess documents

Content

Is the content appropriate?

Is the content complete and accurate?

Is the content correct?

Style

Is the language clear and engaging?

Are the visuals effective?

Is the layout appealing?

Does the organization facilitate reader's understanding?

Form

Word usage

Grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Editing advice

- Read the entire piece once or even twice before you comment, so as to develop a clear sense of the purpose and audience and scope.
- Focus first on the big picture content and organization, and then on the particulars.
- Be honest but remain diplomatic and supportive.
- Explain why, if pointing out that something is confusing or doesn't work.
- Make specific recommendations for improvement.

When editing someone's writing, consider tone

- Lead with the positive
- Edit as you would wish to be edited

In summary, as author or editor

Think about

- structure
- flow
- words and visuals
- the reader

Often approach those tasks separately

- I cannot read a manuscript for both science and grammar
 - Tasks need to be separated
- Often the grammar inhibits understanding the science and logic