



THE WRITING PROCESS

Revision: Checklist

QUESTIONS ABOUT IDEAS

- Does the essay have a clear, properly limited, and interesting thesis? Is it an assertion about something and not just a statement of fact?
- Is the thesis adequately supported? Is the support found within the essay, or is it filed away in the writer's mind?
- Are probable objections to the thesis anticipated and dealt with? Does the thesis make "sweeping generalizations" that are ineffective or of questionable relevance for the reader?
- Is the evidence that you use to support your thesis cited correctly according to the required documentation style for the essay? If you are unsure what documentation style is required or recommended, ask your instructor.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZATION

- Is the thesis conspicuous enough? Will the reader recognize it in time to follow the reasoning of the essay?
- Does every paragraph support the thesis and help to build the reader's confidence in it? Is the thesis developed and defended, or is it merely restated over and over in different words? Does the essay stick to the thesis, or does it digress and wander away from the main point?
- Does the first paragraph attract the reader's attention? Is the opening interesting, or is it just another boring, blunt statement of the thesis?
- Is the necessary supporting information provided where it is needed? Are there enough facts and explanations provided to clarify the main point of each paragraph? If you left out any supporting details and examples, add them.
- Does the last paragraph give enough sense of completion? Does the essay seem "completed" or "ended," or does it seem like the writer got bored and tired of writing?
- Are there clear and helpful transitions between paragraphs? Are the paragraphs isolated units, or are they connected by transitions like "Furthermore" or "However"?

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

- Do the sentences show enough variety of structure? Are there too many short, choppy sentences or too many long, tangled ones? Are there any fragments or run-ons?
- Is the vocabulary clear, appropriate, and effective? Do all of the words make sense? Does every sentence contain accurate word usage? Are there any words that are needlessly abstract and vague, or are there any inappropriate slang expressions? Did you leave out any words? If so, add them.
- Is the essay written in standard written English? Do all of the subjects and verbs agree? Is every plural noun in the correct form? Does each verb have the correct ending? Make sure that you did not carelessly switch verb tenses. Does every pronoun agree with the noun to which it refers? Have the articles "a," "an," and "the" been used correctly?
- Are all words correctly spelled and capitalized? Use your finger to point at each word as you read it aloud. If you're not sure if a word is spelled correctly, look it up in your dictionary.
- Are all of the forms of punctuation correct? If you're not sure, consult an appropriate resource like a grammar handbook.
- Did you remember the correct format for an essay title? If not, look it up in your notes and correct your title. Are all of the paragraphs indented correctly?

REMINDERS

- Never hand in an essay to a teacher until you have satisfactorily answered all the above questions. Otherwise, you may have to write three or four drafts of each essay.
- When proofreading, use a ruler or a blank sheet of paper below each line of your writing in order to cut off the rest of the words from your vision. The fewer words you examine at a time, the easier it is to find errors. In addition, it is helpful to read your essay slowly, and read it aloud (quietly). Don't let your eyes move quickly from one word to the next.
- Ask friends, relatives, and teachers to help you improve your essays. If you have any further problems or questions about proofreading, come to the Rockowitz Writing Center, in the Silverstein Student Success Center on the 7th floor of the library, for help.