

## Improving a Piece of Writing

Ask yourself the following questions as you read your paper. You'll find they will help you catch mistakes and make your next draft stronger.

### Revising questions:

*For the initial stages of your paper -*

- Do the words on the page make a point? Ask yourself, "So what?" (If you can't satisfactorily answer that question, your paper may not have enough substance.)
- Would someone who knows nothing of your topic understand?
- Are you providing examples? Do your examples make sense and build upon each other?
- Can objections be raised? What evidence could refute those objections?
- Are there unnecessary words? Sometimes meaning is lost when there are too many words used. See if you can drop excess words from each sentence. (For example: Students were dropped from school enrollment in order to ensure that tuition was paid.)
- Have you used strong verbs instead of passive ones? Also, avoid using the "to be" verb forms (is, was, etc.) too much.
- Does your conclusion relate to your introduction?
- Are there any areas in the paper where you have been vague?
- Have you wandered off your point?

## Editing questions:

*After completing revision -*

- Do your subjects and verbs agree?
- Are you using verb tense in a consistent way?
- Have you punctuated correctly? No comma slices? No fragments?
- Keep an eye out for words that sound the same but are spelled differently - your computer spell check won't catch them - for example: they're/there/their ,affect/effect , through/threw, to/too/two, etc.
- Have you cited sources in proper form for any quotations you used?

## Proofing Suggestions:

*Just before you hand in your paper -*

- Read your paper aloud-you'll catch things like missing words or sentence fragments immediately.
- Read your paper backwards, or put something over the top so you can only read one line at a time. This will help you see typos, incorrect punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Check the layout of the paper. (Title, title page, page numbers, name on each page).