

Revising and editing are two distinct processes. **Revising** is intentionally looking at ways of improving your essay. **Editing** is correcting the mechanics of your essay like sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Revision is an opportunity to revisit and rethink your assignment or topic, who the intended reader or audience is, and even your purpose or thesis. Revision happens to your essay as an entity, on a large scale, with a focus on big ideas, organization, and credibility. In contrast, editing is proofreading, or reading with the intent of finding and fixing errors. Editing happens within your essay by examining it piece by piece, sentence by sentence, even word by word.

- Organization
- Research and Sources
- Editing

Read your paper aloud, one more time, with feeling. You’ve worked hard. Own the words on the page. Be proud of what you have written.

Revising your essay takes time. There are many things to consider.

- Is the essay well organized?
- Is research used effectively?
- Are sources credited correctly?
- Is the sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, or spelling correct?

Start the revision process early, a couple of weeks before the due date when possible. The Gavilan College Writing Center provides writing assistants and resources to help you through the process. Allow yourself enough time for follow-up appointments.

Gavilan College Writing Center	
Drop in or schedule an appointment	
PHONE	(408)848-4811
WEBSITE	gavilan.edu/writing
EMAIL	writingcenter@gavilan.edu
HOURS	Monday thru Thursday 8:00am-5:00pm Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm

Organization

Revision takes time. If possible, begin the revision process a week or two before your paper is due. Build the time necessary into your schedule, including at least a day or two away from your essay. This helps to create distance between you and what you have written, helping you read it with a fresh set of eyes and more objectivity.

- Read your paper aloud. Read it to yourself. Read it with a pen in hand. Read it to another person, your pet, a nearby plant, or your favorite stuffed animal. Come to the Writing Center and read it to a Writing Assistant. The point is, read your paper aloud. You use a different part of your brain for seeing, speaking, and hearing, so by reading it out loud you engage parts of your brain that aren't familiar with your paper.
- Create a reverse outline.
 - A reverse outline is a tool to help you analyze the organization of your essay.
 - What is the title of your essay?
 - Identify the introduction and conclusion.
 - Number all other paragraphs in order beginning with one.
 - Identify the main idea or ideas in each paragraph.
 - Write this information down in outline form.
- Does the title capture the main idea of the essay in a creative way?
- Does your introduction contain a thesis that effectively states the main argument of your essay?
- What is the main point of each paragraph? Is there more than one main idea? Does each paragraph have a topic sentence that clearly states the main idea?
- Does each subsequent paragraph advance the claim made in your thesis?
- Does the order of your paragraphs best suit your purpose? Do some offer stronger support than others? Would a change in the order better support your thesis?
- Do your paragraphs logically flow from point to point? Are transitions from one paragraph to another smooth?
- Now having written your whole essay, review your original thesis. Is the thesis appropriate given the evidence presented in your paper? Does your conclusion restate your thesis? Is one statement stronger than the other? Does either need to be rewritten?

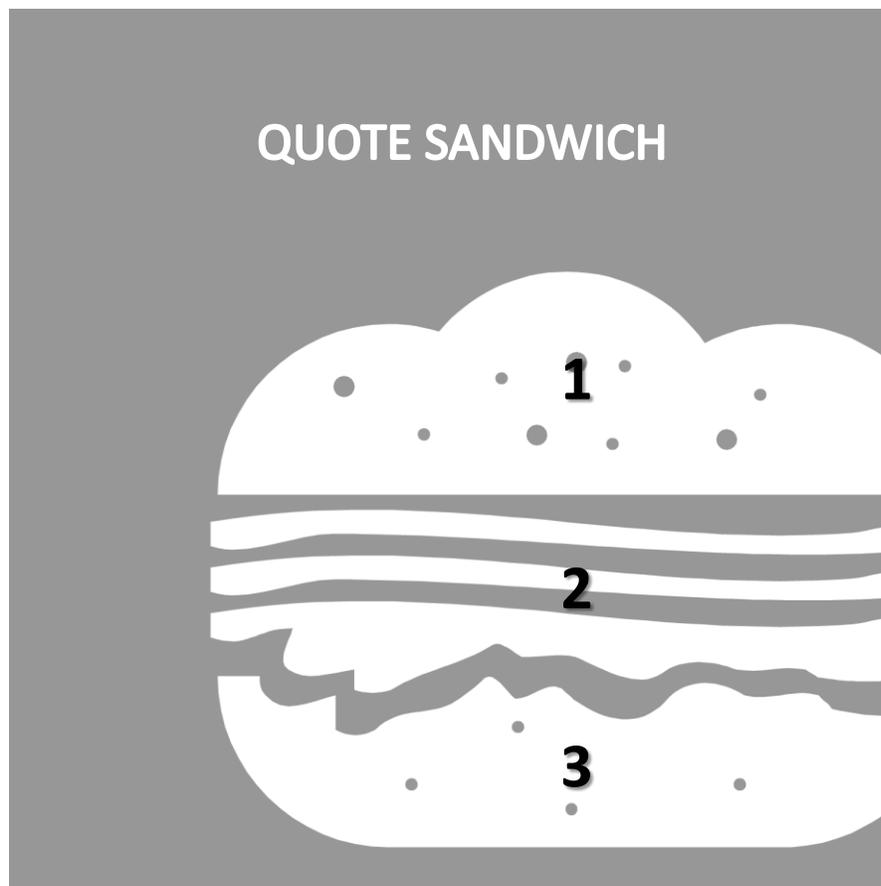
Research and Sources

Using research effectively in your essay lends credibility to your thesis and supporting ideas. Pay close attention to how you incorporate research. Overuse of quotes, ineffectual paraphrasing, and inadequate summaries can have unintended consequences. They detract from your ideas, making the paper sound like someone other than you wrote it. Worse yet, they can result in plagiarism.

- Read your paper aloud. This time, listen carefully to who is speaking. Does it sound like you or is your voice being masked by the voices of your sources?
- Incorporating your research (Quote Sandwich):
 - Have you introduced your research using signal phrases, a phrase that leads into a quote, statistic, or idea from another source?
 - After including a quote or paraphrase, have you commented and expanded on the research to demonstrate how it supports your ideas?
- Analyzing the evidence:
 - Does your research support your thesis?
 - Have you used direct quotes sparingly?
 - Have you effectively paraphrased or summarized points made by your sources? Do you hear your voice? Have you used your own words and sentence structure while maintaining the integrity of the source's idea?
- Documenting your sources:

When it comes to documentation, don't rely on your memory. The rules for documentation are specific and change over time. Refer to a current handbook or online resource like [Purdue OWL](#) often.

- Have you credited your sources and formatted your citations correctly to avoid plagiarism?
- Do the sources cited within the text of your essay match exactly the sources listed on your Works Cited page?
- Is the formatting and content of your Works Cited page precise and correct?



Think of incorporating quotes in your essay as a sandwich where the meat is the quote surrounded by the bun, your words.

1. Make a point or a statement.
2. Support the statement with a quote.
3. Add detail by explaining, interpreting, or giving examples.

Editing

You have finished revising your essay organizationally and assuring your reference material is effectively folded in with your ideas. Now it is time for editing. Remember, editing looks at the details of your paper, examining it sentence by sentence and word by word. This is when you pay close attention to the correct use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

- Read your paper aloud. Read each word, each phrase, each sentence. You may want to start at the end and work your way forward. Have a pen handy to correct errors as you read or mark places that need closer attention. Listen for sentences that don't say what you want them to say. Pay attention to spots where you hesitate, perhaps the wording is awkward or a word isn't right. Observe if you need to take a breath before you reach the end of a sentence. It might be too long. Concentrate on the rhythm of your voice as you read. Is repetition used effectively or do you keep hearing the same thing over and over?
- Be on the lookout for your own pattern of errors, errors you know you commit regularly.
- Are your sentences complete? Are there any sentence fragments or run-ons? Have you varied the length and structure of your sentences?
- Is the grammar correct? Do the verbs agree with the subjects? Is the verb tense consistent throughout the paper?
- When checking for spelling errors, use spellcheck as a place to start but don't rely on it entirely. Spellcheck will not find all of the errors. Many words may be spelled correctly but are not the word you meant to use. You must also look up words that you aren't sure of, that look wrong, or that you know you often spell incorrectly.

When you've finished editing, take a moment to reflect on the types of errors and inconsistencies you found. Is there a pattern? Paying attention to patterns in your writing will not only help you when editing in the future but will also make you a better writer.

Read your paper aloud, one more time, with feeling. Own the words on the page. You have worked hard to create your best essay. Be proud of what you have written.