

## REVISING YOUR DRAFT

### 1. Put your draft aside.

Time away from your essay will allow for more objective self-evaluation

### 2. Get feedback.

Since you already know what you're trying to say, you aren't always the best judge of where the draft is clear or unclear. Let another reader tell you. Then discuss aloud what you were trying to achieve. In articulating for someone else what you meant to argue, you will clarify ideas for yourself.

### 3. Construct an

### "Outline" of your essay.

Identify the main idea(s) in each paragraph. Rank their importance in advancing your thesis. Consider connections between and among ideas.

### 4. Revise your thesis.

Based on what you did in the previous step, restructure your argument: reorder your points, cut irrelevancies or redundancies, add complications and implications. You may want to return to the text for additional evidence.

### 5. Introduction & Conclusion

Now that you know what you're really arguing, work on the introduction and conclusion. Make sure to begin your paragraphs with topic sentences, linking idea(s) in each paragraph to those proposed in the thesis.

### 6. Proofread!

Aim for precision and economy in language. Read aloud so you can hear stylistic infelicities. (Your ear will pick up what your eye has missed.)

# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

## Your thesis will likely change.

You will constantly rethink & reevaluate your thesis. Because clarity of vision is the result of experience, it is unreasonable to expect to come up with the best thesis possible before beginning a draft, or even during a first draft. Successful revision involves bringing your thesis into focus—or, changing it altogether.

## Structural changes happen often.

Drafting is usually a process of discovering an idea or argument. Your argument will not become clearer if you only tinker with individual sentences. Successful revision involves bringing the strongest ideas to the front of the essay, reordering the main points and cutting irrelevant sections. It also involves making the argument's structure visible by strengthening topic sentences and transitions.

## There are no shortcuts.

Revision takes time. The reward for sustained effort is a clearer, more persuasive, more sophisticated essay than a first draft can be.