

When you write a first draft of a paper, you're only halfway done. You still need to revise and edit. These may seem like the same thing, but the difference is in the scope and focus.

Revising addresses big picture issues, such as overall clarity and organization, while editing focuses on all the minute details of the paper, such as formatting and punctuation. When you make changes to your draft, focus on revising the big issues first because they have the biggest impact on the quality of the paper. Once you've got the overall form and function down pat, then begin working on the details. To put it in perspective, think of woodworking: you wouldn't sand and stain a block of wood before you have shaped it into an ornate bannister, would you?

To help you through these two distinct but related processes, here is a handy checklist:

Revising: Shaping your paper	Editing: Polishing it off
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Double check that writing meets all criteria of the assignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check for spelling and word choice errors
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish the appropriate tone for this audience and writing situation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review for grammar mistakes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engage audience with topic: is this writing interesting?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correct punctuation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refine thesis statement to match content of writing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Format document correctly
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Double check that all paragraphs stay focused on main idea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Read out loud or backwards to find typing errors
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Add supporting elements (research and ideas)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make sure sentences are concise (no unnecessary words)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check for clarity of ideas: will the audience understand all points?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine whether there is a clear subject and verb in each sentence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make sure essay contains introduction, body and conclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Try to write in active voice as much as possible
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organize ideas logically (spatially, chronologically, cause/effect) and use transitions to connect ideas and paragraphs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remove first-person (I/me/my/mine) and second-person (you/your/yours) perspectives unless appropriate and explicitly allowed for the assignment.

**Office:** Writing Center

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