REVISING YOUR PAPER

Organization, Paragraphing, and Coherence

Before you begin revising your paper, give yourself a break from it. If at all possible, wait a full day before beginning the revision process. This helps you get some "distance" from your paper, allowing you to read your paper more objectively. As you approach your paper, play the role of a reader who doesn't know anything about your subject. Better still would be to have someone else read your paper to see where it might be missing information or leading to confusion. In either instance, read your paper aloud. You'll be surprised what you notice!

Main Idea/Thesis

1. Find the main idea of your paper and write it down on a separate piece of paper. Is this idea clearly stated in your paper?

2. Find the central idea of each paragraph. Can it be stated in a word or phrase? List the paragraph ideas in order under your thesis.

3. Review the list. Do your paragraphs clearly support your thesis? If they don't, you may want to rewrite your thesis OR adjust or eliminate the unrelated paragraphs.

Paragraph Clarity

1. Look at each paragraph in isolation. Do all of the details in the paragraph clearly support the main idea of the paragraph?

2. Are all the details relevant? Will the reader understand how the details relate to the paragraph's main idea?

3. Is all the information related enough to be in the same paragraph? Do you need to create a new paragraph or move some of the details to another paragraph?

4. Does your introduction create interest in your topic? Does your conclusion provide a satisfactory ending?

Coherence

Do your ideas flow logically within each paragraph and from one paragraph to the next? You may need to rearrange sentences or paragraphs to help the flow of your paper. Moreover, if your ideas already flow logically, you can still make the reading experience smoother by including clear transitions between sentences and paragraphs. Transitions are bridges between what has been read and what is about to be read. They show how ideas relate to each other. The following transitional words and phrases may help you to connect your ideas more clearly.

Addition
again, also, and then, another, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, next, plus the fact, then too, too

Cause and Effect
accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, hence, since, so, then, therefore, thus

Comparison
by comparison, in like fashion, in the same way, likewise, similarly

Concession
although this may be true, certainly, even though, for this reason, granted, it is true, naturally, of course, to be sure, to tell the truth, with the exception of

Contrast or Change in Idea
after all, although, anyhow, at the same time, but, despite this, even though, however, in contrast, in other words, in spite of, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, yet

Examples/Specifics
A few include, an example, especially, essentially, for example, for instance, in particular, let us consider, the case of, the following, specifically, you can see this in

Place (Usually Prepositions)
above, across, adjacent to, around, below, beneath, beside, beyond, elsewhere, farther on, here, inside, near, nearby, nearly, next to, opposite to, outside, over, there, through, under

Purpose
all things considered, for this purpose, for this reason, in order to, to accomplish, to this end, with this in mind, with this objective

Restatement
as I have said, in simpler terms, simply stated, that is, to put it differently

Sequence
first, second, third, next, finally

Summary
in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, to conclude, to summarize

Time
afterward, at the same time, before, currently, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, lately, later, meanwhile, shortly, simultaneously, soon, subsequently, then, this time, until now, when