Now that your essay’s structure is established and you have completed several drafts, it is time to revise sentences and words. Keep in mind the following ideas.

**Sentence Variety**
Make sure that your sentence structure is varied. To create variety and interest, use a combination of short and long sentences in your essay.

* Sentence that is too long: “I put the guitar on the workbench, adjusted the guitar, then I tuned it, and next I picked up the guitar chord, plugged it into the amp, and then I turned the amp on and was ready to play.” Divide this run-on sentence into three sentences: “After putting the guitar on the workbench, I adjusted and tuned it. I then inserted a guitar chord and plugged it into the amp. With a flip of the switch, the amp was on and I was ready to play.”

* Sentences that are too short: “I drove to the beach. I found the traffic backed up. I enjoyed the afternoon at the beach, though.” These sentences are repetitive and short. Combine them to read, “Even though my drive was delayed by traffic, I enjoyed the afternoon at the beach.”

**Weak Phrases**
Avoid these three types of weak phrases:

1. Empty Phrases: Change “*Due to the fact that* the ball fell out of bounds, we lost the game,” to “We lost the game *because* the ball fell out of bounds.”

2. Roundabout Openings: Change “*There are now* music classes offered in elementary schools” to “Elementary schools *now* offer music classes.”

3. Excessive Prepositional Phrases: Change “*Growth in the greenhouse effect may result in increases in the intensity of hurricanes*” to “The *growing greenhouse effect may intensify hurricanes*.”

**Strong Verbs and Active Voice**
* The following sentence is adequate but uninteresting: “Joe hit the moving ball over the net and fell to the sand.” Create interest by using strong verbs: “Joe spiked the spinning ball over the net and slammed into the sand.”

* Avoid passive voice (“to be” verbs--it is, this is, she was). For example, “The ball was spiked by Joe.” This is too wordy. Instead, use active voice: “Joe spiked the ball.”

**Final Fine Tuning**
Pay special attention to first and last sentences of paragraphs. Also, make sure word choice is clear and appropriate. Finally, edit for grammar and spelling.

For more information: By: Michael Ruwe

*The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E.B. White

*The Longman Writer: Rhetoric and Reader* by Nadell, Langan, and Comodromos

http://www.rpi.edu/dept/llc/writecenter/web/revise.html