

The Final Revision

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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:

[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/lc/writecenter/web/revise.html>

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