

## REVISION CHECKLIST

from *The Confident Writer*, Constance Gefvert

The following checklist provides questions for you to ask yourself in each cycle of the revising process.

### Cycle I **THE WHOLE ESSAY**

1. What is my **thesis**? Is the thesis clearly stated in the beginning or somewhere else? If there is a reason not to state it, is the thesis clear to the reader by the end of the essay?
2. Is every **paragraph** and every **sentence** clearly **related** to my thesis? Which parts that are not so related can be eliminated?
3. What is my **purpose** in writing? Is everything in the essay clearly aimed at accomplishing that purpose?
4. Who is my **audience**? Have I given my reader strong enough arguments or sufficient information to support the thesis or develop the dominant impression? What could I add in the way of evidence, illustrations, or examples to reach my reader more effectively?
5. Is the **essay** clearly **organized**? Have I arranged the arguments, illustrations, or evidence in the most effective order, considering my purpose and the needs of my audience? Have I tested the structure of my essay against an outline?
6. Is the **title** sufficiently interesting? Does it sound like a title and not a headline? Does it reflect the controlling idea of my essay?
7. Is the **introduction** sufficiently interesting to get my reader involved in the essay? Does it give my reader a clear sense of how and why I am writing on this subject?
8. Does the **conclusion** provide closure? Will my reader feel that I have come to an end and not merely a stopping place?

## Cycle II **THE PARAGRAPHS**

1. Are the paragraphs **organized** in the most effective manner? Have I consciously pondered whether the **order** I have followed is the most effective?
2. Is everything in each paragraph clearly **related** to the **topic sentence** (or to the topic, if it is not expressed in a single topic sentence)? So any of the paragraphs need further development?
3. Have I made **divisions paragraph** in the best places, considering my audience and purpose? Should I have **short paragraphs** for emphasis or transition? Or do I have too many short paragraphs, which would be more effective if grouped together?
4. Are the **transitions** between paragraphs logical? Are they accurate and effective transitions?
5. Are the paragraphs **coherent**? Do they make effective use of structural signals, referential words and phrases, repetition, and ellipsis?

## Cycle III **SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND WORD CHOICE**

1. Are the sentences all of similar length and similar structure, or have I **varied** them in order to emphasize appropriate words or phrases? Have I used passive voice and "it" and "there" patterns sparingly and for special emphasis?
2. Are **links (transitions)** between sentences clear?

3. Have I used **balance** and **parallelism** in order to emphasize parallel ideas?
4. Have I **combined sentences** in order to show the relationship of ideas as clearly as possible, either through coordination or subordination?
5. Do any sentences sound awkward or confusing when **read aloud**?
6. Have I avoided **trite** expressions that will put the reader to sleep? Can I substitute **fresh phrases** for clichés or jargon?
7. Are all the **words** consistent with the **purpose** and **audience**? Are there intrusive expressions that are too informal in a formal paper or too formal or pedantic in a less formal paper?
8. Have I used words **accurately**? If I have chosen a word I do not normally use, have I checked a dictionary to be sure that it means what I think it means and that it is **appropriate**?

#### Cycle IV **EDITING**

1. Are the **verb tenses** consistent with edited American English?
2. Are **plural endings** consistent with edited American English?
3. Are **comparative and superlative adjective** forms consistent with edited American English?
4. Do the **subjects and verbs agree** in person and number?
5. Do the **pronouns** agree with the antecedents?
6. Have I avoided other other grammatical problems or **inappropriate usage**?
7. Have I used **commas** where I should have used periods or semicolons, producing comma splices?

8. Have I used **periods** where I should have used commas, producing sentence fragments?

9. Have I used other **punctuation** marks effectively?

10. Have I **documented** all secondary sources and included the necessary footnotes and bibliography in the correct form?

11. Have I checked the **spelling** of all words I am unsure of?