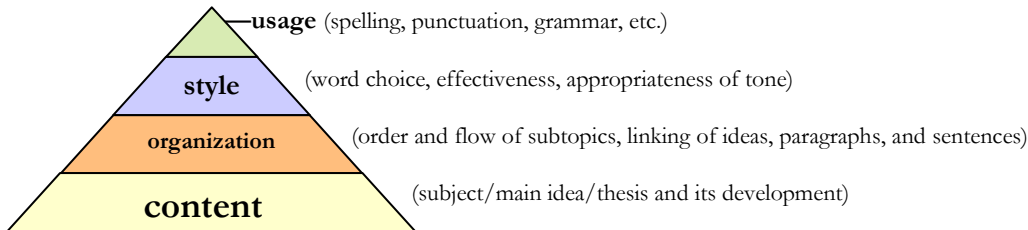


#8) Revising Checklist

When revising your writing, it is important to remember that there are multiple facets of writing that work together—and build upon one another—to form the whole. Try to think of these facets as different layers of a pyramid:



Notice that content forms the base of the pyramid, and in writing, content should likewise be thought of as the base on which everything else relies. Each subsequent layer represents the next level of concern in the revision process. This handout walks you through the stages of revision one level at a time so that you will learn an approach to setting the proper priorities and revising your way to good finished work.

LEVEL ONE: CONTENT

- Does your work address the concerns of the assignment/fulfill the purpose of writing?
- Is there a clear central idea/thesis?
- Is the central idea/thesis developed through facts, examples, and sound reasoning?
- Is each subtopic equally and adequately supported?

LEVEL TWO: ORGANIZATION

- Are the facts, reasoning, and examples relevant to each subtopic?
- Does the order in which you have presented your information make sense?
- Do paragraphs flow together by means of clear logic and transitional phrasing?
- Are sentences within the paragraphs arranged in a logical order?

LEVEL THREE: STYLE

- Does the voice/tone remain consistent throughout the work?
- Have you paraphrased correctly? Have you incorporated quotations into your writing smoothly?
- Is there enough variance between lengths and types of sentences?
- Are the word choices clear, accurate, and appropriate?
- Are thoughts expressed in interesting ways? Do you use figurative language like analogies, metaphors, or similes?
- Do your introduction and conclusion engage the reader and then give a sense of closure?

LEVEL FOUR: USAGE

- Have you correctly used apostrophes, hyphens, commas, and capitalization? Correctly punctuated citations?
- Have you avoided common grammar errors like fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, dangling modifiers, verb tense shifts, and faulty pronoun agreement?
- Did you spell check?

Please use the reverse side for further help with these categories.

Further Suggestions:

(Page numbers refer to *The St. Martin's Handbook*, Sixth Edition)

LEVEL ONE: CONTENT

- If you are working on an assignment for a course, look at the instructor's guidelines and highlight the items your paper has included. If there are requirements that your paper has not addressed, be sure you focus on these areas while you are revising.
Underline your thesis statement. If you cannot locate your thesis, be sure that you revise your introduction so that it clearly states your purpose/central idea. Refer to pp. 61-63 and 177-204.
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LEVEL TWO: ORGANIZATION

- Go through the paragraphs in the body of your essay and underline the topic sentences. If there is no topic sentence in a paragraph, create one that accurately states the focus of the paragraph. Refer to pp. 110-114.
 - After you've underlined the topic sentences of each paragraph, decide whether the order of these paragraphs is the most effective way to develop your thesis/main idea. Refer to pp. 130-137 for more information and suggestions.
 - In addition to ensuring that the logical flow from one paragraph to the next is clear and effective, incorporate transitional words or phrases at the beginning or end of each paragraph. Refer to pp. 130-137.
 - After you've linked your paragraphs effectively, read them again to make sure each sentence further develops the topic sentence. Make sure each sentence presents new information. If a sentence repeats information, try combining or omitting it. Refer to pp. 114-129.
 - Logical flow and transitional phrasing are also necessary within each paragraph. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next. Refer to pp. 114-129 for more information about organizing a paragraph.
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LEVEL THREE: STYLE

- Consistent tone and voice are important in effective writing. Inconsistencies can confuse or distract your audience. Read your draft, checking for word choices that seem to jump out from the text. Make sure that your attitude remains consistent and appropriate for your purpose. Refer to pp. 526-532.
 - Using outside sources is an important part of effective writing; however, you don't want someone else's words to dominate your writing. Be sure you choose your quotations, paraphrases, and summaries effectively and to incorporate them into your own text smoothly. Refer to pp. 270-280.
 - Refer to pp. 682-687 and 695-700 for suggestions on varying sentence structures.
 - Refer to pp. 701-707 for information about and suggestions for creating a more memorable prose style.
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LEVEL FOUR: USAGE

- Though it might be the most tedious part of the revision process, making sure your punctuation is correct is an essential part of written communication. If you are aware of particular weaknesses in your writing, such as commas or apostrophes, check your paper carefully for these issues. Refer to chapters 46-51 in the handbook for punctuation usage.
- Grammatical errors (fragments, comma splices, dangling modifiers, etc.) distract from the effectiveness of your writing. These types of mistakes not only cause your reader to stumble but also can cause misunderstanding. Try reading your paper aloud to a friend (or reverse the roles). You may be able to catch many of your surface errors using the read aloud strategy. Refer to chapters 36-41 in the handbook for additional grammar help.
- Another way to find errors at the sentence level is to read each sentence in the paper, starting with the very last and working your way backwards to the first. This strategy takes your attention away from content and organization and better focuses your attention on sentence level grammar issues.