Revison: Guiding Questions

Adapted from:


Thesis and Introduction

1. Do the first few sentences of your introduction effectively get the attention of your readers and make them want to continue reading?
2. Do you present a one-sentence statement of your thesis that (1) identifies your subject, (2) identified the main ideas presented in your paper, (3) clarifies how the ideas are logically related/organized, and (4) conveys the main point of your paper?
3. Do you avoid listing the main ideas of your paper in separate sentences in the introduction?

Organization and the Support and Development of Ideas

1. Do you begin each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence that gives you some specific point(s) to develop or support?
2. Is the main idea or ideas of each topic sentence a major aspect of your thesis, as conveyed by your thesis statement?
3. Is each body paragraph focused on supporting and developing the main idea or ideas conveyed in the topic sentence for the paragraph? (Delete any material that does not belong in the paragraph, any material that is not clearly related to the main point(s) conveyed in the topic sentence. If that material is important, consider revising the topic sentence or using the material in a different paragraph.)
4. Is each claim presented in your body paragraphs supported with ample evidence? (Add support as needed.)
5. Is your paper "balanced"? Have you avoided using very long paragraphs and very short paragraphs?
6. Do you both introduce and qualify any quotations you use?
7. Is there a logical progression of ideas within paragraphs and from one body paragraph to the next? What is the logic behind the order you have chosen for the different parts of the paragraph and for the order of the paragraphs?
8. Do you use transitional words, phrases, or sentences to take readers smoothly and logically from one idea to the next and from one sentence to the next?
9. Do you end body paragraphs with logical transitions into the next body paragraph?
10. In the conclusion, do you restate (but not repeat) the thesis statement and leave readers thinking about the importance of the ideas you develop in the body of the paper?
Style

1. Do you use a variety of sentences throughout your paper? (Notice how each sentence begins and how long each sentence is. If necessary, rewrite or combine sentences for more variety.)
2. Could any of your sentences be rewritten to convey ideas more effectively or more clearly? Do any of your sentences seem a bit awkward or wordy, causing you to pause and reread the sentence to understand the meaning? (If so, rewrite those sentences.)
3. Do you maintain a consistent tone throughout the paper?
4. If the paper should be written in a formal voice, do you avoid using references to the first person ("I," "me," "my," etc.), avoid using contractions ("can’t," "he’s," "it’s," etc.), and avoid slang or other informal language?
5. Do you avoid common stylistic weaknesses, such as the use of clichés and wordy expressions?
6. Are most of your sentences written in the active voice?
7. Do you use a variety of words and avoid repeating the same words many times in your paper?

Use of Quotations

1. If you use quotations, are all quotations copied exactly as they appear in the original source (with necessary changes indicated with brackets or ellipses)?
2. If you use long quotations, can you shorten the quotations by eliminating parts of the quotations that are not vital to the point you are proving?
3. Do you use the correct punctuation, if punctuation is necessary, as you introduce quotations?
4. Do you place punctuation marks in the right place for all quotations? Make sure all commas and periods are used correctly inside of quotation marks, "like this," and not incorrectly outside of quotation marks, like this".
5. Are words in your paper that are copied from sources properly placed within quotation marks?
6. If necessary, have you cited sources correctly and documented the sources correctly on the "Works Cited" page?

Mechanics

1. Is your paper in the correct format, double spaced with 12-point fonts?
2. Do you have the proper heading on each paper?
3. Does each paper have a title?
4. Have you proofread your paper carefully to eliminate all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors?