

STEPS FOR REVISION

FIRST REVISION

On the first revision, concentrate primarily on making global changes that will affect the *content* and *organization* of the paper. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have I tried to include more in the paper than I can adequately develop?
- Should I pick some part of the topic to focus on in more detail? What is my purpose in the paper? Am I clear about what I intended to do, and have I done it?
- Have I made a clear commitment early in the paper (see p. 89)? Is the reader going to be able to tell what it is? Do I follow through and meet that commitment?
- Have I thought about my audience and asked myself what specific questions they expect me to answer in the paper? Have I answered those questions?
- Does my writing have a pattern that the reader can follow easily? Are the proportions of the paper okay? Have I spent too much time on some parts and not enough on others?

SECOND REVISION

In the second revision, ask these questions that focus on *economy* and readability:

- Can I cut out words and make my writing more concise?
- Do I need to improve readability by using more specific and concrete language? rearranging some of the sentences? adding examples?
- Can I help my reader by making my writing more visually attractive?

THIRD REVISION

On the third revision, ask these questions that focus on style:

- Can I make my writing more active and direct by selecting better verbs and strengthening transitions?
- Can I make my style more concrete and less cluttered by cutting out prepositional phrases and reducing the number of nominalizations and abstract words?
- Can I improve the rhythm and flow of my writing by making better word choices, reorganizing clauses and sentences, and changing punctuation?

Most third-revision changes are local changes that may not significantly alter your meaning, but they are important nevertheless because they can make your writing easier and more pleasant to read. If you have the time to spend tinkering with your writing and fine-tuning it, the investment will often pay off both in your own satisfaction and your reader's good will. People like to read graceful, carefully polished prose.