REVISION & EDITING STRATEGIES

Remember that revision is not fixing minor details like spelling or punctuation; it can be a major overhaul. As you revise, you may change the entire structure of your paper—you may build or remove walls, add a bathroom, build a porch. Do not be afraid to change your purpose, organization, ideas. Revision gives you the opportunity to look at your ideas in a fresh way and make major changes. Once the structure is sound, you can take care of the minor details during the editing process.

REVISION

✓ Check that the paper maintains a clear purpose
  Does the paper have a clear purpose and focus? What do you want the reader to walk away with? Have you expressed this?

✓ Check organization
  Is the paper effectively organized? Try writing a Reverse Outline or Nutshell Statement.

✓ Check for analysis and development
  Are you explaining your ideas thoroughly? Have you addressed all aspects?

✓ Check your sources
  Make sure the outside information is necessary, relevant, thoroughly explained and connected to your own ideas

✓ Check for transitions
  Are you clearly moving from idea to idea and paragraph to paragraph? Make sure that you are showing the relationships between your ideas

EDITING

✓ Delete sentences or passages that do not relate to or further your main ideas

✓ Change “to be” verbs to active verbs, replace nondescript words like “thing” or “it” with meaningful ones. Try circling all of these words and then replacing them

✓ Double check the paper format and make sure that all quotes are properly cited

✓ Pay close attention to your own “problem areas” If you tend to forget comma rules, pay close attention to your commas; if you confuse “its” and “it’s,” check them in your work

✓ Check for sentence level errors, correcting sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. Try reading your work backwards (sentence by sentence, of course!) Ask someone to read your work aloud to you