

REVISING YOUR DRAFT: SHAPE (ORGANIZATION), INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION, SENTENCE LEVEL

Some students think that once they have a draft, they're done. Thoughtful writers know better. They write a first draft to see whether they can make a case to support their answer. Then they revise their draft until they think they've presented that case in a way that meets the needs and expectations of their readers.

1. **Check your introduction, conclusion, and claim.** Your readers must see three things quickly: where your introduction ends, where your conclusion begins, and what sentences in your introduction and conclusion state your main claim.
2. **Make sure the body of your paper makes sense.** Readers will think your paper makes sense when they see the key terms that run through your whole paper, where each section ends and the next begins, how each section relates to the one before it, what role each section plays in the whole, what sentence in each section and subsection states its point, and what key terms run through each section.
3. **Check your paragraphs.** Each paragraph should be relevant to the point of its section. Make sure you have good paragraph structure, with an introductory sentence, a concluding sentence, and key concepts. Avoid strings of short paragraphs (fewer than five lines) or very long ones (more than half a page).
4. **Let your draft cool, then paraphrase it.** When you return to your draft, read it by sections, skimming it like you would skim a source. Then, based on what you have read, paraphrase it for someone who hasn't read it. Does the paraphrase hang together? Does it fairly sum up your argument?
5. **If your teacher comments on your draft, always revise it in light of that advice.** Otherwise, you will miss an opportunity to improve your paper. This includes comments about spelling and grammar as well as structure.