

# WORKSHEET FOR REVISING YOUR WORK

This handout is available in an alternative format on request

This document provides a series of questions to work through when revising and editing your essay. You might want to use it in conjunction with other resources, such as handouts, a writing handbook or online sources.

## ARGUMENT:

1. *Circle your thesis statement and ask the following questions:*
  - ◆ Does my thesis answer the assignment question? If a question was not provided, does my thesis give the short answer to my research questions? For a book/article review, does my thesis state my overall assessment (positive and negative) of the text?
  - ◆ Is my thesis direct, unified and coherent? Does it make a claim **about** my topic?
  - ◆ How does my thesis differ from my topic? It should say something **about** my topic.
  - ◆ Is it possible to argue my thesis?
  - ◆ Is my thesis statement too obvious or vague? If yes, your thesis needs to be re-worked.
  
2. *Underline the first sentence of each paragraph. Write your thesis statement, followed by the first sentence of each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Ask the following questions:*
  - ◆ Is my thesis clear?
  - ◆ Does each sentence address one separate idea?
  - ◆ What is the relationship between each of the sentences? Is it clear?
  - ◆ Does the argument develop from sentence to sentence?
  - ◆ Does the argument progress logically from the first to the last sentence?
  - ◆ Is there any repetition of ideas? If yes, edit the sentences.
  
3. *Look at the quotations you have used in each of your paragraphs. Underline them in a different colour. Ask the following questions about each quotation:*
  - ◆ What claim or point does this quotation support? Is it necessary to make my point?
  - ◆ Does this quotation add to my argument? How does it support my point?
  - ◆ Have I introduced the quotation, provided context for it and commented on its significance?
  - ◆ Have I cited this source using a standard documentation style?
  - ◆ Do I use the quotations to support *my* ideas? What is the relationship of the quotations to my topic sentences? Is that relationship clear?
  - ◆ Does the quotation merely provide information? If yes, consider paraphrasing.
  - ◆ Is the quotation very long? If yes, consider paraphrasing or synthesizing the information.
  
4. *Read your introduction aloud and put a checkmark beside the following parts:*
  - ◆ Statement and identification of the topic
  - ◆ Narrowed topic
  - ◆ Introduction of one specific aspect of the topic that is a problem or a question
  - ◆ Thesis statement

All of these elements should be evident in your introduction and should appear, usually, in this order.

5. *Read your conclusion aloud. Ask the following questions:*
- ◆ Does my conclusion state the broader significance of what I have written?
  - ◆ Does it comment on what I have written?
  - ◆ Does it show the relationship of my essay to the themes of the course or of my field?
  - ◆ Does it state my thesis in a new way to show how my argument has developed over the course of my paper?
  - ◆ Does it answer the question “Who cares”?

You should be able to answer YES to **at least one** of the above questions. You should answer NO to the ones that follow. If not, you need to amend your conclusion.

- ◆ Does my conclusion simply restate my thesis?
- ◆ Does it repeat all of my main points?
- ◆ Does it provide new information or go in a different direction?

### STYLE:

1. *Consult a list of transitional words; find and circle those words in your essay. Does each transitional word adequately express the relationship between the two phrases it joins?*
2. *Read each sentence aloud **slowly**. Ask yourself the following questions:*
  - ◆ Is the sentence clear and coherent?
  - ◆ Does the sentence sound right?
  - ◆ Is there only one main subject and verb?
  - ◆ Am I using unnecessarily complex words?
  - ◆ Have I eliminated any redundant pairs or modifiers?
  - ◆ Is every word in the sentence necessary?
3. *Keep a running list of the common spelling and grammatical mistakes that you make. Check each sentence for typical mistakes.*

### RESOURCES FOR GRAMMAR, EDITING AND PROOFREADING:

See our handouts on proofreading, wordiness, citing and documenting sources and paragraph structure. As well, you might consult these web resources.

[http://www.netmechanic.com/news/vol5/html\\_no9.htm](http://www.netmechanic.com/news/vol5/html_no9.htm)

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Handout also available at <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/webresources>.