

Exercise 10. Revising

Student: _____ Date: _____

Revising is the third step in the traditional writing process model; revising is rewriting. Turabian¹ suggests a strategy for revising: check the manuscript from its outer to inner parts first, then work inward, then back out. This strategy relates the introduction to the conclusions, the methods to the results, then lastly examines the discussion and relates it to the references cited, abstract, title, and keywords. Prior to the digital age, Woodford² also offers another useful approach: set aside the draft manuscript and *reread all cited literature again* before revising. This strategy has two practical outcomes: the authors refresh their understanding of the community and prior messages, and the authors regain a perspective on the potential readers of their manuscript. Fresh eyes tend to spot critical errors and to recognize plagiarism in a draft.

For this exercise, you will need the draft copy of your manuscript for which you have already perfected and re-edited the visuals (tables, figures), your disciplinary handbook, and the outlet guidelines. You may also find different outcomes for this exercise if done on a paper or on a digital copy of the manuscript. Follow these steps to guide you to revise the text until you develop a personalized process:

1. Reread the conclusion and underline the main conclusion; put a check at the margin for secondary conclusions. Next, reread the introduction and underline the stated problem and the stated hypothesis. Compare: how does the information in the conclusion address the problem and confirm the research question or deny the hypothesis? Should the secondary conclusions be indicated as possible results in the introduction? Which keywords are repeated in these two sections to relate them? Are the lengths of the introduction and conclusion sections appropriate for the outlet?
2. Reread the methods and the results. Are the stated results credible for the methods used? Why? Do the visuals of the data (tables, figures, etc.) correctly reflect the methods and support the stated results? Check that the text extends or explains **but does not repeat**, the visual presentation of the data. To relate these two sections which keywords are repeated?
3. Review the outlet's guidelines about verb tense. Check throughout the manuscript that correct verb tenses indicate prior published research or your research. Typically, present tense indicates to a reader the current knowledge, i.e., the already published research, while the past tense indicates your research as completed but not yet part of current knowledge. (For example, "Turabian suggests, reports, finds...I discovered, stated, practiced..." see above.) This convention of the scientific community has ethical implications: when you incorrectly use present tense to describe your research, you assume a place in the community not yet authentic for your claims and deny your readers the opportunity to be persuaded by your evidence.
4. Reread the discussion and check it from the viewpoint of your readers. How does this section suggest further research questions? A clarification of the problem? An improvement to the methods? The implications of the results? A place in the context of the prior research? What information would your reader want to take away from this manuscript?
5. Re-examine the title, abstract, and keywords. Edit for concise, accurate words that reflect the content of the manuscript for the outlet as well as provide access to the reader and to the community.
6. Check spelling, years, and all citations of all references in the text, tables, and figures and compare to the list of references and vice versa. (Can be done manually or by using the "find" function in a word processor; start at the bibliography and move through the entire manuscript back to the bibliography.)
7. Incorporate all changes back into the manuscript (save as another version to preserve the original).
8. Reread again.

¹ Turabian, Kate L. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. See Chapter 9.

² Woodford, F. Peter. 1999. *How to Teach Scientific Communication*. Reston, VA: Council of Biology Editors. See p. 44.

