

Revising vs. Editing

What is the difference between revising and editing?

Revision involves making major changes to a document's content, structure, and/or organization. Editing involves making sentence-level changes.

When a writer revises, he or she will usually...

- write and rewrite entire sections of the paper for the purpose of improving the content;
- focus on the paper's controlling ideas and the cohesion of ideas; and
- add, change, and/or delete large sections of the paper.

You are revising if you are...

- modifying your controlling ideas, especially your thesis or central argument;
- adding new information;
- moving around paragraphs or parts of paragraphs;
- removing unnecessary information; and/or
- changing your paper's focus.



When a writer edits, he or she will usually...

- edit only after the paper has undergone major content and structural changes;
- focus primarily on sentence-level issues like sentence variety and word choice; and
- rearrange the sentence order of a particular paragraph or the word order of a particular sentence.

You are editing if you are...

- deleting unnecessary words;
- rearranging words in sentences; and/or
- substituting less precise or effective words with more precise and effective ones.