The Writing Center Presents:

Editing

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Editing

Once you have revised a draft for content and organization, it’s time to look closely at your sentences and words. Turning a “blah” sentence into a memorable one or finding exactly the right word to express a thought can result in writing that is really worth reading.
Cohesion

- Check the connections between sentences
  - If you need to signal the relationship from one sentence to the next, use a transitional word or phrase.
Check Your Sentences

• If you noticed that a sentence was hard to understand or didn’t sound right when you read your paper aloud, think about how you might rephrase it.

• Often you can pick up problems with verbs, pronouns, and modifiers by reading aloud.
Vary Sentence Length

• If a sentence is too long, break it into two or more sentences.

• If you notice a string of short sentences that sound choppy, combine them.
Varying Sentence Openings

• Vary sentence openings by beginning with
  • a dependent clause,
  • a phrase, and adverb,
  • a conjunctive adverb, or
  • a coordinating conjunction.
Examine Language

Examine tone for slang, jargon, emotional language, and your level of formality.
Eliminate Wordiness

• Look for long expressions that can easily be shortened
  − (“at this point in time” –“now”)
• Remove unnecessary repetition
• Remove unnecessary qualifiers
  − (rather, very, somewhat, little)
Use Action Verbs

• Any time you can use a verb besides a form of be (is, are, was, were) or a verb ending in –ing, take advantage of the opportunity to make your style more lively.

• Sentences that begin with “There is (are)” and “It is” often have better alternatives.
Use Specific and Inclusive Language

- As you read, stay alert for any vague words or phrases.
- Check to make sure you have used inclusive language throughout.
Study Word Choice

• Are the nouns primarily abstract and general or concrete and specific? Too many abstract and general nouns can result in boring prose.

• How many verbs are forms of be- be, am, is are, was, were, being, been? If be verbs account for more than a third of your total verbs, you are probably overusing them.
All Information Obtained From

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