

Text revision in four steps

In this exercise, the individual revision steps are systematically separated from each other. First, you focus your attention on the overall impression, second on the content and structure, third on linguistics and style, and finally on spelling and punctuation.

In this way, you can ensure that your text is comprehensively revised, improving both fundamental inconsistencies and spelling mistakes. The result is a qualitatively superior and more reader-friendly text.

Preparation:

- Print your raw text after not working on it for a while
- Distort it with format changes, by setting double line spacing and wide margins.
- Choose a location for reading that is not where you usually do your writing.

Procedure:

1.	gain an overall impression	Read your text at an even pace. Just quickly mark conspicuous parts without going into detail. This provides an initial overview and a rough estimate where revision is needed. While doing so, pay attention to the following: How does the text affect me as a whole? What initial urges for change do I notice?
2.	revise content and structure	<p>For the entire text (especially introduction and conclusion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the research question/main statement clear? Is it mentioned in introduction and conclusion? ▪ Is the topic described at the beginning and the relevance of the problem justified? ▪ Is the methodology presented and relevant to the object of investigation and the aim of the study? ▪ Is the structure of the paper sketched at the beginning and does the planned line of argument work as envisaged? ▪ If the central question is answered, are hypotheses supported or refuted (by data, sources, findings, text passages...)? ▪ Are primary and secondary sources sufficiently considered and reflected? ▪ Are research positions differentiated and presented correspondingly? Is one's own position sufficiently made clear and justified in the context of previous research? Is any criticism of research contributions substantiated?



- Have material and methods been described in appropriate detail?
- Have all the necessary steps in argumentation been taken? Are they sufficiently detailed and sufficiently abstract?
- Are the arguments stringent, clear and consistent?
Are derivations logical?
- Are research question and results related to each other?
Are the results reflected upon?
Are further questions or consequences formulated?

For the sequence of chapters (outline):

- Is the main focus of the text reflected in the size of the respective chapters?
- Are the chapters meaningful in relation to the research question/main statement?
- Does the sequence of chapters make sense? Is there a main story line?
- Are the chapter headings meaningful?

For the internal structure of each chapter (e.g. subchapter):

- What is the topic? What is the main statement?
- Sequence: Is there a logical order to the subchapters or other larger units? Is something missing? Are any individual subchapters redundant?
- Check/write connections between sections

For each paragraph:

- What is the topic? What is the main message?
- If necessary, formulate main messages more clearly and place them centrally.

For the sequence of paragraphs:

- Fundamental question: What is the function of a particular statement or paragraph in the overall context?
- Is a mental step or statement missing?
- Are there superfluous thoughts/statements?
- Is the sequence of the statements/paragraphs comprehensible? Should the sequence be changed?

Within the paragraphs

- Sort sentences: Put statement(s) and arguments in a meaningful order.

Also use the worksheets "Restructuring", "Structural text revision: Chapter-Paragraph" and "Shortening" in this revision phase.



	Intermediate step	Now incorporate the results from steps 1 & 2 into the text on the computer and print it out again for the following revision steps.
3.	Rephrase sentence structure, wording and style	<p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are orthography, punctuation and grammar correct? ▪ Is the style objective, clear and comprehensible? ▪ Is the articulation neutral and unemotional, is criticism objective and justified? ▪ Is the paper written in the present tense? ▪ Is the author named according to the conventions of the subject ("I / we", "the author(s)", or passive formulations)? <p>At the sentence level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are any sentences too long? Are there too many nested sentences in the text? ▪ Gibt es zu viele „dass“-Sätze im Text? ▪ Gibt es zu viele passive Satzkonstruktionen, die den Text schwerfällig machen? ▪ Stehen Hauptsachen im Hauptsatz und Nebensachen im Nebensatz? ▪ Ist die logische Struktur sprachlich abgebildet durch Konnektoren (einerseits-andererseits, je-desto...)? <p>At the word level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there repeated words? ▪ Can any "filling" words be deleted (e.g. in fact, in order to, XXX)? ▪ Gibt es zu viele Wörter, die mit -ung, -heit, -keit, -ismus enden? ▪ Are there too many abbreviations? ▪ Gibt es überlange und umständliche Wörter? ▪ Gibt es zu viele „Papierverben“ (z.B. erfolgen, bestehen, befinden, erwiesen) und Hilfsverben (z.B. können, mögen, sollen, dürfen, würden, möchten)? ▪ Are technical terms explained appropriately? ▪ Is colloquial language accidentally used? <p>In this revision phase also use the worksheet "Text Revision: Language & Style".</p>
4.	Formal correctness, spelling, grammar	<p>Quotations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are quotations meaningfully integrated into the text (not just inserted)? ▪ Is it clear why the quotation is made here?



Figures:

- Are figures, tables, diagrams, formulas etc. reasonably integrated into the text (i.e. not only inserted)?
- Is it clear which function the respective illustration, table or similar has?

Grammar:

- Are the collocations correct?
- Are the enumerations within sentences correct?
- Are the sentences congruent?
- Is the use of tense correct?

Formal consistency:

- Are quotations in a consistent format and correct?
- Are authors always named with or without first names?

Spelling, punctuation and typing errors

- Have I checked the paper at least once with the spell-checker on my computer?
- Did I read the paper out loud to myself, e.g., to discover mistakes caused by moving parts of the text?
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Layout:

- Is the front page provided with all important information?
- Is the table of contents clearly arranged and are the headings concise? Do the headings, numbering and page count match the continuous text?
- Is the declaration of primary authorship available and signed?
- Are all other requirements of the subject / institute / professorship met?
- Are the printed figures and tables readable and numbered?
- After the last corrections and after printing, are the page connections correct?
- Is the paper clean, legible and complete after printing?