

Order, Argument, and Elegance: How to Revise a Paper

By Katie Kinney, The Scribe Writing Center — April 23, 2019

- Tip #1 Let the paper sit
- Tip #2 Revise with a printed copy
- Tip #3 Read it aloud

Paragraph Structure

- Introduction
 - **Hook**
 - Roadmap
 - Background
 - **Thesis**
- Body
 - **Topic Sentence**
 - **Supporting Material**
- Conclusion
 - **Restate thesis**
 - Review argument
 - **The “so what”/Memorable final thought**

Checklist

- ✓ Let the paper sit and prepare a printed copy
- ✓ Evaluate body paragraphs for structure.
- ✓ Revise body paragraphs at the sentence level.
- ✓ Evaluate concluding and introductory paragraphs for structure.
- ✓ Revise concluding and introductory paragraphs for structure.
- ✓ Read the paper aloud.

Methods for Evaluating Body Paragraph Structure

- Highlight topic sentences.
- Ask: Does everything in the paragraph serve the claim or idea of the topic sentence?
- Reverse-outline your writing.
- Make a document containing only your thesis and topic sentences.

Methods for Sentence Level Revision

- Read the paper aloud.
- Replace passive voice with active voice
 - Passive voice: The gazelle was stalked by the lion. *Or* The gazelle was stalked.
 - Active voice: The lion stalked the gazelle.
- Replace weak, “to be” verbs with harder working verbs
 - To be: Am, Be, Is, Are Was, Were, Been, Being
 - Example:
 - The lion **is** alert in the presence of its prey.
 - The lion **tenses** in a crouch ready to pounce on its prey.
- Keep it snappy
 - Personal challenge: Allow no sentence longer than 20-25 words.

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