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

**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 tense 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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**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.

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