

Drafting & Revising

“Pre-draft” Writing generates and records ideas and increases comprehension.

“Writing about a subject is a way of learning about it; as you write, your understanding of your subject will almost certainly deepen.”

Many writers begin writing a draft before exploring their subject and organizing their ideas. While this kind of writing serves a valuable purpose (generating ideas and forming connections between concepts), it isn’t the same as writing a draft.

Draft Writing moves toward a *whole* essay from a blueprint of ideas (such as an outline or an idea tree). When you draft, you are writing sentences and paragraphs that *are meant to change*: as you learn and think more about your subject, your ideas and your argument should grow and develop. The drafting process reflects this growth.

Therefore, investing too much in a first draft can be a mistake. The first draft should be an expansion of your initial ideas into actual prose, not a perfect paper.

“Convince yourself that you are working in clay, not marble, on paper not eternal bronze: Let that first sentence be as stupid as it wishes.” --Jacques Barzun

Revising gives you an opportunity to look at your work with fresh and critical eyes. *Revision* means “to see again,” **not** “to reword” or “to fix.” It is helpful to think of revision in terms of *global* and *local* elements.

Global Elements: focus, organization, logic, unnecessary tangents, omitted ideas, etc.

Local Elements: transitions, style, word choice, grammar, punctuation, etc.

“You will save yourself time if you handle global revisions before turning to sentence-level issue, because in the process of revising globally you may decide to delete sentences, paragraphs, or even larger chunks of text. There is little sense in revising sentences that may not even appear in your final draft.”

All quotes excerpted from: Hacker, D. (2002). *The Bedford handbook* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin’s.